

Who owns the most land in America? Jeff Bezos and John Malone are among them

Samuel Stebbins | November 25, 2019

Spanning over 3.5 million square miles, the United States is the third largest country in the world by landmass, trailing only China and Russia. While over a quarter of all land in the United States is owned by the federal government – [here is a look at how much land the government owns in every state](#) – vast swaths of the country are owned by just a handful of individuals and families.

Using data from [The Land Report magazine's 2018 Land Report](#), 24/7 Wall St. reviewed the 50 largest private landholders in the United States. Estimates are based on information from published reports, online databases, tax records, and information provided by various landowners, and include only rural land holdings.

All told, the 50 individuals, families, and heirs on this list own over 31 million acres – or about 1.4% of the country's total landmass. For reference, one square mile is equal to 640 acres. This ranking is current as of the end of 2018.

The vast majority of the land held by the individuals and families on this list is located in states west of the Mississippi River. The most common exceptions to this rule are parcels located in Maine and Florida. While this list only includes privately held land, nearly all of it serves some commercial purpose – from farming and ranching to logging and renewable energy production.

Not only do the private land holdings on this list often generate income for their owners, but also real estate itself is a valuable commodity. Not surprisingly, many of the people on this list rank among the wealthiest Americans. [Here is a look at the richest person in every state.](#)

50. Hadley family

- **Land area:** 260,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of Hong Kong

The Hadley family, Anheuser-Busch heirs, own 260,000 acres, including the massive Diamond A Ranch, which makes up a substantial part of New Mexico's southwestern tip.

49. Lyda family

- **Land area:** 260,035 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of San Antonio

The Lydas are Texas cattle ranchers and landowners. Their properties include the massive La Escalera ranch in far West Texas.

48. Galt family

- **Land area:** 262,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** 2,500 times the size of Vatican City

The Galts are a family of cattle ranchers with a number of large properties in Montana, including the Martinsdale Ranch. Errol Galt is the former Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Game commissioner.

47. Anne Marion

- **Land area:** 275,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three times the size of Detroit

Anne Marion owns several major properties in Texas, including the famous 6666, or "Four Sixes" cattle ranch in the Southern Panhandle, which is close to 150 years old.

46. Lee family

- **Land area:** 275,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of Chicago

The Lee Family owns an estimated 275,000 acres in New Mexico. The Lees are sheep and cattle ranchers who owe some of their wealth to the discovery of uranium and coal on their property in the western half of the state.

45. Babbitt heirs

- **Land area:** 275,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Eighty times the size of Los Angeles International Airport

The Babbitts are long-time Arizona cattle ranchers who have been in the area since 1886. They own several large ranches in the northern part of the state.

44. Killam family

- **Land area:** 277,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** One quarter the size of Grand Canyon National Park

The Killam family deals largely in cattle and oil, with ranches in Texas and Oregon and oil operations in Louisiana, Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas, and Texas.

43. Kokernot heirs

- **Land area:** 278,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three times the size of Detroit

The Kokernot family's 06 Ranch brand registered in Texas since 1837. Both the Family's 06 Ranch and Leoncita Cattle Company Ranch are in West Texas.

42. Fasken family

- **Land area:** 279,128 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Ten and a half times the size of Hilton Head Island, SC

David Fasken, a Canadian, bought a ranch in West Texas in 1913. The discovery of oil on that ranch propelled Fasken to wealth, and now Fasken Oil & Ranch is a major oil drilling company

that has heavily employed fracking technology. The Faskens have several major properties in West Texas.

41. Collier family

- **Land area:** 280,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** One-tenth the size of Puerto Rico

Baron Collier was an advertising executive who developed land and infrastructure in southern Florida. Collier was the largest landholder in the state at the time of his death. Today, his family owns some 280,000 acres, primarily in Collier County, which is named after him.

40. Bass family

- **Land area:** 285,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** One-tenth the size of Connecticut

The Bass family fortune, like those held by many of the entries on this list, comes from oil and cattle ranching. Ed Bass helped build the brand-new \$540 million Dickies Arena in Fort Worth, Texas, which opened in late October 2019. The family also owns San Jose Island on the Texas Gulf Coast.

39. Barta family

- **Land area:** 286,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** One-fifth the size of Delaware

The Barta family, which owes its wealth to its prescription services company, Sav-Rx, now owns one of the largest cattle ranching operations in Nebraska. The family owns numerous properties throughout the northern and eastern part of the state.

38. Llano Partners

- **Land area:** 295,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three and a half times the size of Philadelphia

Under the livestock feeding company Llano Partners Ltd., Hughes Abell owns and operates ranching operations in New Mexico, Texas, and Florida. Abell currently serves as the vice president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, a trade group with membership exceeding 15,000 in Texas and Oklahoma alone.

37. Mike Smith

- **Land area:** 295,980 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of Guam

Mike Smith owns nearly 300,000 acres, which are primarily spread throughout eastern Texas. His properties include the 11,830 Broseco Ranch, which contains two lakes that are 100 acres in size.

36. Robinson & Freed families

- **Land area:** 300,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of Los Angeles

Collectively, the Robinson and Freed families own 300,000 acres in partnership. Their land is primarily made of up six cattle ranches in Utah.

35. Shannon Kizer

- **Land area:** 302,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of Phoenix, Arizona

Shannon Kizer has 302,000 acres across five states: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Shannon's farming and ranching operations produce peanuts, corn, wheat, dairy, and cattle.

34. Collins family

- **Land area:** 311,395 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of Chicago

The late Truman Collins was a lumberman who became the largest private landholder in Pennsylvania before his death in 1914. Today, his living family members own over 311,000 acres of land in northern California and western Pennsylvania.

33. Stefan Soloviev

- **Land area:** 325,077 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of the Hawaiiin Island of Molokai

Though he resides in New York City, Stefan Soloviev owns over 325,000 acres of land across New Mexico, Kansas, and Texas. Much of the land is used to grow crops like wheat, corn, and sorghum.

32. Malone Mitchell 3rd

- **Land area:** 336,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of the Hawaiian Island of Kaua'i

Malone Mitchell runs Longfellow Ranches, a 500 square mile hunting preserve located in West Texas.

31. Zane & Tanya Kiehne

- **Land area:** 345,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of Singapore

Zane and Tanya Kiehne own ranches that span seven counties in New Mexico and seven counties in Texas and consists mostly of mountainous terrain that is home to a variety of wildlife. Both Zane and Tanya were born into ranching families.

30. Hughes family

- **Land area:** 390,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Half the size of Yosemite National Park

Dan Hughes, patriarch of the Hughes family, was a wildcatter in Texas. Together, his family owns 390,000 acres.

29. Holding family

- **Land area:** 395,030 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of Oklahoma City

The wife and children of the late Robert Earl Holding, who bought Sinclair Oil Corp. for \$78 million in 1976, own nearly 400,000 acres. Their land includes the 190,000 acre Sunlight Ranch in Montana, just outside of Yellowstone National Park.

28. Jeff Bezos

- **Land area:** 420,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three times the size of Guam

Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos is not only one of the richest men in the world, with a net worth of \$109 billion at the time of this writing, but he is also one of the biggest private landowners in the United States. Bezos owns 420,000 acres, much of which is in west Texas.

27. Philip Anschutz

- **Land area:** 434,500 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** One-quarter the size of Delaware

Philip Anschutz owns 434,500 acres of land in Wyoming and Colorado. Plans for his land in Wyoming include a massive wind farm that will rank among the largest in the world.

26. Fisher family

- **Land area:** 440,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Ten times the size of Washington, D.C

The Fisher family owns 440,000 acres of land, primarily timberland in northwestern California. Donald and Doris Fisher co-founded the clothing brand Gap Inc.

