

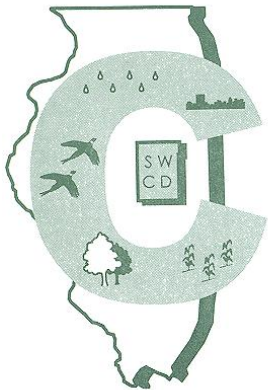
LESA:

An Effective Way to Plan

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
2110 W. Park Court, Suite C
Champaign, Illinois 61821



Champaign County

Soil and Water Conservation District





What is LESA?

- A two-part evaluation system
 - soil productivity
 - social/economic/environmental factors



LESA...

- Science/Fact-based process
- Decisions are consistent, accurate and defensible.



Where Do We Start?

- LESA is already in place -- NRCS & SWCD began the program 16 years ago.
- LESA should be updated and used



LESA: A 2-Part Process

□ Land Evaluation (LE)

- SWCD-NRCS provides soils data, ranking for productivity

□ Site Assessment (SE)

- Local officials rate land current farm activity
 - surrounding non-urban land use
 - distance to utilities and transportation
 - other crucial local issues



LESA: LE portion

Land Evaluation (LE)

Based in soil productivity

Index with 100 as best soils (Flanagan)

- **9 soil productivity groups**
- **SWCD recommends saving top 4 groups (85)**
- **Average for site 1/3 of total score (0-300)**



LESA: SA portion

Site Assessment (SA)

Suitability of site for development and interface with agricultural community

- **Agricultural land use nearby**
- **Current zoning nearby**
- **Compatibility and proximity to towns**
- **Land use feasibility**
- **Available resources-roads, water, sewer, etc.**
- **Environmental impact**
- **Total points 2/3 of LESA score (0-300)**



LESA: Adding it up

Total Score = 0 to 300

Combining the soil productivity and impact of development on agriculture, the environment and existing infrastructure

□ **LE + SA = LESA**

□ **Scoring system**

220-300 very high rating for protection

200-219 high rating for protection

180-199 moderate rating for protection

179 or less low rating for protection

□ **SWCD recommends protection if 200 or above**



LESA Can Help You...

- Identify farmland in need of protection
- Aid in planning and zoning policies
- Evaluate proposed or future conversion issues

