

# What We've Lost and Opportunities Ahead

By Jim Freeburn

Western SARE PDP Coordinator

For New Mexico, Los Lunas, December 2017



What Have We Lost???

From 1982 to 2012, according to the AFT, the U.S. lost about 24.5 million acres of farmland

Since 1980, the U.S. has lost 17.7 million acres of forest lands.

Over 42 million acres lost in 30 years

Soverignman.com says the U.S is now losing over 5 million acres per year. That's 1 square mile per hour or about 9.5 acres per minute.

**Land lost to Ag does  
not come back**

Lost an area about as big as 54% of  
New Mexico in the last 30 years.

New Mexico is 77.886 million acres.

**New Mexico  
Comparison**



# New Mexico

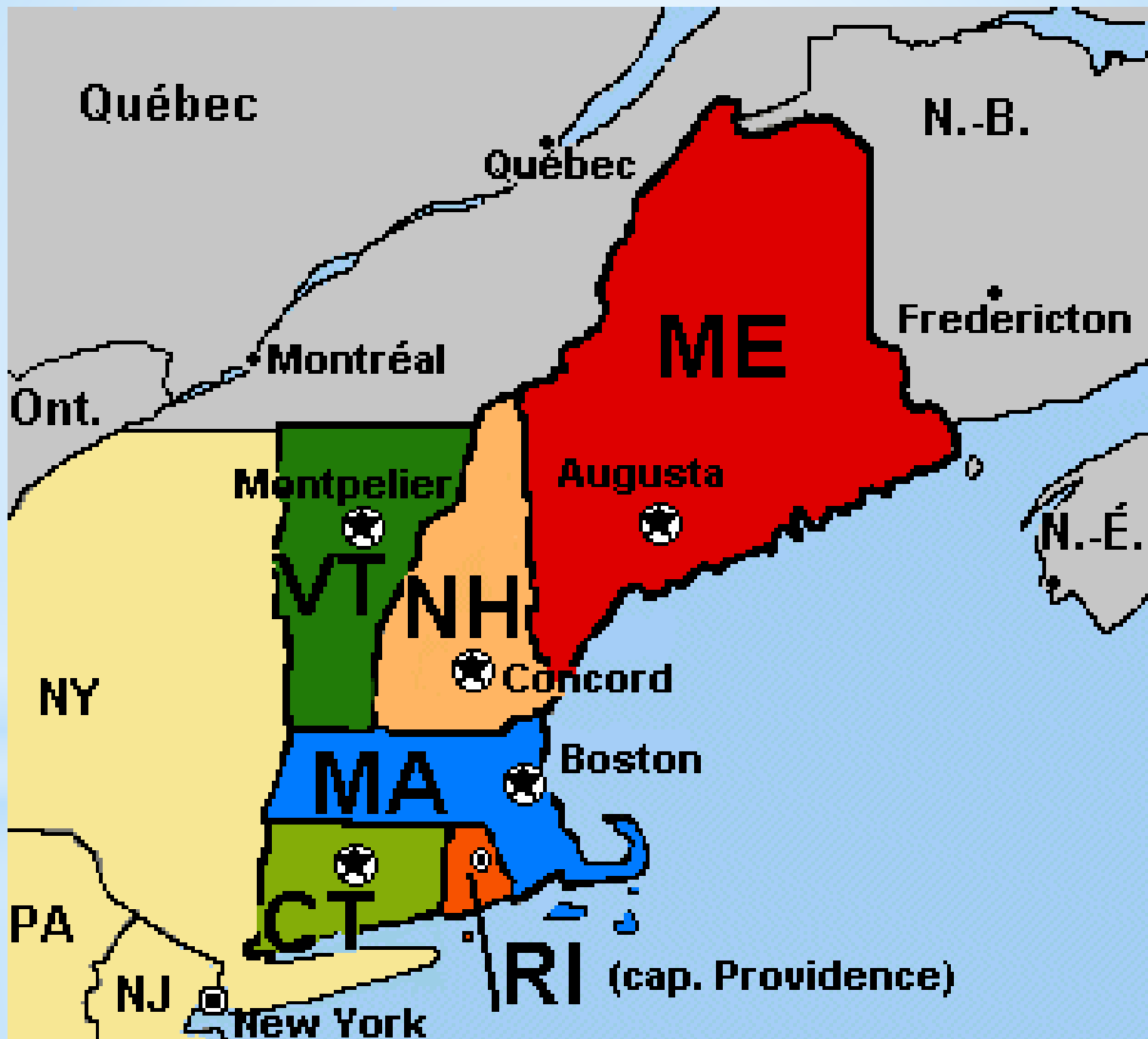
SANTA FE ★

ID 28633032 © Fabrizio Mariani | Dreamstime.com

Download from Dreamstime.com

This watermarked comp. image is for previewing purposes only.





An area larger than Iowa

Larger than all 6 New England States  
together

**Land forever lost in 30  
years**

Fire

Invasive Species

Sneaky Climate Change

**Other Culprits**



Over 60,000 fires per year for the last 3 years

Over 10 Million acres burned in 2015

Loss of watershed, grazing, and wildlife habitat

Increased sedimentation and runoff

Decreased water quality

Huge costs

**FIRE**

Came to U.S in 1890 as packing material

By 1965, present on 65 million acres

Very fire adaptive

Now dominant on over 100 million acres

An area 1.5 times the size of my beloved  
Wyoming

# Invasive Species Cheatgrass as an example

Cheatgrass out competes brush and trees; often becomes a monoculture

Fire removes trees and usually brush

Urban development removes ag lands

# What Else Results???

Summer asphalt temperature 158 degrees

Summer concrete temperature 122 degrees

Asphalt roof summer temp 150-160

Average soil temp increases 18 degrees after  
cheatgrass

U.S. forest floor temp 46 degrees annually

Wyoming range soil temp 65 average degrees in  
summer

100 degree difference in some cases before to after

# Changes







Warmer temperatures

Less irrigation water

More people wanting a “connection” to their food

More fires, more extremes in climate

Less land for farms and ranches

# What are some trends?



Enhance irrigation efficiency

Grow longer season crops or other perennials

Consider nontraditional alternatives for things like fire reclamation, native plants, essential oils

Capitalize on niche markets

Vertically integrate or direct market

**What can a person do?**







**BUY LOCAL ≈ SUPPORT  
YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY**