

National Agricultural Land Network



American Farmland Trust's **National Agricultural Land Network, or NALN**, works to strengthen the collective capacity of public agencies, planning entities, and land trusts working to protect agricultural land by providing **opportunities to network, learn, and collaborate around tools and strategies to save the land that sustains us.**

Agricultural land in the United States is under threat. Conversion of farmland and ranchland continues with nearly 11 million acres of agricultural land developed or compromised from 2001–2016 alone. Additionally, 371 million acres of agricultural land owned by aging landowners is likely to change hands over the next 15 years, putting its future use for

agriculture at risk. And climate change threatens agricultural productivity at a time when demands on agricultural land to provide food, fiber, energy, and climate solutions continue to grow.

This threat demands new energy, continued innovation, and strengthened connections among public and private entities working across the country to save this irreplaceable resource. Entities of all types—from well-established public farmland protection programs and agricultural land trusts to state and county agencies and land trusts considering agricultural land protection policies, programs, and projects—have shared with AFT their interest in more information sharing, peer learning and professional development opportunities,

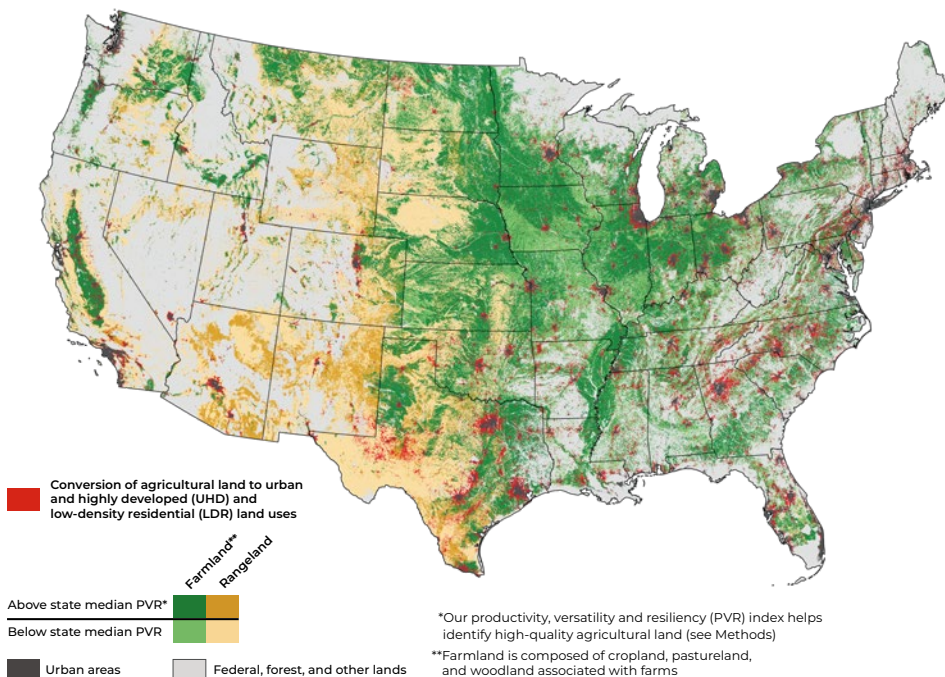
policy updates, and training on agricultural land planning and protection tools and strategies.

For much of its history, AFT has provided a broad array of support to the growing agricultural land protection community—whether through regional events and national conferences, cutting-edge research and communications insights, or technical expertise and policy innovation.

In 2020, AFT launched the National Agricultural Land Network, or NALN, to further strengthen the collective capacity of public agencies, planning entities, and land trusts working to protect agricultural land.

The NALN seeks to provide a high level of professional networking and support to organizations/entities and individuals directly engaged in retaining and protecting agricultural land, and those whose programs, services or public policy advocacy help to advance agricultural land protection and planning. The NALN is a learning and knowledge exchange network; it offers policy education and updates but will not promote or take positions on specific legislation.

We welcome organizational members such as public Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement programs, private land trusts, and state and county government or quasi-governmental agencies with jurisdiction over agriculture, conservation, and/or planning. Other eligible organizational members include farm and conservation organizations, coalitions, trade associations, and service providers.



Conversion of agricultural land to urban and low-density residential development between 2001 and 2016 from AFT's *Farms Under Threat: The State of the States* (2020)

When organizations join the NALN they are added to the roster on the NALN webpages. All staff of organizational members are eligible for NALN products and services.

We also welcome individuals who are not affiliated with an organizational member and whose work is focused on advancing agricultural land retention and protection. Individual members may be researchers, planners, legislators, public agency staff, nonprofit organization staff, or individuals serving on public or non-profit boards and committees that address aspects of agricultural land retention and protection.

There is no cost for membership or to participate in the online community platform or most programming. Some select services, programming, or events may require a fee. Organizational members directly engaged in agricultural land protection or planning may receive preference for certain workshops and events where participation may be limited. **To join the NALN, find the membership form on the NALN webpage.**

NALN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- **Informational Webinars:** Webinars offer basic training on agricultural land protection and planning tools and techniques, relevant national research, agricultural land protection, planning and policy innovations, and updates on Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) implementation.
- **Virtual Network Connects:** NALN members gather virtually every quarter to network and learn. These Zoom calls are scheduled for two hours and the first fifty people to register are given access to join where they get to know other practitioners from around the

country and visit designated breakout rooms for in-depth conversations with national experts on a variety of trending issues.

- **Roundtables:** Roundtables are designed to facilitate networking among practitioners within states and regions or focused on specific topics. Roundtables help to identify opportunities for collaboration to expand and improve program, planning, and policy work.
- **NALN Community & Library:** The online community platform is a virtual space allowing members to share successes, challenges, and information by topic, state/region, or experience level. Every NALN member is uploaded to the Open Forum and is encouraged to join other communities that interest them. A shared document library allows members to post relevant materials such as sample easements and easement deed terms, stewardship plans and management contracts, and land use plans and zoning ordinances.
- **The Network News:** NALN members receive a copy of the Network News in their email inbox monthly. Issues include announcements about webinars, workshops, and grant opportunities, as well as federal and state legislative updates, news from USDA, and more. All past issues of the Network News can be found in the NALN Community library.
- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) Resources and Support:** Resources and support for entities applying to ACEP-ALE and for landowners interested in protecting their land through the program are available through the Farmland Information Center. Webinars, the NALN Community, and regional roundtables provide opportunities for information sharing on ACEP-ALE implementation.

NALN CONTACTS

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Find the NALN membership form at farmland.org/NALN