



**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE**  
**RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

*University of Arkansas System*

# **Urbanization Challenges to Agriculture and Land Use in Northwest Arkansas**

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# Northwest Arkansas

## We have cows..... and culture.



# Northwest Arkansas

**Poultry .....**



**And people.**



# Northwest Arkansas

**We raise hens.....**



**And houses.**





# Northwest Arkansas

**We have broilers.....**



**And bicycles.**



# Sometimes they compete,

**But their houses.....**

**Sometimes look similar.**



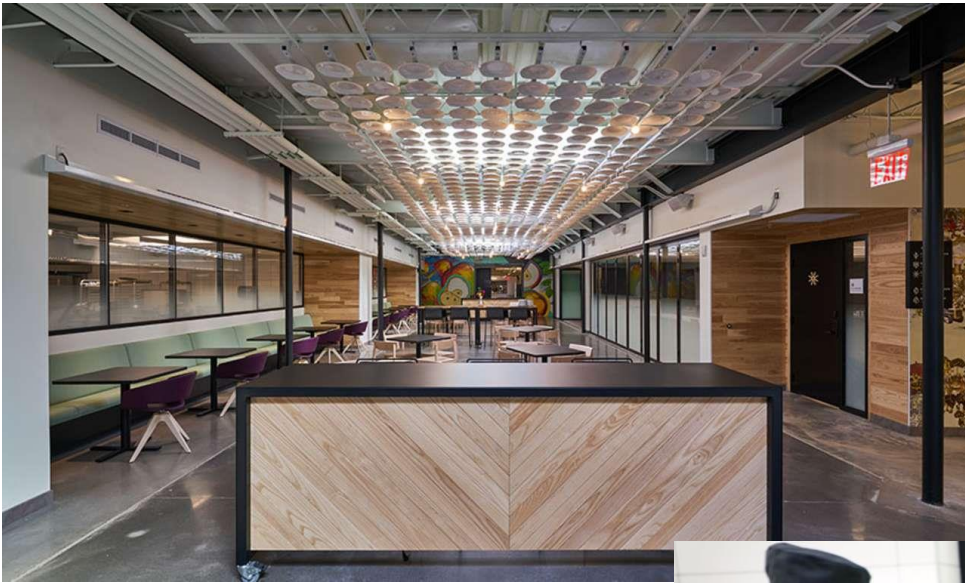


# NWA - Fascinated with food trucks and local brews.





# NWA -Fascinated with Food: Brightwater Institute





# Brightwater Institute – culinary, not cooking.

- Brightwater: A Center for the Study of Food approaches food as art, food as wellness, and food as business to offer an entirely unique approach to the culinary arts. Our goal is to develop leaders who combine culinary skills with the ability to recognize and address complex food issues.
- In addition to artisanal food, culinary arts, pastry and baking, and beverage management, we offer courses with a focus on culinary nutrition, food waste reduction, and food security.
- Special classes in applied farming, seasonal cooking, and the art of fermentation are among the many one-of-a-kind classes that can be found at Brightwater.

# Benton County Ag Facts

- Over 2,000 farms in the county
- 400 poultry farms
- 122 million broilers produced annually.
- Around 50,000 head of beef cows
- Annual turkey production of 1.6-2 million
- 1.7 million laying hens

