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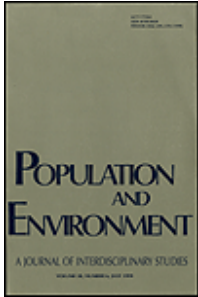
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Environmental Monitoring for Sustainable Use of the Planet

John Cairns Jr.

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Environmental Monitoring for Sustainable Use of the Planet

John Cairns, Jr.

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Environmental monitoring is an activity that is essential to maintaining human quality-of-life. Since human society depends on ecosystems to provide breathable air, potable water, food, fiber, building materials, pharmaceuticals, and genes, it is simple self interest to monitor ecological capital and the rate at which the interest on this ecological capital in the form of ecosystem services is produced. By integrating the many existing environmental monitoring programs, making their methods compatible, making their spatial and temporal scales complementary, and making the products of these investigations readily available, an explosion in understanding of the relationships between human society and natural systems will be possible. The boundaries of each individual effort will be extended by this coordination, and the confidence in each finding will be magnified. These efforts will enhance the ability to demonstrate the intimate links between environmental condition and human quality-of-life and provide essential quality control for ecosystem services.

HUMAN DEPENDENCE ON ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Natural systems provide services that are essential to human society (Westman, 1978). Those few functions of natural systems that have been widely recognized as beneficial to human society are called ecosystem

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463

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