

# ZIMBABWE ECOSYSTEM SNAPSHOT



Zimbabwe's rich natural landscape provides ecosystem services at multiple spatial scales: from soil and timber locally, to water provision regionally, to carbon storage and tourism globally. Natural landscapes also provide critical resources for subsistence and income for rural and urban communities.

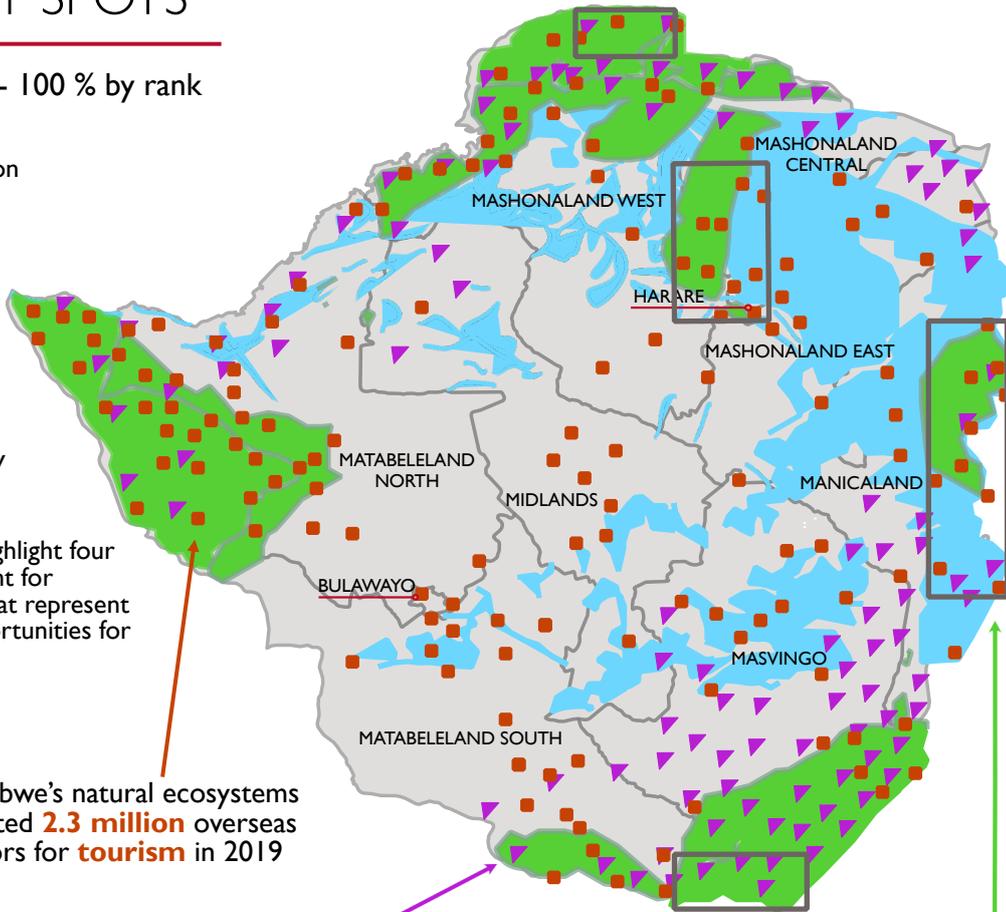
Understanding the quantity and patterns of ecosystem services is important for ensuring their long-term provision.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES HOT SPOTS

Top 80 - 100 % by rank

**40%** of Zimbabwe is covered by **woodlands and forests**, providing ecosystem services to local and regional communities

-  Water provision
-  Biodiversity
-  Tourism
-  Baobab density
-  Gray boxes highlight four areas important for biodiversity that represent potential opportunities for protection



Zimbabwe's natural ecosystems attracted **2.3 million** overseas visitors for **tourism** in 2019



**Non-timber forest products** like the baobab tree provide myriad resources for local and international people, estimated at **\$78/km<sup>2</sup>** in high density areas



The **Eastern Highlands** are a small link in East Africa's Montane Forests, hosting high plant and animal diversity resulting from a complex mosaic of vegetation types

Information on ecosystem services can be used by government and civil society to help support natural resource decision making, inform policy around land management, and educate the public. Moreover, determining the economic value associated with specific ecosystem services, like tourism or non-timber forest products, can illuminate the contribution these services make to the local economy, elevating the importance of conserving these resources for future generations.

The U.S. Forest Service has supported sustainable natural resource management in Zimbabwe since 2016 by providing technical assistance related to ecosystem service assessment, native tree nurseries, and responsible mining.

