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These images were exported as a tagged image file to Google Drive. The data were downloaded and reprojected to create the final imagery mosaics in the NLCD Alaska Albers projection. To further improve the ability to create valid change detection, the two 2016 images were used to create a single composite image. A model was created to identify potential cloud and shadow areas in the 2015 to 2017 composite image. These cloud and shadow areas were replaced with pixels from the 2014 to 2017 composite image which utilized a longer timeframe to minimize cloud and shadow areas. Problem areas still persisted in southern perennial ice and snow mountain areas. These were manually filled to create a seamless composite. Once these two comparable composite images were created, the change detection process was similar to the 2011 process referenced here. Jin, Suming, Yang, Limin, Zhu, Zhe, Homer, Collin G., A land cover change detection and classification protocol for updating Alaska NLCD 2001 to 2011: Remote Sensing of Environment, v. 195, p. 44-55, at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rse.2017.04.021 These were combined into a vegetation disturbance layer to create a disturbance map from approximately 1940 until current. Tasseled cap, normalized burn ratio (NBR), normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) and normalized difference water index (NDWI) images were calculated. Ancillary data included: - Digital elevation model (DEM) and derivatives (slope and aspect), - Fire and forest thinning polygons obtained from the state of Alaska, Landfire, and the Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity (MTBS) Fire disturbance areas were directly downloaded from the MTBS website. . https://mtbs.gov/direct-download, I directly download U.S. 1984-2016 Burned Areas Boundaries Dataset (mtbs_perims_DD.shp). These were utilized to create a fire year image for the entire Alaska timeframe that was available. Forest harvest disturbance was download from the Forest Service website. https://data.fs.usda.gov/geodata/edw/datasets.php?xmlKeyword=harvest_USA.Activity_TimberHarvest.shp. These were combined to make a vegetation disturbance layer from 1940 to the current date. - Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) snow/ice raster data, and - 2001 NLCD. Change detection and classification models used NLCD and ancillary data to predict land cover classes for changed areas. The general modeling process was as follows: 1. Biomass increase was calculated from spectral and DEM derivatives, plus 2001 land cover. 2. Biomass increase was added to the disturbance data, yielding a disturbance template. 3. The disturbance template plus the spectral derivatives (NBR, NDVI) were compared to the 2001 land cover to model updated vegetation change areas. 4. The updated vegetation change areas were inserted into the 2011 land cover to create training data for a classification and regression tree (CART) model. 5. A CART classification was used to detect unmapped disturbances and change. 6. The vegetation classification was refined to detect and correct for areas of shadow and succession after forest fires, clearing or thinning. 7. Snow/ice change was detected using an algorithm based on NDWI plus topography (correction for shadows) and MODIS snow/ice data, which yielded snow/ice change areas. 8. Water change was detected using a Landsat-based water change detection algorithm, refined by land cover and topography data (shadow areas) to detect changes. 9. The vegetation, snow/ice, and water change areas were combined to update the overall classification and to derive a set of change pixels. 10. Change pixels in urban/developed areas were created by modeling change in major cities. Manual editing was used to add developed change for small towns and other features. After all mapping units were processed, the change pixels were mosaicked and checked for consistency and quality. Manual edits were used to clean up areas that were incorrectly classified. Snow, ice, and water extents were mapped directly from Landsat imagery. As a result, the extent of snow, ice, and water reflects the year and season when the imagery was recorded. Differences in snow, ice, and water extent between 2001 and 2011 may not reflect perennial changes in their extent, but simply reflect seasonal change between the two time periods.</procdesc>
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