

# Community Assessment Tool (CAT) TRAINING GUIDE

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## ABOUT THE COMMUNITY CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) Community Assessment Tool (CAT) is a web based decision support tool for identifying communities that exhibit different environmental and socioeconomic characteristics. The tool is designed so that users can assess a wide range of environmental and socioeconomic characteristics in different combinations and assign relative importance of each. This flexibility allows the tool to be used to identify communities that are most likely candidates for a wide array of different conservation, health, and economic projects and programs. The CAT application also provides detailed information about each community that can be used to customize programs that so that they address specific community needs or attributes.

Types of characteristics that can be assessed include -

### **Socioeconomic Criteria:**

- **Rural Characteristics:** What is the population size of the community and what is its proximity to larger population centers in the region?
- **Population Change:** What is the population trend in the community since 1970?
- **Vulnerable Populations:** Does the community have distinct population segments that experience elevated disparities affecting quality of life, such as health and income?

- Economic Transition: Is the community experiencing significant economic transition by sector and/or overall economic health? (Transition by sector might include, for example, proportional decreases in sectors such as resource extraction alongside increases in other sectors such as tourism and recreation.)
- Economic Potential: Does the community have strong indicators of future economic success, such as geographic proximity to markets, large percentage of population that is working age, and other indicators of potential for economic growth?

### **Environmental Criteria:**

- Water: Does the community face significant threats to water supply, water quality, and watershed health, including development threats, forest health, wildfire, and existing and historic industrial or agricultural impacts?
- Natural Resource Amenities: What is the proximity of the community to significant natural resource amenities, including public lands such as national parks and monuments, protected wilderness, and wild and scenic rivers?
- Resources at Risk: Is the community experiencing current or potential change in land use that could impact its natural resource amenities, such as public lands and local open spaces, working lands, scenic beauty, air quality, and/or other amenities?

### **Community Capacity Criteria:**

- Voting Participation: Do community members participate in the future of their communities by voting in local, state and federal elections?
- Local engagement: Does that community have residents that volunteer for charitable organizations, serve on local committees, attend local meetings about town or school affairs, and/or participate in any public activities?
- Charitable giving: Does that community have residents that support conservation or environmental causes through charitable donations?

Specific data elements used in the tool can be found in the accompanying data matrix document.

## **GETTING THERE**

- Web link
  - Use the following link to connect to the Community Conservation Assessment Tool project introduction page:
  - <https://web.tplgis.org/CAT/>

# Community Assessment Tool



## Mapping Portal

- Explore the Tool



## Layer Descriptions

- Description of Data Used for this Project



## User Guide

- Learn how to use the Tool

## Overview

For the Intermountain West Pilot Program, we will use our Community Assessment Tool and qualitative assessment to target a range of rural communities that exhibit diverse environmental and socioeconomic needs and characteristics. Through this process we seek to identify an initial suite of six partner communities in different forms of transition where protection of land and water and creation of local parks show potential to enhance community strengths and address pressing threats to community values, objectives, and well-being.

## Contact Us

Email: [gis.support@tpl.org](mailto:gis.support@tpl.org)

- In order to access the data viewer and project query tool, click on the map image at the bottom of the introductory page.
- Password protected site
  - A popup will open that will require a username and a password in order to continue.
  - Contact The Trust for Public Land, Geographic Information Systems team ([gis.support@tpl.org](mailto:gis.support@tpl.org)) for permission to use the password protected mapping site.

**CAT Project Login**

To gain access to this application contact:  
**GIS Support at The Trust for Public Land**

Enter your user name and password to log in.

