

Subject: Re: PABIODIV: Human Footprint
From: Larry Hutchins <larry77@penn.com>
To: Biodiversity Partnership <pabiodiv@webmail.upb.pitt.edu>
Date: Mon, 4 Nov 2002 11:50:32 -0500 (EST)

Sue,

'Human use leaves wildlife with just a fraction of the terrestrial surface of the globe still untouched'

This seems to be an outrageous claim. For instance, I own 700 acres, My wife and I live here alone and share it with a huge number of deer, raccoons, birds, foxes, bear, etc. who make much more use of the property than we do. Just because I pass through "their" habitat occasionally does that mean that I'm using it and they are not? Technically I suppose my land is not "untouched" but to date animals have not stopped using it just because I also use it. In fact they cause a lot more damage to the flora than we do. Deer have practically eliminated wild flowers from my property. The bear and the coyotes take a few deer each year but the deer still are increasing in number.

Here in Northern PA there are huge tracts, 10, 12,000 acres that are owned by hunting clubs of a small number of people who spend very little time on the land other than hunting season and therefore cause little disturbance. Their impact on the biodiversity of the land has to be minimal. Unless we all plan to colonize Mars we have to live with the interface of Man & Nature and careful statements of the problem will win more thinking people to examine their roles than sweeping claims that seem more intended to raise money for some organization than to ameliorate the true situation.

Larry Hutchins

On 10/24/02 4:35 PM, "Sue Thompson" <sthomp@andrew.cmu.edu> wrote:

From Grist Magazine

A whopping 83 percent of the surface of the Earth is dedicated to human activities -- farming, mining, fishing, or just plain old living -- according to a report released this week by the Wildlife Conservation Society and Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network. Human use leaves wildlife with just a fraction of the terrestrial surface of the globe still untouched, mostly in Alaska, Canada, Russia, Tibet, Mongolia, and the Amazon River Basin. The report also found that close to 100 percent of the land that can be farmed for rice, wheat, or corn is already being cultivated by humans. Eric Sanderson, a landscape ecologist and the leader of the report, called it "a clear-eyed view of our influence on the Earth" that provides "a way to find opportunities to save wildlife and wild lands in pristine areas."

Their map is available at <http://www.wcs.org/humanfootprint>

The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Listserve encourages open discussion about biodiversity issues in the state. It is hosted by the Allegheny Institute of Natural History, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and is moderated by the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership. The opinions expressed in messages are those of the authors and NOT the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership.