

Waymart Borough

Wayne County Agricultural Land Use/Land Cover Study

A study examining the change of agricultural land use and land cover
in Wayne County from 1959 to 2002

This is report M-28, Waymart Borough; in a series of reports examining land use and land cover change in Wayne County's 28 municipalities, particularly agricultural land between 1959 and 2002. For a detail of the study procedures, see the Project Narrative.



Overview

Waymart Borough was founded in 1851. It is the first of the four boroughs when traveling east along Route 6, the major east-west corridor through the central part of Wayne County. Waymart Borough has the second largest land area out of the six boroughs in the county with 1,766 acres, which equals almost three square miles.

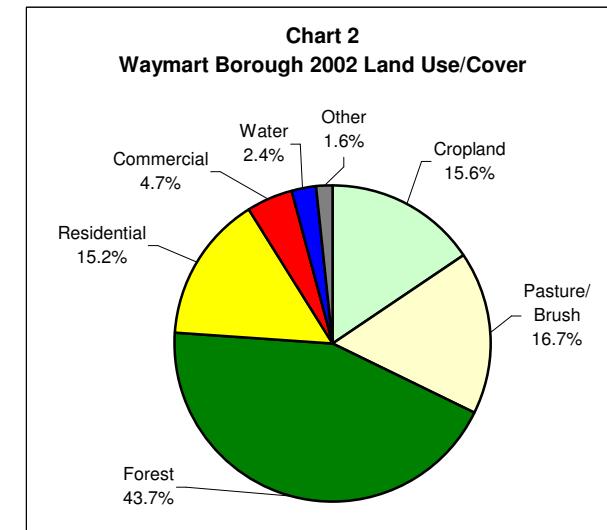
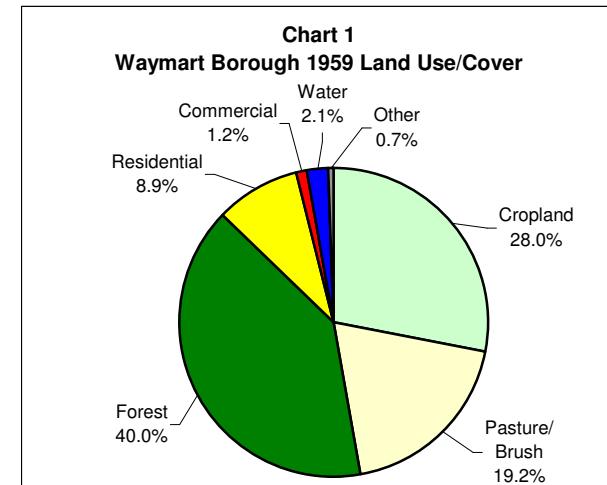
Cropland covered 494 acres in 1959, which was equal to 28% of the Borough's total land area and was the second highest-ranking land use category as shown in Table 1 {below}. By 2002, the total acreage of cropland had decreased to approximately 275 acres, but still ranked as the third highest land use category in the Borough.

Table 1 - Waymart Borough Land Use/Land Cover

Land Use/Land Cover	Waymart 1959 Acres	Category Percent of Total	Waymart 2002 Acres	Category Percent of Total
Residential	124.80	7.1%	254.35	14.4%
Commercial	21.69	1.2%	83.86	4.7%
Industrial	0.27	0.0%	5.65	0.3%
Transportation	-	0%	-	0%
Utilities	1.09	0.1%	4.94	0.3%
Religious	5.75	0.3%	6.57	0.4%
Government/Institution	4.93	0.3%	11.36	0.6%
Recreational	-	0%	0.51	0.0%
Cropland	493.86	28.0%	275.33	15.6%
Farmstead	32.12	1.8%	13.80	0.8%
Pasture/Brush	338.50	19.2%	294.99	16.7%
Forest	706.38	40.0%	772.03	43.7%
Water	36.93	2.1%	42.93	2.4%
Mining/Extraction	-	0%	-	0%
Total	1,766.32	100.0%	1,766.32	100.0%

Table 1 above shows the acres and percent values for the various land use/land cover categories for Waymart Borough in the years 1959 and 2002.

The following charts are to aide in visualizing the changes in the land use/cover of Waymart over the 43-year period of the study. For presentation purposes, farmsteads were grouped with the residential classification in the charts throughout this report. The category "other" includes land uses that generally are less than 1% of the total land use/cover. The categories included in "other" are: industrial, utilities, religious, government/institution, and recreational.



Charts 1 and 2 {above} show that between 1959 and 2002 Waymart gained forestland. Residential acreage also increased during this time period. In both years, forestland was the most dominant land use/cover classification. Pasture/brush and cropland lost acreage. Residential gained 130 acres, equaling 15.2% of the total area, which includes farmsteads.

Cropland

As shown in Table 1 {previous page}, cropland accounted for 28% of the total land use/cover in Waymart in 1959. The 494 acres of cropland within the Borough in 1959 were located primarily near the municipal boundary. By 2002, nearly 220 acres of cropland converted to various other land uses. The cropland remaining in 2002 was located primarily in the northern portion of the Borough on both sides of State Route 296. Even with cropland equaling 275 acres in 2002, it was still a more prevalent land use than residential. Table 2 {below} shows what became of the 1959 cropland by 2002.

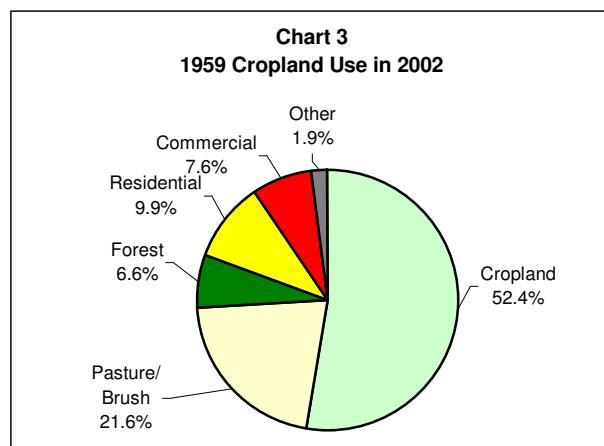
Table 2 – 1959 Cropland Use in 2002

Land Use/Land Cover	1959 Cropland Classification in 2002	
	Acres	Percent
Residential	43.63	8.8%
Commercial	37.46	7.6%
Industrial	0.27	0.1%
Transportation	-	0%
Utilities	1.82	0.4%
Religious	0.01	0.0%
Government/Institution	4.29	0.9%
Recreational	-	0%
Cropland	258.62	52.4%
Farmstead	5.50	1.1%
Pasture/Brush	106.44	21.6%
Forest	32.70	6.6%
Water	3.12	0.6%
Mining/Extraction	-	0%
Total	493.86	100.0%

The above table shows what 1959 cropland became by 2002.

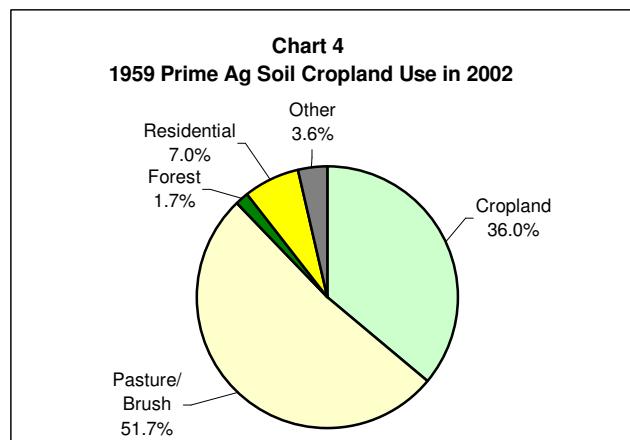
Of the nearly 500 acres of 1959 cropland in Waymart Borough, more than half, 258 acres had been maintained as cropland 43 years later. Cropland from 1959 that converted to pasture/brush equaled 21.6% or approximately 106 acres. Forestland was another land cover that cropland from 1959 converted to totaling 6.6%. A total of 49 acres, equal to 9.9%, was converted to residential use, which includes farmsteads and approximately 37 acres or 7.6% changed to commercial use. Chart 3 {upper right} illustrates more clearly what became of the 1959 cropland by 2002.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classifies soil as either prime agricultural soil, farmland of statewide importance, or non-prime soil. The following sections analyze soil from a prime versus non-prime perspective.