# Economic Impact in Benton County

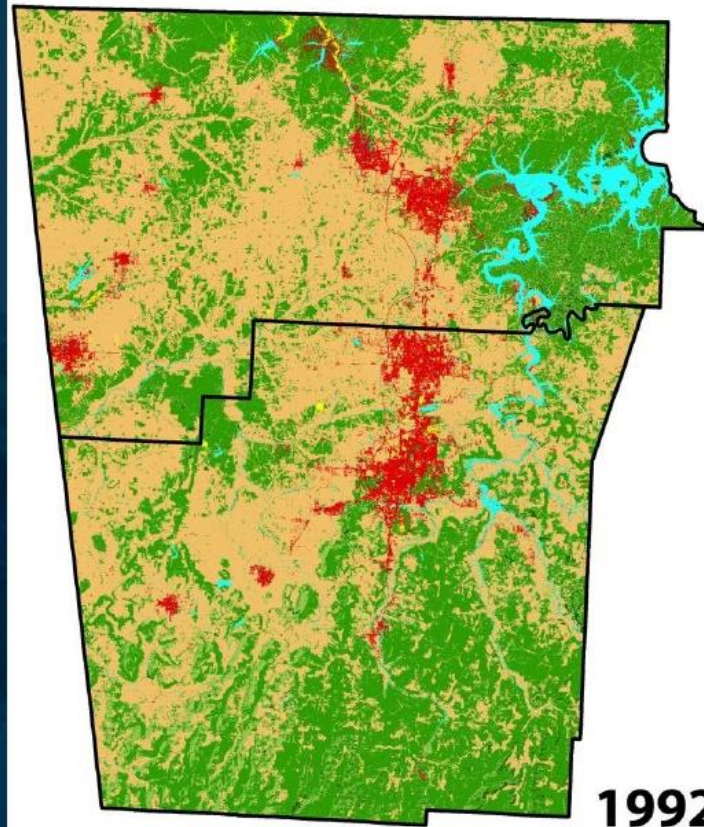
- Total Ag Gate Receipts: \$500,000,000 +
- \$457,000,000 value of poultry products sold
- \$57,000,000 sales of cattle and calves
- \$700,000 Average value of investment in land/equipment/buildings



# People in our area

- Current population of 500,000 in NWA
- Expected population of 800,000 in 20? years.
- Huge economic drivers in our area which attract folks to move here.
- Many people tend to be maximumists instead of minimalists.
- Median home price for listed homes is \$267K

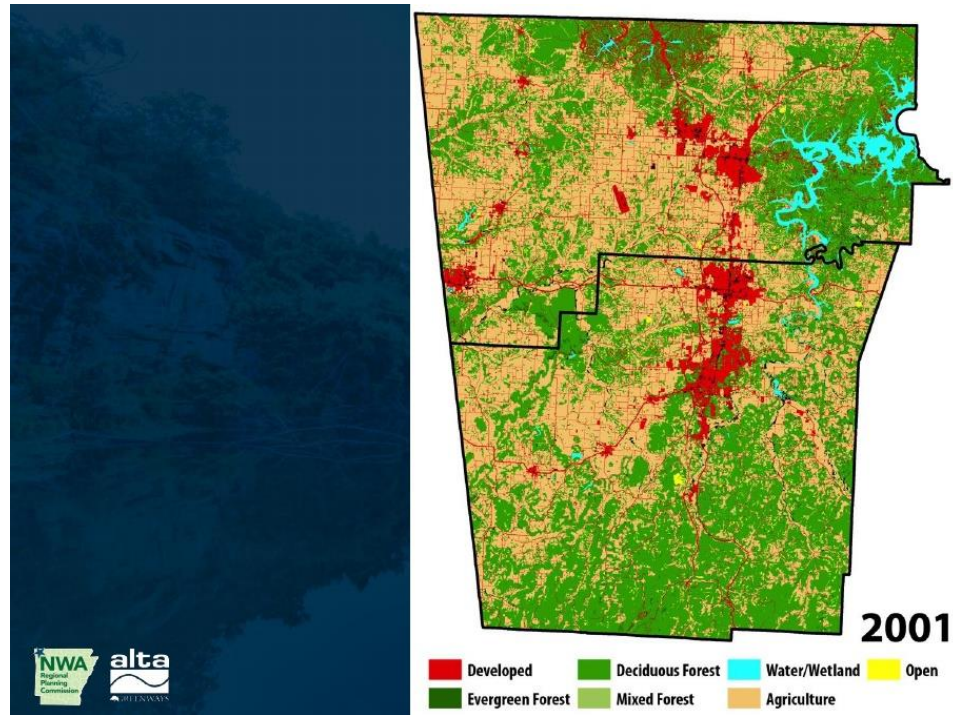
# From the Northwest Arkansas Open Space Plan.



1992

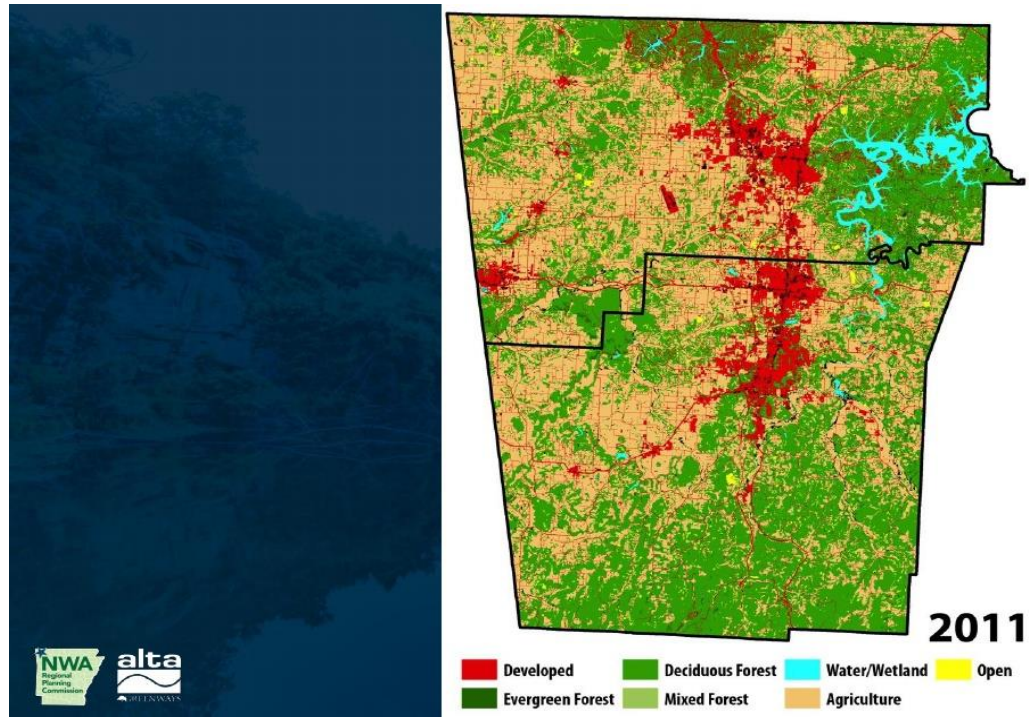
- |                  |                  |               |      |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|------|
| Developed        | Deciduous Forest | Water/Wetland | Open |
| Evergreen Forest | Mixed Forest     | Agriculture   |      |

