

NRCS Land Use Designations and Modifiers

LAND USES: NRCS has developed the following land use designations to be used by planners and modelers at the field and landscape level.

- **Crop.** – Land used primarily for the production and harvest of annual or perennial field, forage, food, fiber, horticultural, orchard, vineyard, or energy crops.
- **Pasture.** – Land composed of introduced or domesticated native forage species that is used primarily for the production of livestock. Pastures receive periodic renovation and cultural treatments, such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, weed control, and may be irrigated. Pastures are not in rotation with crops.
- **Forest.** – Land on which the primary vegetation is tree cover (climax, natural or introduced plant community) and use is primarily for production of wood products or non-timber forest products.
- **Farmstead.** – Land used for facilities and supporting infrastructure where farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and ranching activities are often initiated. This may include dwellings, equipment storage, plus farm input and output storage and handling facilities. Also includes land dedicated to the facilitation and production of high-intensity animal agriculture in a containment facility where daily nutritional requirements are obtained from other lands or feed sources.
- **Associated Agriculture Lands.** – Land associated with farms and ranches that are not purposefully managed for food, forage, or fiber and are typically associated with nearby production or conservation lands. This could include incidental areas, such as idle center pivot corners, odd areas, ditches and watercourses, riparian areas, field edges, seasonal and permanent wetlands, and other similar areas.
- **Designated Protected Area.** – Land or water used for the preservation, protection, and observation of the existing resources, archaeological or historical interpretation, resource interpretation, or for aesthetic value. These areas are officially designated by legislation or other authorities. Examples: legislated natural or scenic areas and rural burial plots.
- **Developed Land.** – Land occupied by buildings and related facilities used for residences, commercial sites, public highways, airports, and open space associated with towns and cities.
- **Water.** – Geographic area whose dominant characteristic is open water or permanent ice or snow. May include intermingled land, including tidal-influenced coastal marsh lands.
- **Other.** – Land that is barren, sandy, rocky, or that is impacted by the extraction of natural resources, such as minerals, gravel or sand, coal, shale, rock, oil, or natural gas.

MODIFIERS: The restructuring effort introduces the use of land use modifiers to more accurately define the land's actual use. Modifiers provide another level of specificity and help denote what the land is actually managed for. One or more modifiers can be applied to any Land Use:

- **Irrigated.** – Used when an operational system is present and managed to supply water.
- **Wildlife.** – Used when the client is actively managing for wildlife.
- **Grazed.** – Used when grazing animals impact how land is managed.