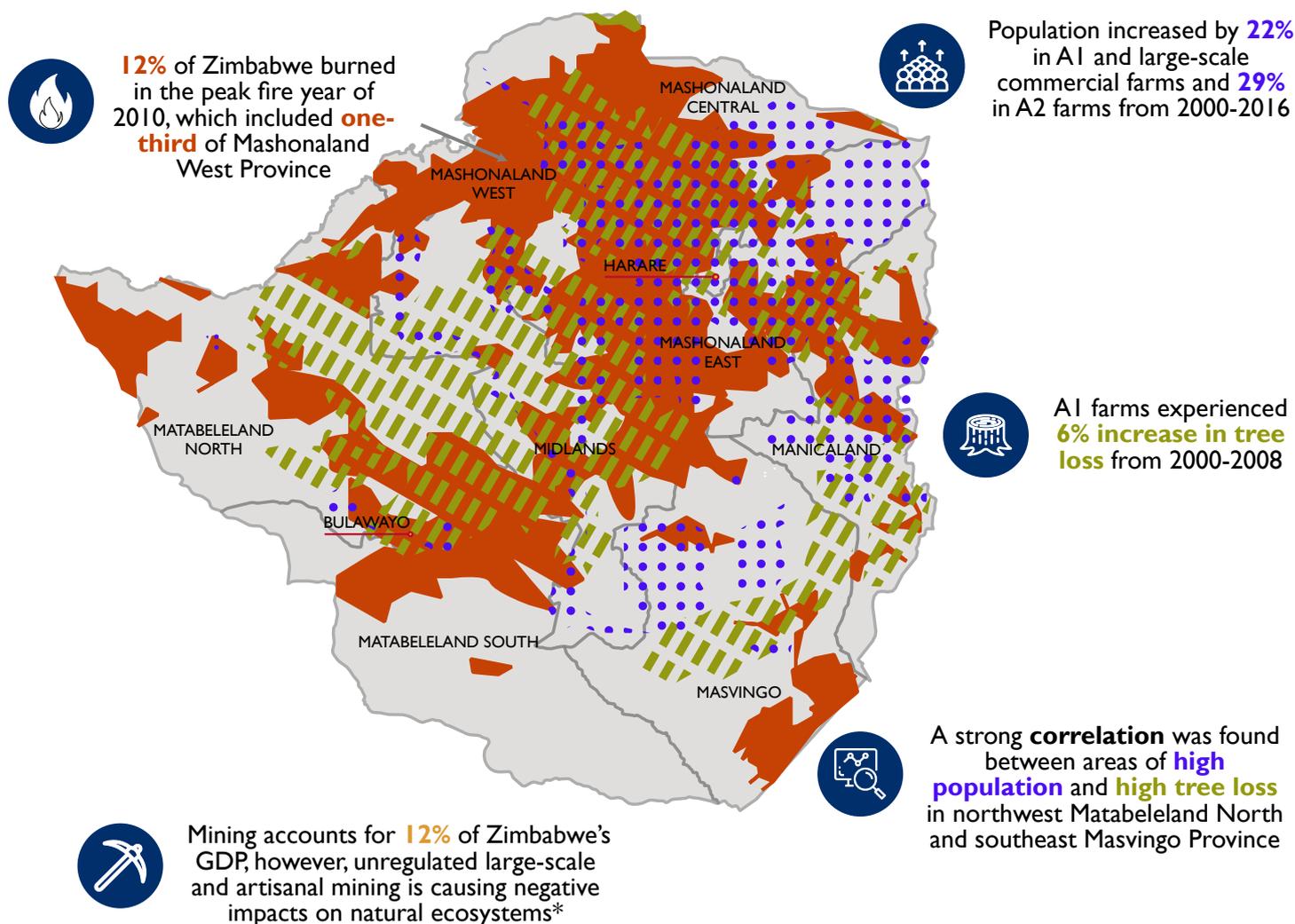
# THREATS TO ECOSYSTEMS & SERVICES

Top 80 - 100 % by rank

-  Fire
-  Population growth
-  Tree loss

Zimbabwe's natural ecosystems and the services they provide are experiencing increasing pressure from agricultural development, urbanization, wildfire, and mining. This is concerning as substitutes for ecosystem services can be costly or completely unavailable.

A major influence on natural resources has been Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Program, which started in 2000. The program resulted in 12.4 million ha of large-scale commercial farms redistributed across more than 150,000 A1 and A2 farms. The resettlement program had multiple influences, including clearing of woodlands and forests for agriculture – often using fire – reduced fallow periods, and environmental degradation from soil erosion and overgrazing. However, in recent years, trends in the rates of tree loss have declined and the area burned in wildfires has decreased.



This analysis of ecosystem services in Zimbabwe highlights nature-based opportunities to strengthen the natural capital upon which livelihoods and the national economy depend, through programming that addresses watershed management, biodiversity conservation, rangeland health, and climate resilience. In addition, payment for ecosystem services might provide another way to protect upper watersheds and explore incentives for smallholder farms to allow fields to regrow or developing programs relating to non-timber forest product value chain development.

\* Source: <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/zimbabwe-mining-and-minerals>

For more information, contact: Beth Hahn | [beth.hahn@usda.gov](mailto:beth.hahn@usda.gov)