Green areas

LE > 85

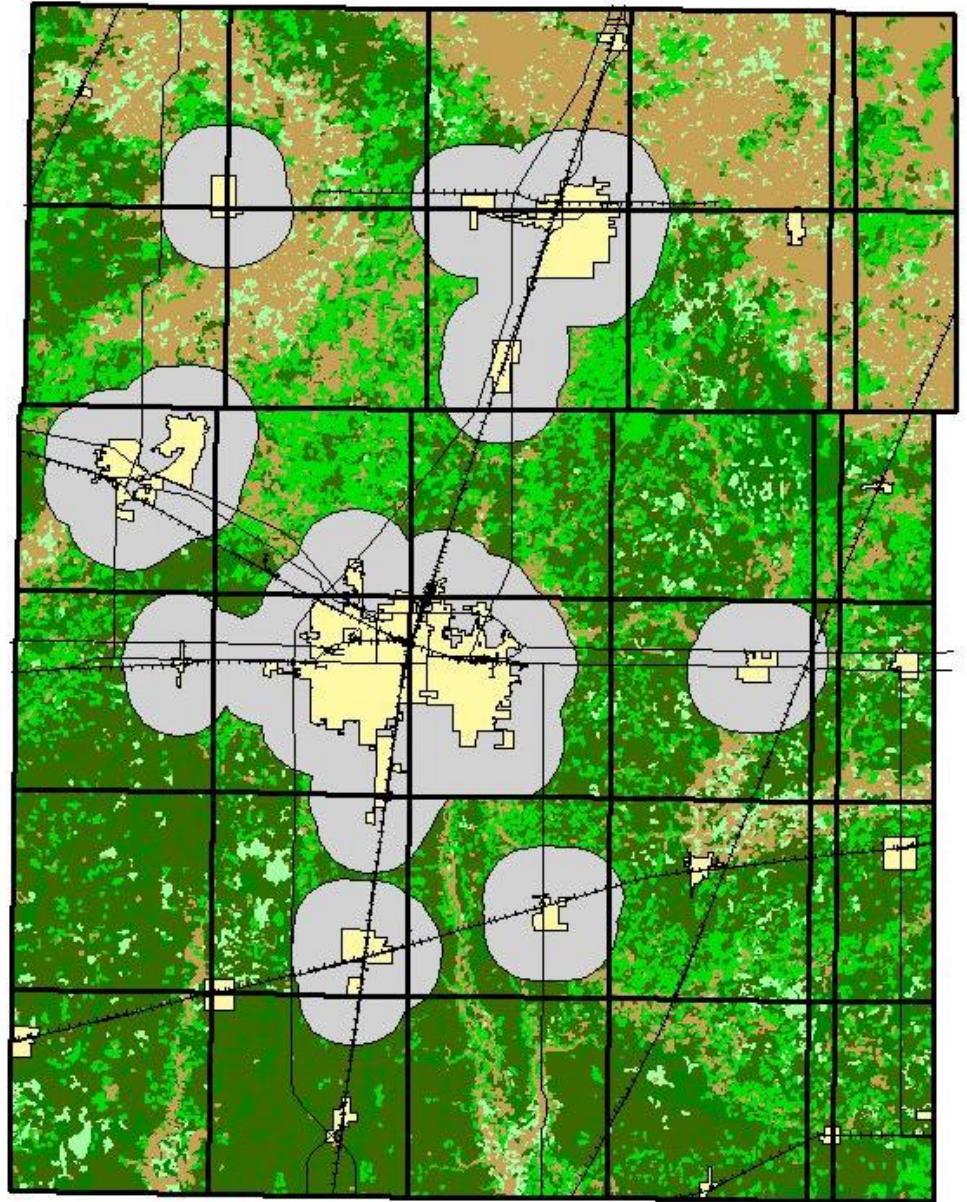
Prime farmland definition

Brown areas

LE < 85

Gray areas = 19%

Undeveloped land

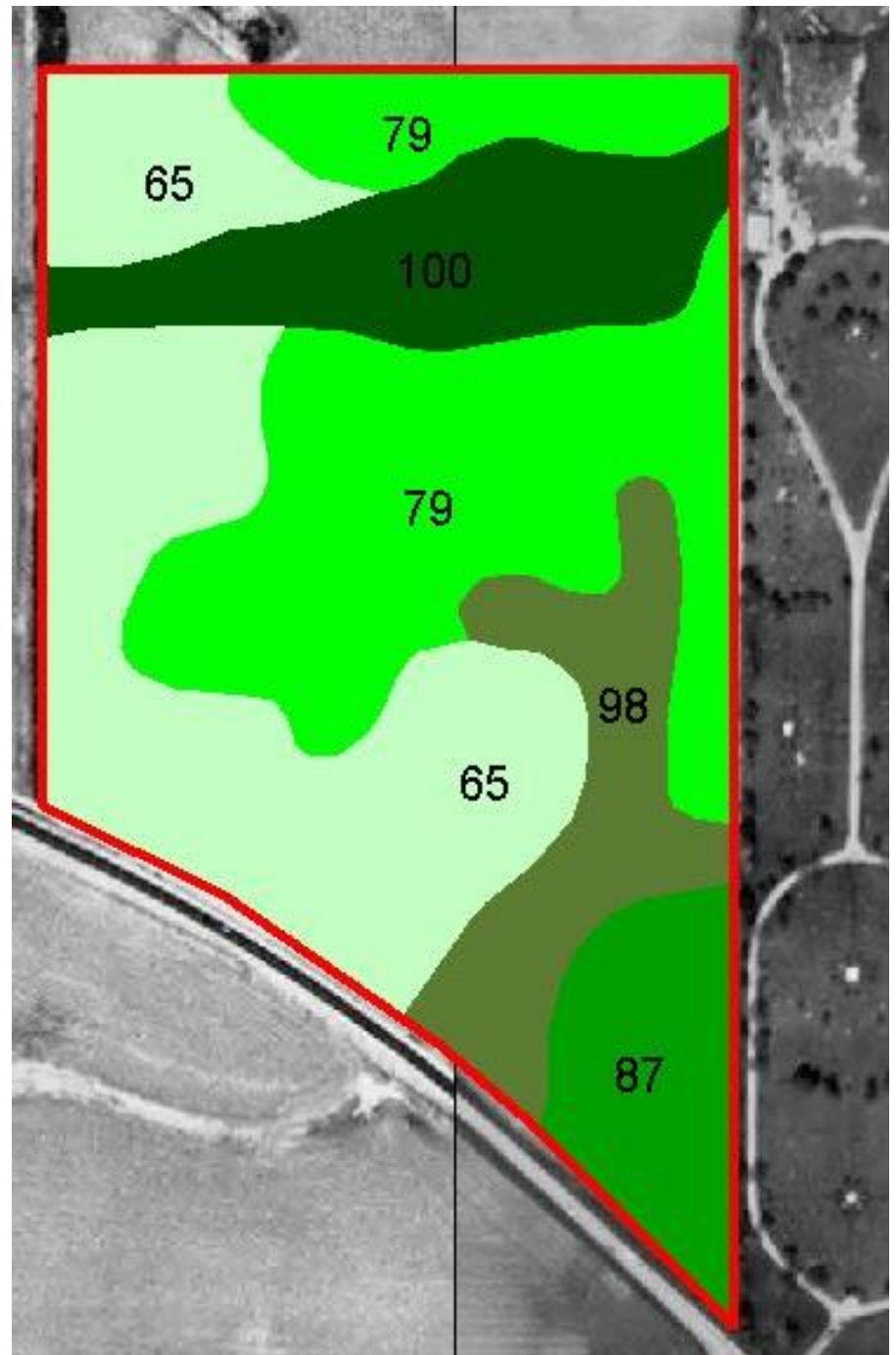


Example A

LE = 80

LESA close to town = 136

LESA away from town = 226

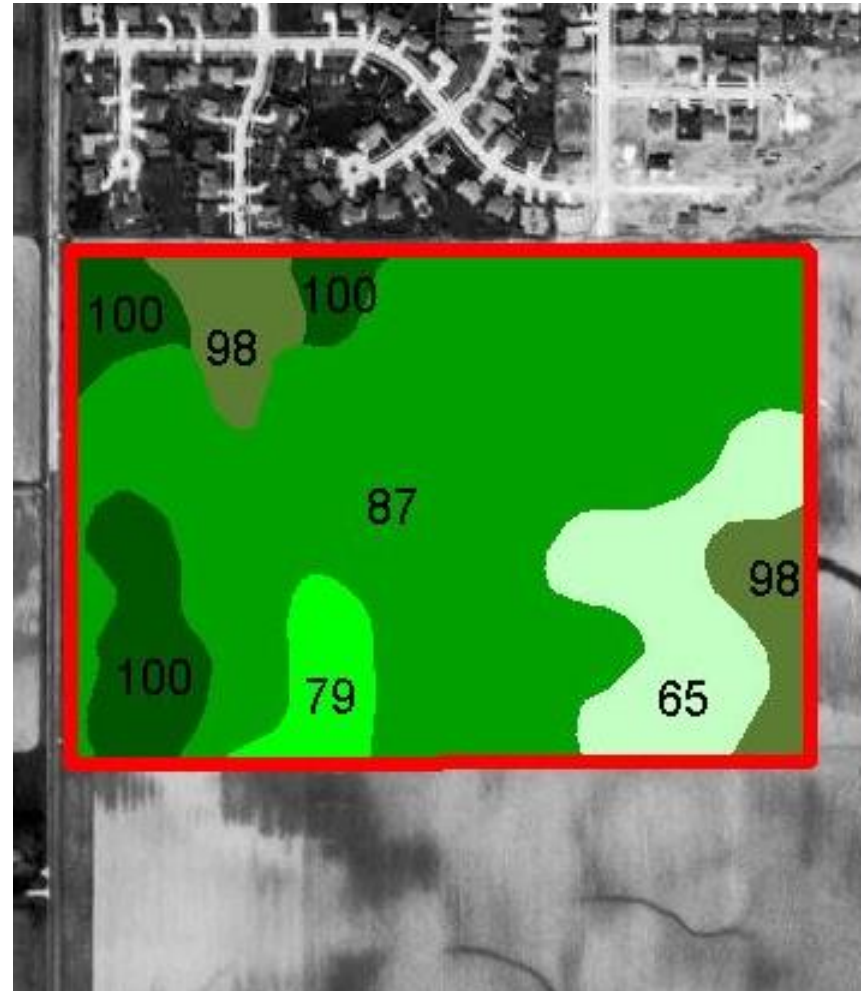


Example B

LE = 86

LESA close to town = 152

LESA away from town = 232

