

Smart Growth and Natural Resource and Environmental Quality

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Evaluation Issues

- Definitions
- Causal relationships
 - Complex
 - Isolating the unique effects of state land policy
 - More direct for land conservation
 - Less direct for air and water quality
- Data and measurement
 - Relevant, simple, consistently measured in all states, 1990-2000
- Geography: state and county

Evaluation Issues

- State similarities and differences
 - Lots of similar policies address EQ in all states
 - Federal mandates
 - State policies and programs
 - Differences relevant to this evaluation mainly about:
 - Conservation of land with natural resource or farm value
 - Potential indirect effects via density and changes in trip characteristics (evaluated separately)

State-Level Measurements: Acres

- Thus, the focus is on change in the amount of land identified as having above average natural resource or environmental value:
 - Acres of farmland enrolled in conservation
 - Acres of land in private land trusts
 - Acres of resource land
 - Acres of farmland
 - Per capita acres of state parks

Farmland in conservation programs

- Non-smart growth states have more farmland enrolled in conservation programs (CRP and WRP), both as share of farmland and absolute amount. From 1987-2002 N-SG states added 10 times more acreage to these programs.
- But N-SG states have more than six times as much farmland as smart growth states.
- Still, N-SG states added to the programs at twice the rate (as % of total farmland).

Land in private trusts

- Non-smart growth states had greater absolute and relative increase.
- Colorado had the greatest increase, followed by Virginia, and Texas.
- Percent of all land in private land trusts only slightly higher in non-smart growth states than in smart growth states.

Resource Land Conversion

- Normalized to population growth, smart growth states performed slightly better, but not uniformly.
- Oregon lost more resource land per person of growth than any other state except Indiana.

Farm Land Conversion

- Smart growth states lost less farmland relative to population growth.
- Non-smart growth states lost two and one-half times more farmland.
- However, the share of farmland that non-smart growth states lost was only 1/2 that of the percent lost in smart growth states.

State Parkland

- Non-smart growth states had greater increase in parkland relative to population growth.
- Smart growth and non-smart growth states had similar state park service levels, about 20 acres per 1,000 people.

Observations

- Compared to other indicators, those for EQ sparse and poor at national level
- No strong support for difference between SG and N-SG states
- SG: slightly better on per capita loss of farm and resource land
- N-SG: better on land in programs, trusts, and parkland