

# Just the Facts

Think of all the ways people use the land all around the world. We use the land to build our homes on, to grow our food on, to grow trees that we harvest for products we need. We use the water that flows over the land for drinking and irrigating, and we dig for minerals that we need. We also use the land for highways, cities, schools, industry, and power production. In addition, we use the land for recreation—parks, trails for hiking and biking, ski resorts, and beaches.

We use the land in many ways. Some of the uses do not harm the earth's ecosystems, but some of our actions are very damaging. What are some land uses that might disrupt an ecosystem?

How many people do you think are using this land? What is the world's population?

Consider these facts:

- The world population is about 5.2 billion and growing by about 90 million each year. By the year 2025, the estimated world population will reach 10 billion. More than 90% of this projected growth will take place in the developing nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These countries could very well double their populations in 33 years.
- Countries with rapid population growth often rank low in the quality of life and high in human suffering. Rapid growth is often accompanied by environmental destruction.
- In many countries, birth rates exceed death rates so the populations continue to grow. There are very few countries with zero population growth where the death rates and birth rates are equal.