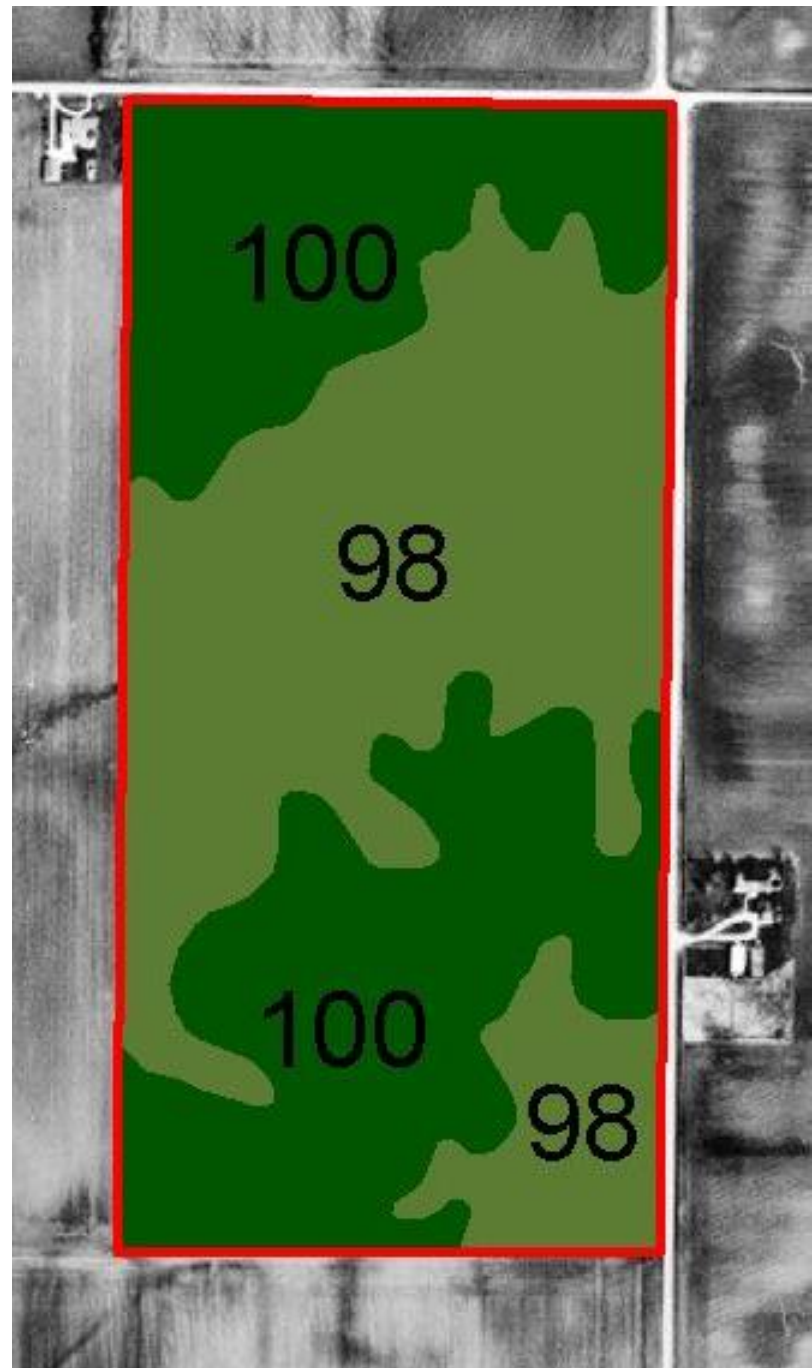


Example C

LE = 99

LESA close to town = 169

LESA away from town = 239



Why Should We Use LESA?

- LESA is science-based
- LESA can make planning easier
- LESA is consistent for all tracts in the county



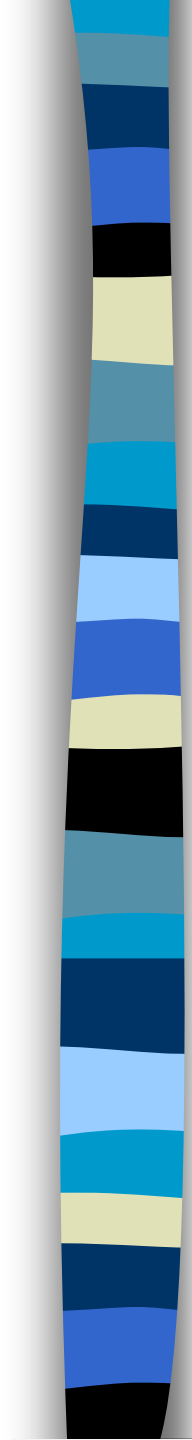
Where do we go from here?

- Update scoring sheet to reflect current needs
- Make the system known to people considering development so they can see if their project is feasible

Who Else Supports LESA?



NRCS, the Champaign Co. SWCD,
and Farm Bureau endorse LESA
and the use of comprehensive
planning/zoning policies



**For more information
on how LESA can help your community,
contact your local USDA Service Center
and speak with NRCS and SWCD
resource professionals today!**

