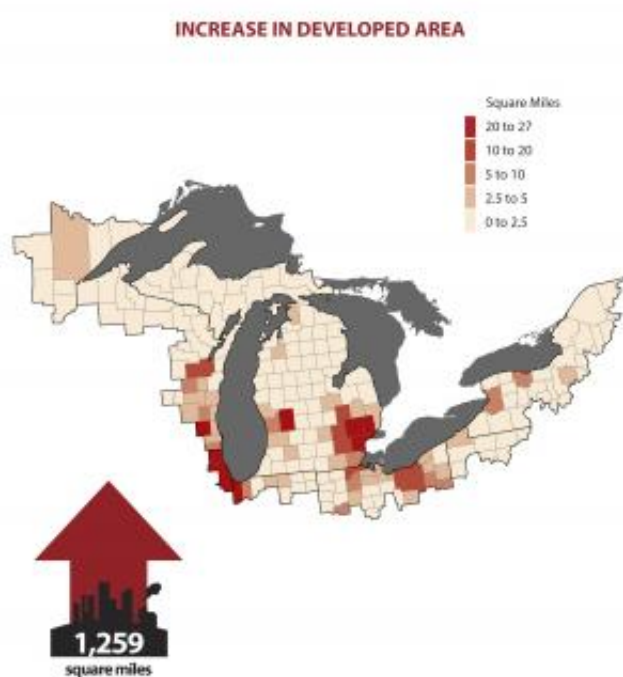


# Land cover changes across the United States chronicled in new NOAA products

March 19 2015

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Increase in developed areas from Great Lakes report. Credit: NOAA

NOAA has issued a comprehensive series of reports detailing the changes in land cover across the United States from 1996 to 2010. The Coastal Change Analysis Program (C-CAP) reports focus on the Great Lakes, Gulf Coast, Northeast, Southeast and West Coast.

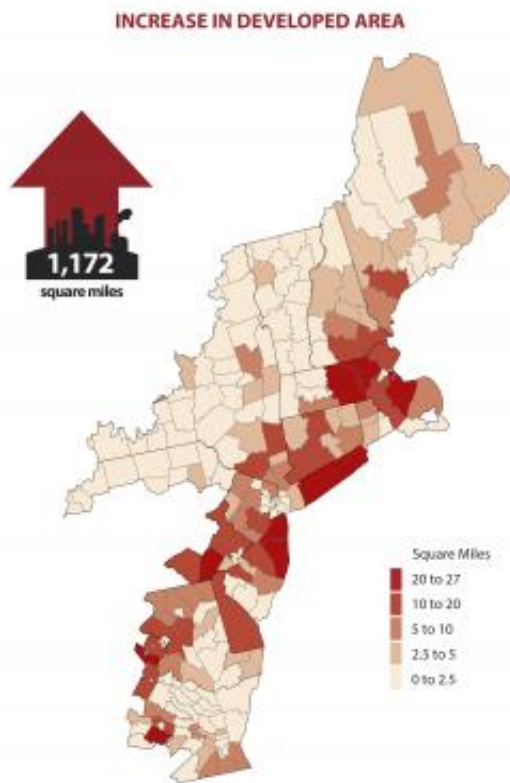
The five regional studies are a new group of NOAA nationwide reports showing that between 1996 and 2010, 64,967 square miles in coastal regions—an area the size of Florida—experienced changes in [land cover](#), including a decline in wetlands and forest cover, with development a major contributing factor. Over the past five years, NOAA scientists analyzed land cover data, which records the physical land type, rather than how land is used.

"People know their region is changing, but it is hard to pinpoint the extent. These reports provide an overview of that information with numbers, graphics, and maps," said Nate Herold, C-CAP coordinator at the NOAA Office for Coastal Management. "Communities can use this information to see how previous land use decisions and changes in climate affect land cover, and help make informed decisions about the future."

Excerpts from the report are shown below:

- **Great Lakes** - four percent of the U.S. Great Lakes region saw changes to its land cover—paved surfaces, trees, forests, grasses, and wetlands—from 1996 to 2010. That figure represents 7,144 square miles, almost the equivalent of Lake Ontario's surface area.
- **Gulf of Mexico** - 13 percent of the U.S. Gulf of Mexico region saw changes to its land cover—paved surfaces, trees, forests, grasses, and wetlands—1996 to 2010. That figure represents 26,516 square miles, almost the equivalent of half the state of Louisiana.
- **Northeast** - four percent of the U.S. Northeast region saw changes to its land cover—paved surfaces, trees, forests, grasses, and wetlands—from 1996 to 2010. That figure represents 7,200 square miles, an area almost the equivalent of Delaware and Connecticut combined.

- **Southeast** - 15 percent of the U.S. Southeast region saw changes to its land cover—paved surfaces, trees, forests, grasses, and wetlands—from 1996 to 2010. That figure represents 14,420 square miles, roughly the equivalent of half the state of South Carolina.
- **West coast** - six percent of the U.S. West Coast [region](#) saw changes to its land cover—paved surfaces, trees, forests, grasses, and wetlands—from 1996 to 2010. That figure represents 9,687 square miles, roughly the equivalent of the entire state of Vermont.



Increase in developed areas from Northeast report. Credit: NOAA

Provided by NOAA Headquarters

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