Prime Agricultural Soil

In 1959, 10% or 50 acres of all cropland in the Borough was on prime agricultural soil. By 2002, 18 acres were still being utilized for agricultural purposes, which was equivalent to 36% of the total. The remaining acres became used for various different land uses, the largest being pasture/brush totaling 26 acres. Residential acreage gained from cropland on prime agricultural soil amounted to approximately 3 acres. The category “other” in Chart 4 {below} includes the land use/cover of water, government/institution, and commercial. Government/institution accounted for 1.9% out of 3.6% in the category “other”, however it comprised slightly less than one acre.

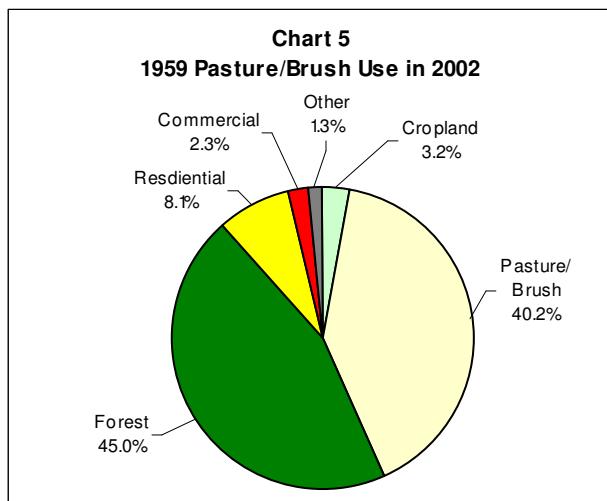


Non-Prime Agricultural Soil

In 1959 roughly 25% of the land cover in the Borough was cropland on non-prime agricultural soil. This amounted to 444 acres, 54.2% of which was retained as cropland more than four decades later in 2002. Pasture/brush gained 80 acres from cropland on non-prime agricultural soil, which accounted for 18.1% of the 1959 cropland on non-prime agricultural soil. The acres of 1959 cropland on non-prime agricultural soil that were retained 43 years later and those that became pasture/brush accounted for 72.3%. The remaining 27.7% became used for various different land uses, the three largest being residential (9.1%), commercial (8.4%), and forest (7.2%).

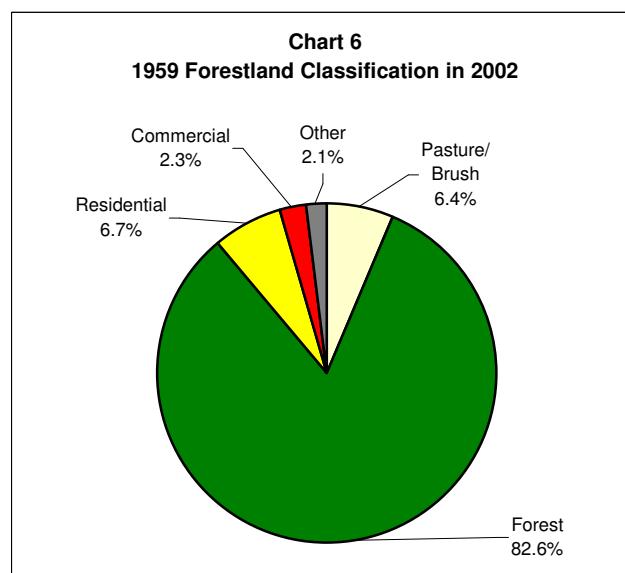
Pasture/Brush

The pasture/brush classification is land that is used for animal grazing or is land that is in some early stage of reforestation. As can be seen in Table 1, pasture/brush accounted for nearly 339 acres in 1959. As shown in Chart 5, {below} in the year 2002, 40.2% or 136 acres were still pasture/brush. Approximately 152 acres of the pasture/brush land from 1959 had converted into forestland by 2002. This conversion accounted for 45% of the total acres of 1959 pasture/brush. Pasture/brush from 1959 also changed to other land uses such as industrial, utilities, and water. Roughly 35 acres of former pasture/brush land converted to either residential or commercial use by 2002, accounting for 10.4% of the total.



Forest

Forestland was the most prevalent land cover found in Waymart during the study period. In 1959, forestland covered 40% of the Borough as shown in Chart 1. Forestland retained between 1959 and 2002 totaled 583 acres, which was 82.6% of the total forestland. About 45 acres or 6.4% of the forestland from 1959 changed to pasture/brush by 2002. Residential acreage was another land use classification that forestland in 1959 changed to by 2002. Forestland that changed to residential accounted for 47 acres, which was 6.7% of the total forestland from 1959. The remaining acreage converted to various other land uses.



