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.

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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Interactive map of environmental information in Minnesota
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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Geological Surveys Database Publications

Sinkholes and sinkhole probability
1988, Minnesota Geological Survey

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