Sinkholes

Sinkholes have both natural and artificial causes. They tend to occur most often in places where water can dissolve the bedrock (especially limestone) below the surface, causing overlying rocks to collapse. Florida, Texas, Alabama, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania are most sinkhole-prone.

Basics

Most sinkholes occur in places where water can dissolve the rock below the surface, for example where the bedrock is limestone, salt, or gypsum. They can collapse very quickly, or slump slowly over time. Many sinkholes occur naturally, but human activities can also cause them. Over-pumping of groundwater, mining, and leaking pipes beneath roads and buildings are common causes of artificial sinkholes. Read more

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does it take for a sinkhole to stop growing?
Florida Geological Survey
Which areas are most at risk for sinkholes?
U.S. Geological Survey

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Flooding is the most common and costliest natural hazard facing the United States. Each year, flooding causes billions of dollars in damages and dozens of deaths nationwide.

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Kentucky Geological Survey

Critical Issues: Map of the Day - Geoscience Features in Kentucky (2016-10-17)

#MapOfTheDay! Today the Critical Issues Program (@AGI_GeoIssues) shared an interactive map of geoscience features in Kentucky from the Kentucky Geological Survey (@KGSNews), which you can find at http://bit.ly/1HvVsFA. The Karst Potential Map includes the locations of sinkholes throughout the...

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Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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Case study: Geologic maps and cave resources in Kentucky

Geologic maps are being used in Kentucky to identify areas that have high potential for development of karst features, such as sinkholes and caves. Defining the Problem A new interstate highway, I-66, is being planned to pass through the vicinity of
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Webinars & Forums

Mapping Displacement and Subsidence with Time-series Radar
2020-04-15
In this webinar, experts from Hexagon and the Arizona Department of Water Resources will discuss the use of time-series displacement maps with a high point density for monitoring and mitigating subsidence due to subsurface extraction of resources such as water or hydrocarbons.

Geological Surveys Database Publications

Sinkholes and sinkhole probability
1988, Minnesota Geological Survey

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