



Our Earth's Changing Land [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Land-Use and Land-Cover Change

Helmut Geist

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Scientists predict that the environment over the next 100 years will be threatened by severe challenges?the loss of biodiversity, expected changes in world-wide climate, and decreasing amounts of arable land and potable water for an exploding human population. All of these will greatly impact how the earth will be able to support life in the future. And at the center of these global environmental changes are developments in land use. Over the last 300 years, and in particular the last 50 years, the earth's land has been altered drastically as a result of increasing industrialization and urbanization worldwide, as well as by changes in agricultural techniques in lands under cultivation. These developments raise troubling questions about our future: How will these changes affect the sustainability of certain types of land use? How will they impinge upon critical regions, like rainforests and deserts? Will the earth be able to provide for the basic human needs of food, shelter, and water?

The Earth's Changing Land: An Encyclopedia of Land Use and Land-Cover Change is an A-to-Z encyclopedia that addresses all aspects of the science of land-use change: Evidence of land-use and land-cover change over the last 300 years, and how these changes impact the lives of people today. Discussions of the models and techniques that scientists use to determine how, and how fast, the earth is changing. Entries on the scientists and organizations who study these developments and who attempt to predict what will happen to the earth in the future. Discussions of policies and measures that can be implemented on a local level that will allow a sensible balance between sustainability and development. Written by leading scientists who have spent years studying the phenomena, the encyclopedia hopes to provide a strong foundation for understanding current controversies, and is written on a level that is understandable to scientists and other interested readers alike.

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