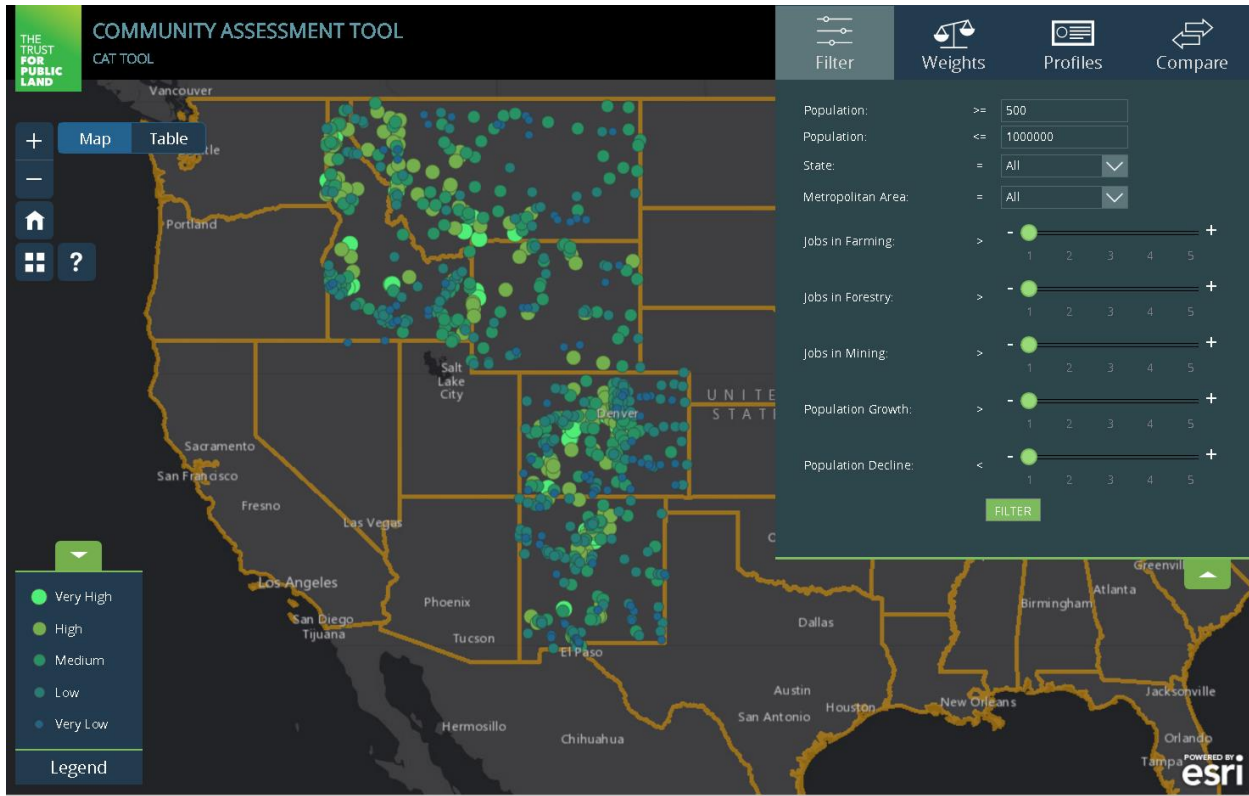
User name:

Password:

Remember my login

• [Contact TPL GIS Support](#)





- Once username and password have been accepted, the user will be taken to the CAT tool:

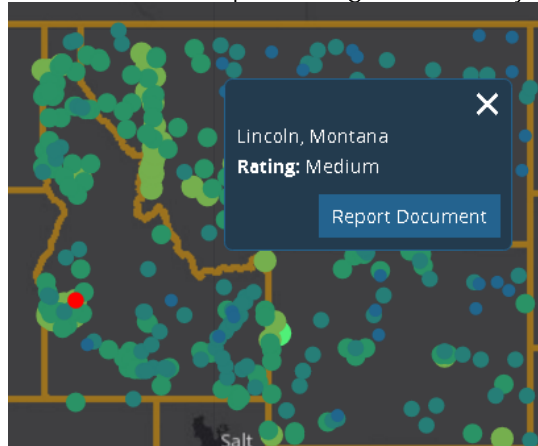


## THE BASIC MOVES

- Change the viewer extent
  - Click the **+** sign to zoom in.
  - Click the **-** to zoom out
  - To zoom in to a particular area hold down shift, click your mouse on one corner of the desired extent, and drag your mouse to the opposite corner of the desired extent.
  - Click and drag your mouse to the right or left to adjust the view
  - As you change the viewer extent the map detail changes. As you zoom in the map becomes more detailed.
  - Click the **🏠** button to return to the original extent.



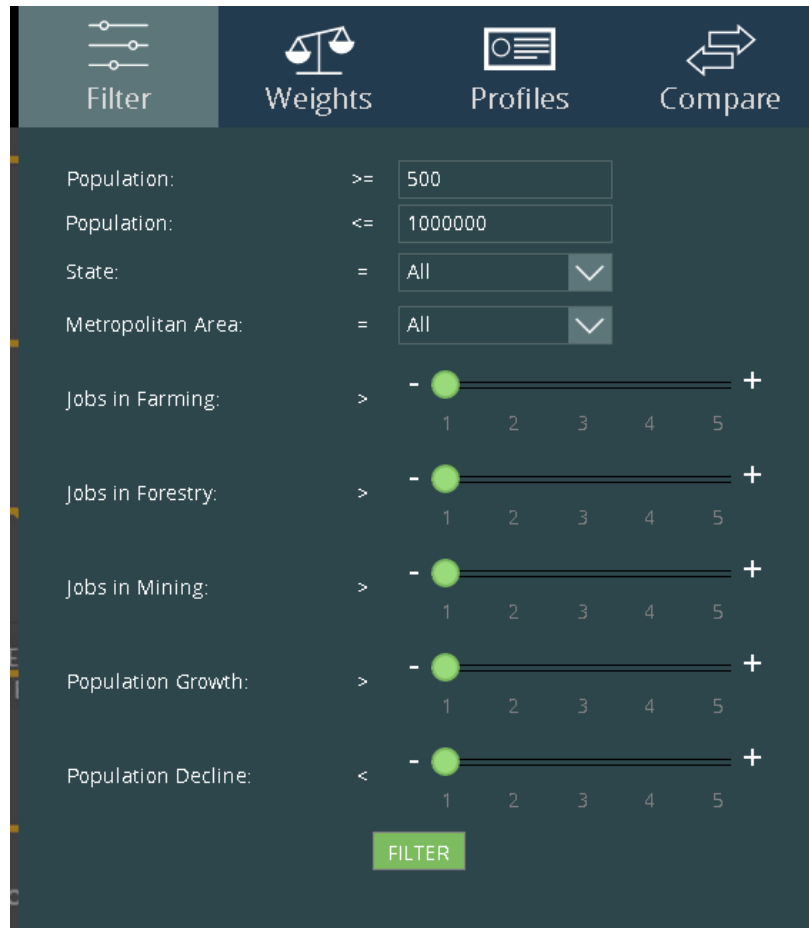
- Click the  button to change the background basemap. A drop down panel will appear. Click the small box next to the basemap you desire. Note that you can close this panel at any time by clicking  again.\
- Click the  button to bring up the help window.
- Click on the  button to switch the view between map or tabular list of communities
- Community Reports
  - Click on the dot representing a community to bring up the report message box.



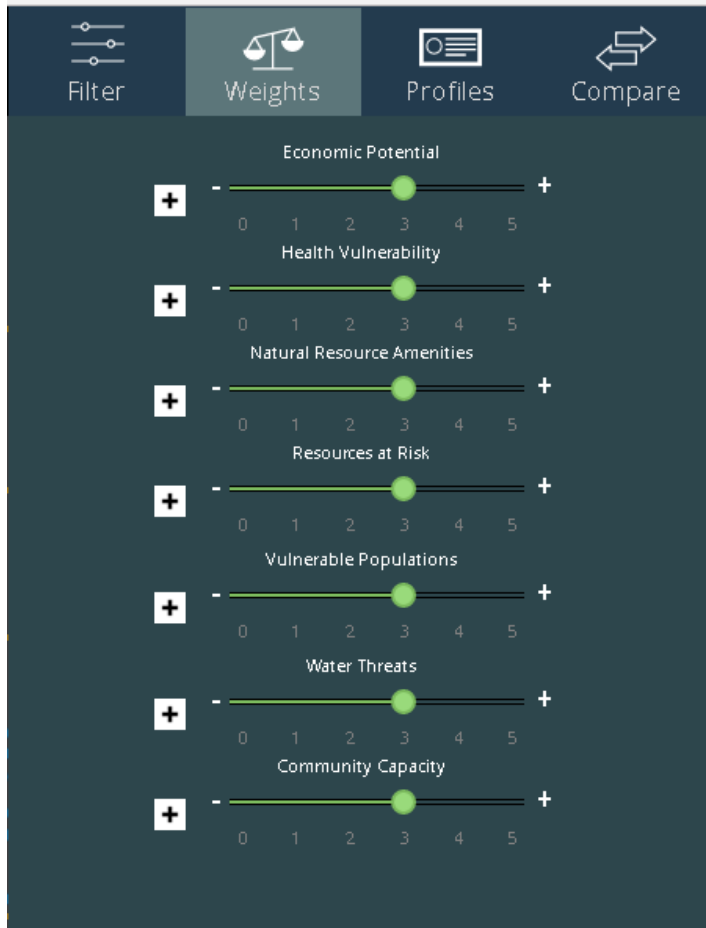
- Click the Report Document button to bring up a detailed community report.
- 
- Still need help? Send an email to [gis.support@tpl.org](mailto:gis.support@tpl.org)

## Advanced Capabilities

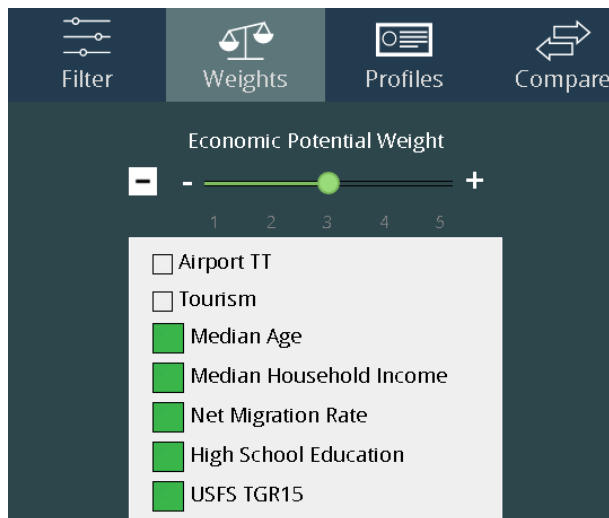
- Filter Tool



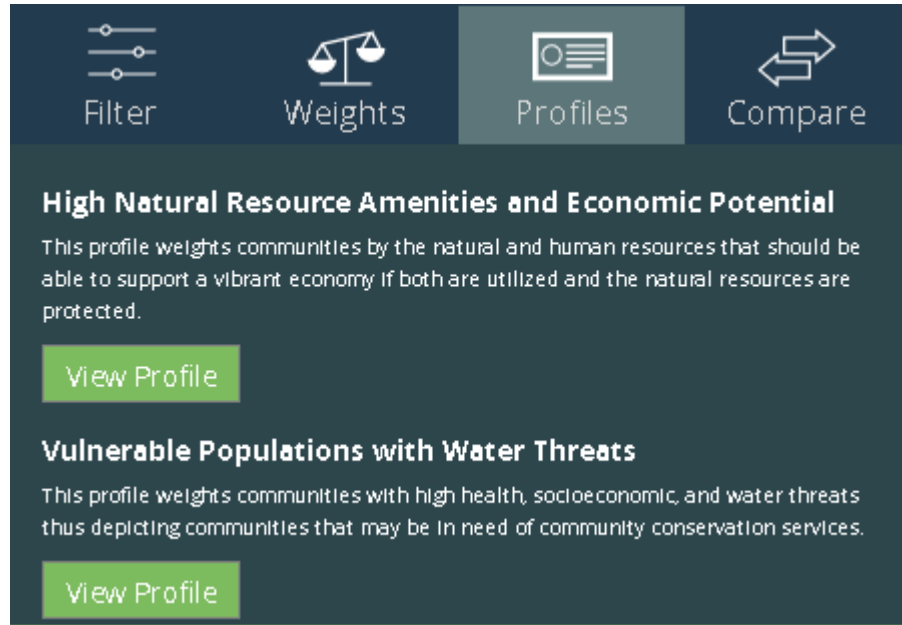
- Use the filter tool to select a subset of communities to review. The filter tool will limit all other functions in the CAT to apply only to the communities that meet the filter criteria.
- Population  $\geq$  and  $\leq$  sets the population threshold. Only communities above 500 total population are included in the tool.
- State - limits the communities to a single state.
- Metropolitan area - "Yes" is communities that are within 50 miles of a census designated Metropolitan area. "No" is communities more than 50 miles from a census designated Metropolitan area. "All" is all communities regardless of this characteristic.
- The slider bars filter communities that are rated to the number selected and above for the category.
- Weights Tool



- Use the Weights tool to reprioritize (score) communities based on characteristics that are important to your objectives.
- You can also remove individual criteria from an issue group by clicking the **+** button next to the group name and then clicking the box next to the criteria to remove.

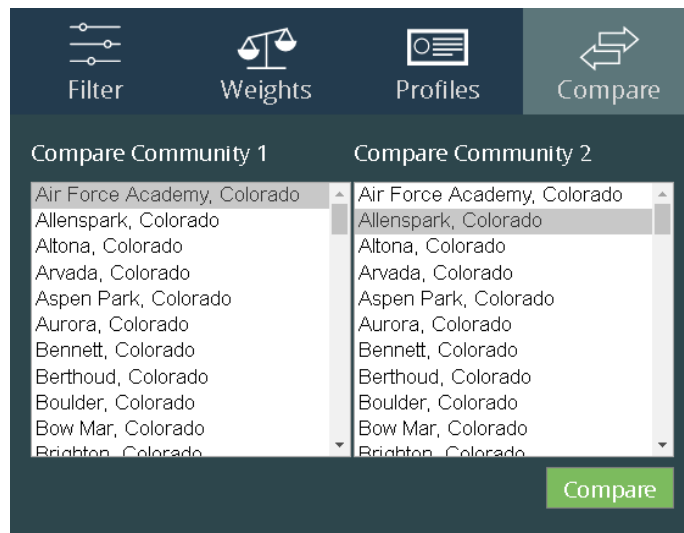


- Profile Tool



- The Profile Tool lets you select a predefined community profile. Selecting a profile overrides all weighting and criteria adjustments previously made.
- Contact TPL GIS staff if you would like to have a profile programmed into the tool

- Compare Tool



- The Compare Tool allows you to compare the characteristics of two communities.



### Comparable Community Data Graphs

