RETENTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AT RISK OF CONVERSION IN PUGET SOUND

This project will identify Puget Sound agricultural land that is at risk of conversion to non-agricultural uses using the Washington State Parcel Database, and quantify the risks facing these lands. The goal is to inform Puget Sound counties’ agricultural strategies and targeted incentive programs.

What We’re Doing

- Collecting parcel, tax-roll, and crop data for all 13 Puget Sound Action Area counties
- Combining these data into standardized Agricultural Lands Database which will contain ownership, land use, assessment, and physical characteristics of every parcel
- Determining conversion risk for each parcel by comparing current use and potential use, adjacent land uses, length of ownership, and owner participation in conservation programs, among other things.
- Holding meetings to train collaborators on how to use the data for outreach and monitoring

WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT

Agriculture in Puget Sound is unique because of its proximity to population centers, and the size of many of the producers. Puget Sound’s population is estimated to increase by 50% in the next 20 years, increasing development pressure on the agricultural land base.

Puget Sound restoration and the vibrancy of agriculture here are threatened by this development pressure. Informed policy can reduce this pressure helping to preserve local, often smaller scale, food production.

Information about the types and scale of the risk facing agricultural landowners, and locating areas at highest risk of conversion can help guide outreach and policymaking efforts.

ABOUT THE NATURAL RESOURCE SPATIAL INFORMATICS GROUP

We are a research group within the Precision Forestry Cooperative at the UW School of Environmental and Forest Sciences. We provide technologies and expertise for analyzing forestry and agricultural issues, specializing in large spatial scales and big data. Our focus is on applied problems that integrate environmental, social, and economic objectives to consider the sustainability, acceptability, and productivity of management opportunities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://nrsig.org/
nrsig@uw.edu, 206-543-7418

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