Residential

Residential land covered 7.1% of Waymart Borough in 1959. This amounted to 125 acres out of a total 1,766. In the year 2002, residential acreage totaled 254 acres, which was 14.4% of the total land area. Although the area of the Borough that is classified as residential increased, the 2002 cropland still covered more area of the Borough amounting to 15.6% of the total area. The acres that became classified as residential by 2002 came from several other land use classifications as shown {on the following page} in Table 3. Residential acreage gained from land that was previously forested totaled approximately 47 acres. This amounts to 18.6% of the total residential acreage in 2002.

Pasture/brush land also became residential acreage. Of all residential acreage in 2002, 10.7% or 27 acres was pasture/brush land in 1959. Cropland from 1959 also contributed to the residential acreage total by 2002. The residential acreage total that was formerly cropland was 17.2%. The residential acreage in 2002 that was used for the same purposes 43 years prior was 45.2% of the Borough total. The remaining acreage that was converted to residential uses by 2002 came from various other land uses including commercial, utilities, and government/institution.

Table 3 - 2002 Residential Use in 1959

Land Use/Land Cover	2002 Residential Classification in 1959	
	Acres	Percent
Residential	114.92	45.2%
Commercial	6.45	2.5%
Industrial	-	0%
Transportation	-	0%
Utilities	0.21	0.1%
Religious	-	0%
Government/Institution	0.94	0.4%
Recreational	-	0%
Cropland	43.63	17.2%
Farmstead	13.49	5.3%
Pasture/Brush	27.25	10.7%
Forest	47.43	18.6%
Water	0.03	0.0%
Mining/Extraction	-	0%
Total	254.35	100.0%

Commercial

Waymart Borough in 1959 had 21.69 acres devoted to commercial activity. In 2002, this number had grown to 83.86 acres or 4.7% of the total land area. Most of the commercial acreage is located along either U.S. Route 6 or State Route 296, the two main arterials through the Borough. The land use attributed with adding the most acres to commercial by 2002 was cropland. The percentage of commercial acreage in 2002 that came from 1959 cropland was 44.7%. The largest single piece of cropland that contributed to the gain in commercial acreage can be attributed to a children's camp that was established containing approximately 37 acres in the Borough near Lake Ladore. Forestland was second to cropland in the number of acres

that became used for commercial purposes by 2002 with 16 acres or 19.3% of the total. Of the total commercial acreage in 2002, 17.5% was also commercial acreage in 1959, which is equal to 14.64 acres. The remaining acreage is spread out in small amounts among several different land uses.

Protected Land

While Waymart Borough had 275 acres of Cropland in 2002, none that area was enrolled in either the Agricultural Security Area or Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Programs. In Waymart Borough, a total of 631 acres have been enrolled in Act 319 (Clean and Green Program). This acreage can be found on just 7 parcels. However, it accounts for more than one-third (38.3%) of the taxable acreage within Waymart Borough. The acreage enrolled in Act 319 reduces the assessed value of the Borough by \$829,600, or 1.3%.

Summary

The most notable change of the Borough during the study period was the decrease in cropland acreage. In 2002, cropland covered 12.4% less of the Borough total land area than it did in 1959. Despite the reduction in cropland it was still the third most prevalent land use/cover in 2002. Forestland increased over the study period and was the largest land use/cover in both 1959 and 2002.

In 2002, Waymart had approximately 43 acres of water coverage. Most of this area is attributed to Lake Ladore, which is located in the southeastern corner of the Borough and accounts for 33 acres of the total water coverage.

Wayne County Agricultural Land Use/Cover

This project was funded in part by the Wayne County Commissioners and by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. This study examines the change in agricultural land use/cover over 43 years (1959-2002). The base data is 1959 USDA aerial photos which were registered to the state plane coordinate system by Wilkes University's Center for Geographic Information Sciences. This enabled comparison with the 1997 aerial photos taken by Wayne County. To aid in the analysis of the data, local municipal volunteers worked with planning department staff members in reviewing the aerial photos and resulting land use maps. A complete list of those community volunteers who aided in the completion of this report can be found in the report summary.

Wayne County Department of Planning 2006

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