# 2001- Most Development occurred along I-49

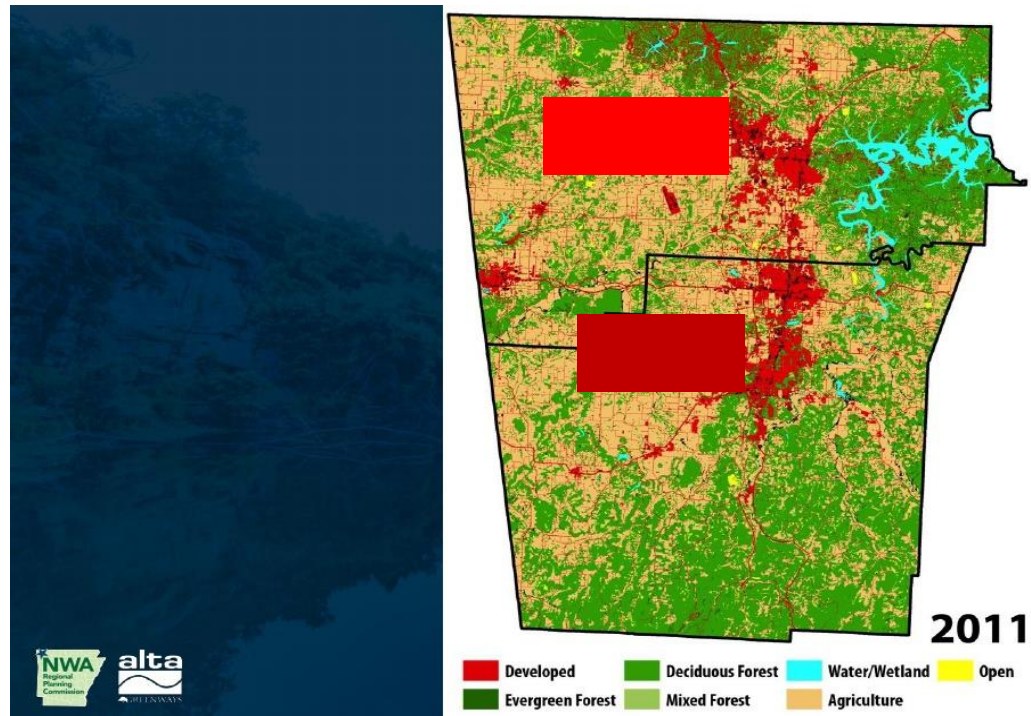




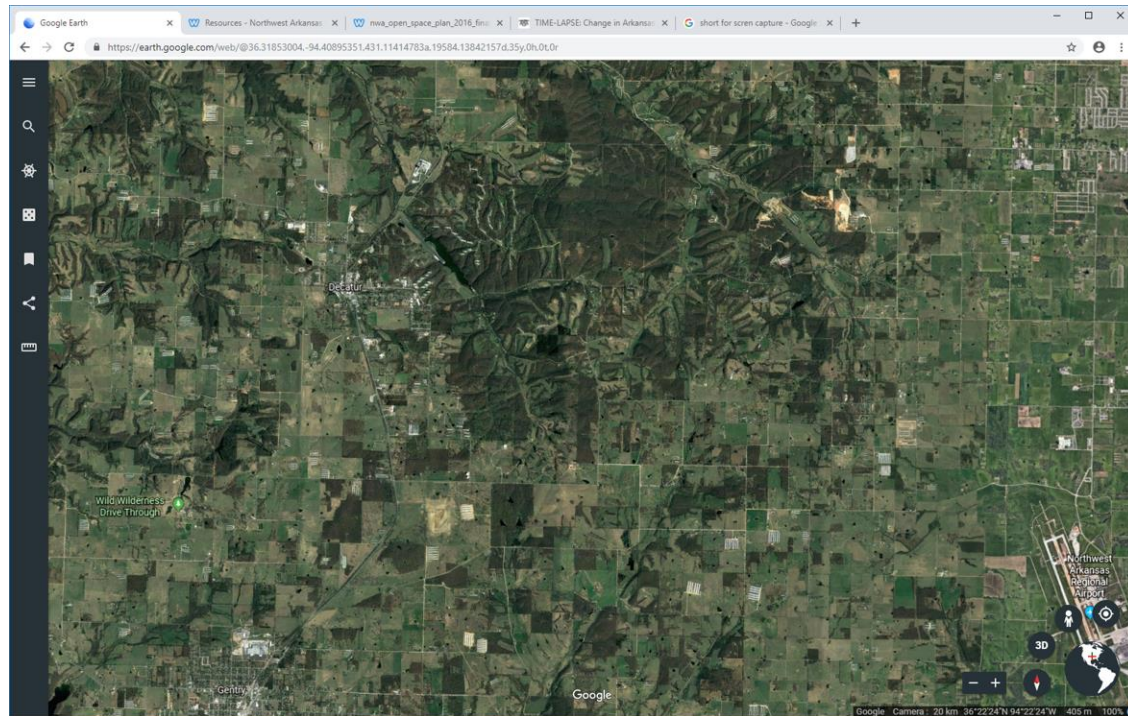
# 2011 – Development spreading away from I-49



# 2040 – Projected 800,000 population.

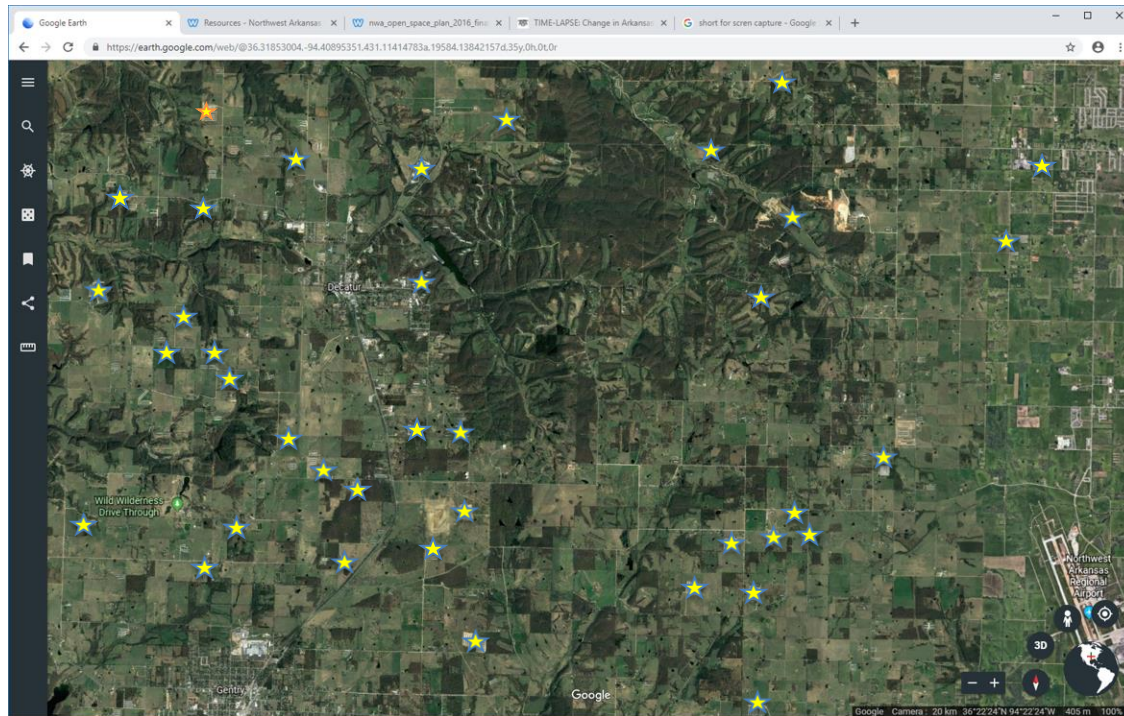


# Decatur, Arkansas - Boomtown





# Decatur, Arkansas - Boomtown



# Local Development

- <https://www.arkansasonline.com/googletimelapse/>

# Who are the 300,000 moving to our area?

- One segment will be dump truck drivers, brick layers, landscapers, plant workers, etc.

## **Another Segment will be:**

- Many will be from out of state.
- Will have disposable income.
- Educated.
- Recreation is important to them.
- Desire for “local” food.



# What???

- These chickens were most likely the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of their families to be raised in NWA.
- Customer who moved here 2 years ago from Colorado says it's not “local”.



# Benton County Farmer's definition.

- Local food: All food that was raised or grown near me or within or near the boundaries of Benton County.
- Believes food produced by the current method of production is safe, affordable, and high quality.

# Benton County **foodie** definition:

- Local food: Food that was produced for an intentional limited delivery system
  - May be grown in Benton County, maybe not. But location does not make it “local”.
  - Perceived Environmental aspect
  - Perceived quality and wholesomeness.
  - Perceived safety (no pesticides, no GMO’s, etc.)



# Challenges: Urban vs. Agriculture

- Maintaining Consumer Acceptance and Confidence in Farming Methods
- Simmons, Tyson, George's, Cargill production in Benton County is not considered "local"
- Being recognized as environmentally acceptable. (C and H had a clean record)
- Land prices are \$8K - \$40K per acre or more.

# Challenges: Urban vs. Agriculture

- Allowing for the future of agriculture.
- Many beef operations will likely say, “ Show me the \$\$\$.” (if they can manage the taxes)
- Poultry farm families have a huge \$\$ investment that’ can’t be recovered.
- Poultry companies are highly invested.
- Can we protect the Investments and way of life of our farm families?

# Can these 2 live side by side?

-Farm families like to live in NWA too.

-Huge investments in our area- financial and historical.

-“Right to farm” does not mean “right to farm irresponsibly”

-They are our customers.

-They have a lot more votes than farmers do.

<50% believe working farms and ranches are a “very important” use of area open space.