25. Simplot family

- **Land area:** 443,091 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of the island of Maui

Jack Simplot was a potato farmer who forged a deal with the former CEO of McDonald's to supply the restaurant chain with french fries. Today, the Simplot family oversees a \$2.5 billion farming operation and owns over 443,000 acres, largely in southern Idaho.

24. McDonald family

- **Land area:** 474,000 acres

- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of Dallas

The McDonald family's 474,000 acres are spread across Alabama, Florida, and Oklahoma – but the majority of the family's land holdings is in Maine. Their land is used for a range of resource extraction industries, including timber, sand and gravel, and oil.

23. D.R. Horton

- **Land area:** 503,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Two-thirds the size of Yosemite National Park

D.R. Horton owns over half a million acres of land. His holdings include the 292,779 acre Great Western Ranch in New Mexico and Camp Horton, a ranch near Fort Stockton, Texas, where he hosts a children's summer camp.

22. Westervelt heirs

- **Land area:** 518,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Half the size of Rhode Island

Herbert Westervelt started a paper company in the late 1800s. The company, now known as Westervelt Company, has operations in renewable energy, lumber, and wildlife services. Westervelt's heirs own over half a million acres across Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia.

21. Holland Ware

- **Land area:** 534,900 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of Badlands National Park

Holland Ware owns over half a million acres of land primarily in Florida and Georgia. Ware has transferred much of his holdings to the Holland M. Ware Charitable Foundation, which supports a number of causes, including animal welfare.

20. Stimson family

- **Land area:** 552,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** One-third the size of Delaware

Founded by Thomas Douglas Stimson, the Stimson Lumber Company, which today operates out of the Pacific Northwest, has remained in the family for six generations. Today, the Stimson family owns 552,000 acres, primarily in Montana and Oregon.

19. Martin family

- **Land area:** 570,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Six-and-a-half times larger than Detroit

The Martin family, owners of the nearly 100 year old RoyOMartin Lumber Company, have over half a million acre of land, largely in Louisiana.

18. Ford family

- **Land area:** 580,000 acres

- **Roughly equal to:** Two-and-a-half times larger than Indianapolis

The descendants of the late Kenneth Ford own 580,000 acres primarily in Oregon. Ford made a career in the timber business during the Great Depression.

17. Thomas Peterffy

- **Land area:** 581,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of San Antonio, Texas

Thomas Peterffy arrived in the United States as a refugee from Hungary in 1965. Peterffy made a fortune as a successful investor and innovator on Wall Street. He became one of the largest landowners in the United States when he purchased 561,000 acres of land in northern Florida for \$700 million in 2015.

16. O'Connor heirs

- **Land area:** 587,800 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Seven times the size of Philadelphia

Heirs of the late Thomas O'Connor, who immigrated to the United States from Ireland in the 1800s, own over half a million acres, including the O'Connor Ranch in south Texas. The family patriarch owned half a million acres in Texas, and the family fortune grew considerably when his son discovered oil on family land.

15. Hamer family

- **Land area:** 600,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of Luxembourg

The Hamer family owns some 600,000 acres of land, largely forest in West Virginia. The family has harvested hardwood timber from the land for five generations.

14. Lykes heirs

- **Land area:** 615,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three times the size of New York City

The Lykes heirs own in Florida a 337,000 acre ranch, which includes sugar cane and cattle operations, as well as a 264,555 acre ranch in west Texas. The owners of the land are heirs to the late Dr. Howell Tyson Lykes, who left a career in medicine to raise cattle and grow citrus.

13. Briscoe heirs

- **Land area:** 640,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three times the size of Dallas

The combined landholdings of former Texas governor, the late Dolph Briscoe Jr., heirs total 640,000 acres. Their holdings include the 100,000 acre Catarina Ranch in south Texas.

