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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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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Groundwater is the water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand, and rock. Groundwater has been used by humans for thousands of years; today it provides 25% of the fresh water used in the United States, mostly for irrigation and public water supplies.

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Maps & Visualizations

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

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Watershed Health Assessment Framework provides a comprehensive look at Minnesota's watershed and environmental information in the form of an interactive map. The map includes information on:
Water quality: Impaired waters, which have a...
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