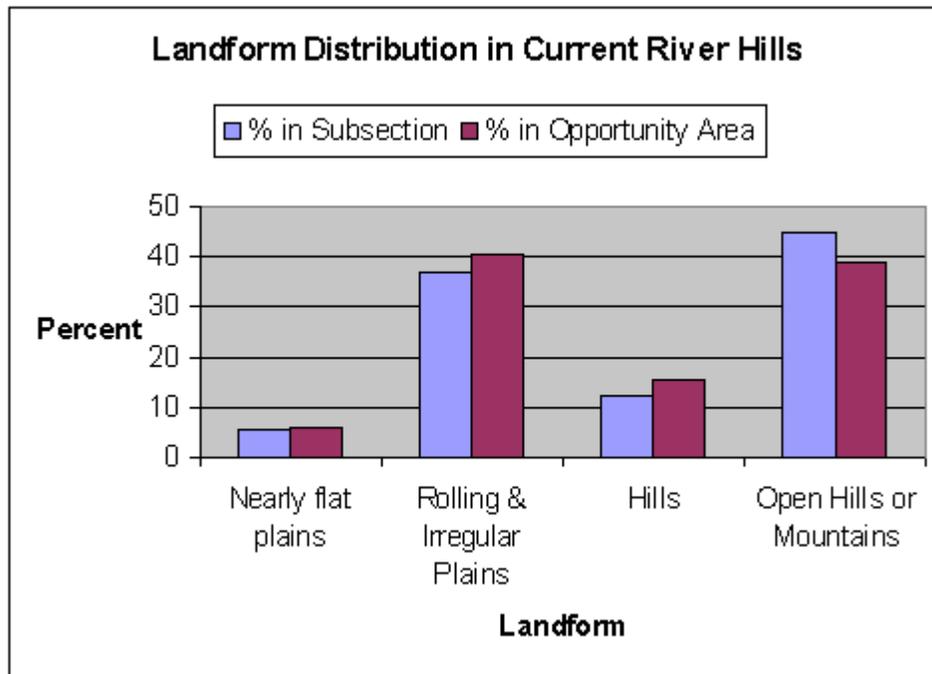


An Ecoregion-based Opportunity Area Inventory--Winter 2000/2001 Update

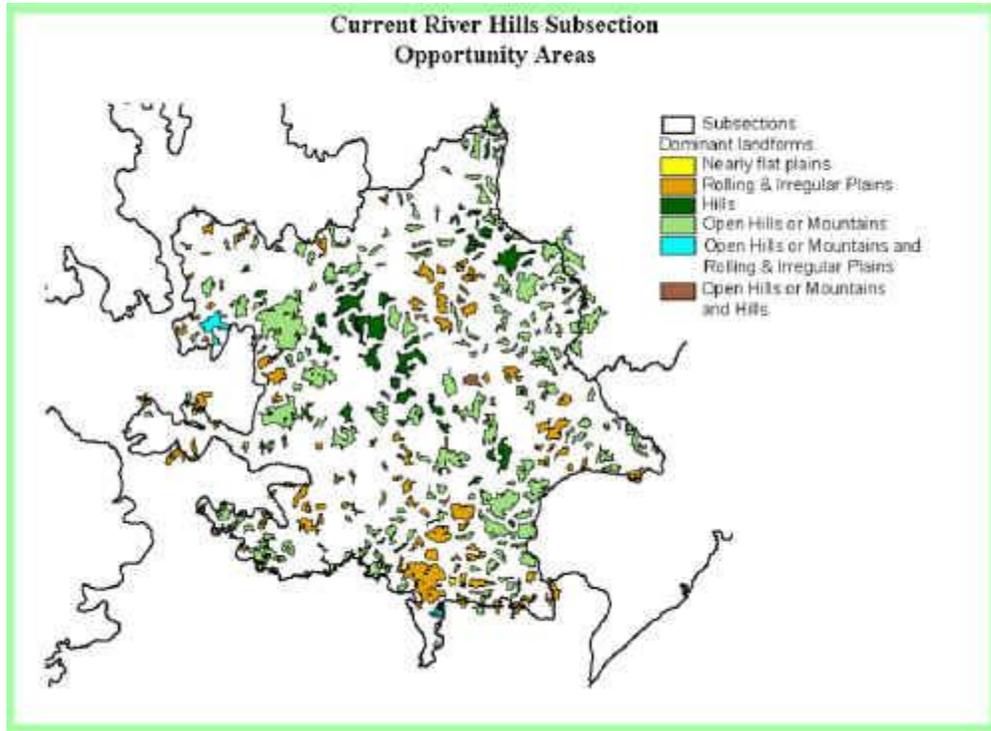
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Last winter, as the land cover data layer was nearing completion, Gene Gardner of MoDOT, Tim Nigh of MDC, Terry Barney of NRCS, and I got together and started talking about using our land cover data layer, in combination with many other sources of information, to produce an ecoregion by ecoregion inventory of important natural resources in Missouri. As some of you will recall, I earlier floated the notion of producing a 'State of the State' report that was conceptually similar. The logical flow of thought is as follows: we now have available a number of important data layers (land cover, ecoregion and land type association polygons, digital elevation models, 14-digit hydrologic unit polygons) relating to the natural resources of the state. It's time to take a crack at organizing and using these data to provide some broad-brush inventories of natural resources. We can do this now in ways that were not possible even one year ago. The results will serve to organize and integrate data layers that will in turn serve as a springboard for different approaches or higher resolution planning and management efforts. The needs and approaches will vary from partner agency to agency.



The enthusiasm for this project has been infectious, if not overwhelming. From the time of our first official small gathering of people in May of 2000, our interagency committee has grown to include about 20 people representing most of our partner agencies. We presented three papers outlining our progress at the Natural Areas Association annual conference in St. Louis this past October.



Our procedures are far from finalized, but the salient features include (1) organize inventories by ecoregion (ecological sections, subsections, and land type associations), (2) identify opportunity areas by intersecting land cover with road density or a buffered road network, (3) bring in other important data layers (e.g. enduring landscape features, rare species locations) as needed to provide finer-resolution inventories for specific needs.

Please contact me if you need more information or would like to share your ideas - we can use all the help we can get!