12. Wilks Brothers

- **Land area:** 702,367 acres

- **Roughly equal to:** Five times the size of Chicago

Brothers Farris and Dan Wilks launched Frac Tech, a natural gas extraction company in 2002, and sold it for \$3.5 billion in 2011. Since then, they have been acquiring land. The largest landowners in both Montana and Idaho, the Wilks brothers also own ranches in Oregon, Tennessee, and Texas.

11. Pingree heirs

- **Land area:** 830,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Two and a half times the size of Phoenix

David Pingree, known as the Merchant Prince of Salem, built an empire that exceeded 1 million acres in the 1800s. Today, between his fifth, sixth, and seventh generation of descendants, Pingree's heirs own some 830,000 acres mostly in Maine through Seven Islands Land Co., a lumber company.

10. King Ranch heirs

- **Land area:** 911,215 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three times the size of Los Angeles

The King Ranch heirs own a four-parcel ranch in southern Texas that spreads across 825,000 acres, making it the largest ranch in the state. The ranch spawned from land that was originally purchased by Captain Richard King in 1853 and subsequently passed down through generations.

9. Peter Buck

- **Land area:** 925,000 acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three-quarters of Grand Canyon National Park

Peter Buck made his fortune as a founding partner of the Subway restaurant franchise. Buck is the owner of Tall Timber Trust, one of the largest owners of timberland in Maine. All told, Buck owns 925,000 acres.

8. Singleton family

- **Land area:** 1.1 million acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Three times the size of Houston

The Singleton family owns a number of ranches, mostly in New Mexico. The family's 1.1 million acres of land also includes land in California.

7. Brad Kelley

- **Land area:** 1.2 million acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice the size of Jacksonville, FL

Brad Kelley's investment group purchased the 762-acre Calumet Farm, a thoroughbred horse breeding and training facility in Kentucky, in 2012. Today, much of Kelley's 1.2 million acres are located in Kentucky.

6. Irving family

- **Land area:** 1.2 million acres
- **Roughly equal to:** As large as Anchorage, AK

The Irving family is the sixth largest private landholder in the United States. In addition to the 1.2 million acres the family owns, primarily in Maine, the Irvings also own some 1.9 million acres in Canada. The family businesses include lumber, newspapers, and petrochemicals.

5. Stan Kroenke

- **Land area:** 1.4 million acres
- **Roughly equal to:** The size of Prince Edward Island

Real estate mogul and owner of the Los Angeles Rams, Stan Kroenke, owns 1.4 million acres of land in the United States, including a 124,000 acre ranch in Montana and additional land in Wyoming. Kroenke is married to Ann Walkton Kroenke, an heiress to the Wal-Mart fortune.

4. Reed family

- **Land area:** 1.7 million acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Half the size of Connecticut

For five generations, the Reed Family has owned and operated the logging company Green Diamond Resource Co. The family's 1.7 million acres of land are primarily spread across Washington, Oregon, and California.

3. Emmerson family

- **Land area:** 2.0 million acres
- **Roughly equal to:** A third of the size of New Hampshire

The Emmerson family owns and operates Sierra Pacific Industries, a company that logs usable lumber after forest fires and sells it to lumber retailers. Through Sierra Pacific, the family owns some 2 million acres in California and Washington.

2. Ted Turner

- **Land area:** 2.0 million acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Twice as large as Rhode Island

CNN founder Ted Turner owns 2 million acres of land largely in New Mexico, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Georgia. Much of Turner's land is used as grazing land for over 50,000 head of buffalo – the largest private herd of bison in the world.

1. John Malone

- **Land area:** 2.2 million acres
- **Roughly equal to:** Half the size of Lake Ontario

John Malone is the largest private landowner in the United States. Malone made his fortune as a media tycoon, building the company Tele-Communications, Inc, or TCI, and acting as its CEO

before selling it to AT&T for \$50 billion in 1999. Malone's 2.2 million acres are largely located in Maine, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming and include profitable cattle ranches.