Human activities on the land leave an indelible mark on the Earth’s surface through conversion of land cover, yet no comprehensive, detailed map of land use for the US exists. To be sure, there are a number of land cover databases, such as the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium’s NLCD, but these are based on a mixed land use/cover classification scheme (i.e. the Anderson) from which only general patterns of urban/built-up and cropland areas can be discerned. Yet more detailed information about the spatial patterns of land use per se are not available, even relatively simple distinctions between even major categories of land uses like residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational cannot be made. I will discuss the development of an initial, general-purpose, national land use dataset and highlight a variety of applications of the data.

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