



### Ecotourism in the Rainforest

Ecotourism attracts people who like being close to nature. Visitors to the rainforest learn about its great variety of plants and animals. Meanwhile, the money they spend creates jobs.

## 12.9 Ideas for Reducing Land Use Conflict

Each of the groups that you have read about in this chapter has its own ideas for how best to use or preserve the resources of the Amazon rainforest. Often these differences have led to land use conflict. A few groups, however, are looking at ways to balance preservation and development. In this way, they hope to meet the needs of people while also reducing harm to the rainforest. Here are some of their ideas.

**Promote Ecotourism** Most countries encourage **tourism**, which is the business of organizing travel for pleasure. Attracting tourists supports a country's economy because tourists spend money on hotels, meals, services, and souvenirs.

Some tour companies are promoting a new type of tourism that is known as **ecotourism**. This kind of travel attracts people who would like to visit unique ecosystems, such as a rainforest. Boat tours of the Amazon rainforest are popular with ecotourists, who come from all over the world.

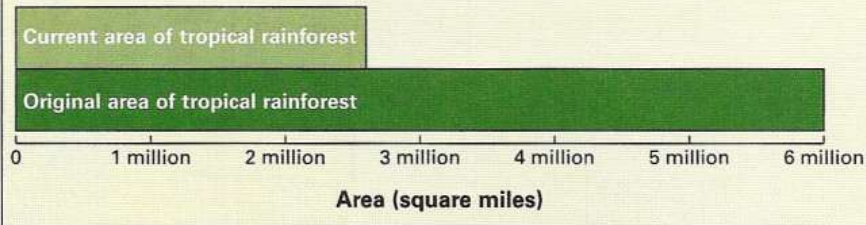
Ecotourism offers many benefits. It creates jobs for people in the tourist industry. It helps the economy by bringing in money. Most important, it gives people a reason to preserve the places that ecotourists come to experience. The great danger of ecotourism is overuse. If too many tourists visit a fragile area, they may help to destroy what they have come to see.

**Encourage Sustainable Development** Another way to balance development and preservation is to encourage sustainable development. In Brazil, sustainable development means finding ways to use the rainforest without destroying it. One way is by growing crops that don't require large areas of land to be cleared.

An example of such a crop is shade-grown coffee, a method of growing coffee that makes good use of rainforest trees. The coffee bushes are planted under a canopy of trees, a location that keeps the bushes from getting too much sun. Leaves from the coffee bushes enrich the soil. Meanwhile, the coffee bushes also provide **habitat** for birds, which in



## Loss of Tropical Rainforest Worldwide



turn eat insects that attack coffee plants. This type of farming requires the use of few or no chemicals, which is good not only for the coffee planters but also for coffee drinkers.

Another less harmful way of using the rainforest is strip logging. Instead of clear-cutting large areas, strip loggers clear long, narrow strips of forest. The forest grows back in these strips far more quickly than in large clear-cut areas.

**Buy Products that Protect the Rainforest** Consumers can help protect the rainforest by buying products that support sustainable development. Examples include ice creams and cereals made with Brazil nuts. The companies that make these products buy the nuts from native Amazonians, thereby helping native peoples make a living without damage to the rainforest.

Another step that consumers can take is to buy products made from wood that is harvested in a sustainable manner. Not all wood is harvested in the same way. Some wood is logged in ways that can destroy a forest, whereas other wood is harvested with care and respect for the forest.

Until recently, there was no way for people to know whether they were buying “good wood.” Then, in the 1990s, logging companies and environmental groups created certification programs to help wood buyers. Under these programs, products from well-managed forests are certified, or labeled. The label tells a buyer that the product comes from “good wood.” Consumers today can buy many certified “good wood” products from forests in Brazil, including lumber, charcoal, pencils, furniture, and musical instruments.

## 12.10 Beginning to Think Globally

In this chapter, you read about land use conflict in the Amazon rainforest. You learned that the rainforest is an important part of the carbon-oxygen cycle. The rainforest is also rich in biodiversity. However, since the 1960s, loggers, settlers, and ranchers have cleared large parts of the rainforest. Native Amazonians, rubber tappers, and environmental groups continue to oppose this deforestation. Still, the rainforest is shrinking year by year.

Not all countries are losing forests as rapidly as Brazil. Some are even gaining forests, a process that is known as **reforestation**. In some places, the process of reforestation is happening naturally. For example, forests in the eastern United States have taken over abandoned farm fields. In other parts of the world, people are planting trees to create new forests. In the next section, you will examine rates of deforestation and reforestation around the world.



### Shrinking Rainforests

These satellite images show the same part of the Amazon rainforest in 1975 and 2001. The light green patches are areas of deforestation. Rainforests are shrinking worldwide. A few thousand years ago, they covered 12 percent of Earth’s surface. Today only 5 percent of Earth is covered with rainforests.



## 12.11 Global Connections

The map shows deforestation and reforestation in countries around the world. Notice that some countries have experienced little forest loss during the 10-year period. This may be because these countries are doing a good job of protecting their forests. Or it may be because they have no remaining forest to lose.

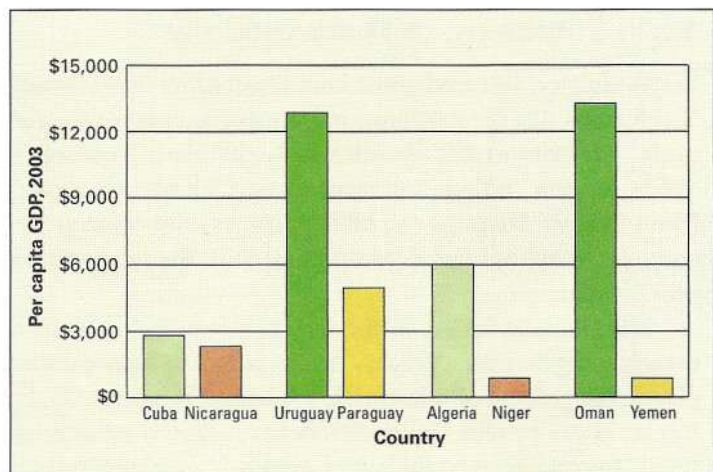
**What factors contribute to the loss of forest worldwide?** There are many reasons why people cut down forests. One reason is population growth. As the number of people in the world increases, so does people's demand for farmland and wood products. Another reason is poverty. Poor people in many countries depend on wood for cooking fuel, heating, and building materials. To meet these basic needs, they cut down trees.

**Can deforestation be slowed or reversed?** Some countries have been able to slow deforestation. Other countries, such as Ireland, have begun reforestation. For thousands of years, the Irish stripped their land of trees to create farmland. By 1900, less than 1 percent of Ireland remained forested. Since the 1950s, the government of Ireland has supported tree planting. The government has also educated people about the importance of forests. Today about 8 percent of Ireland is forested.

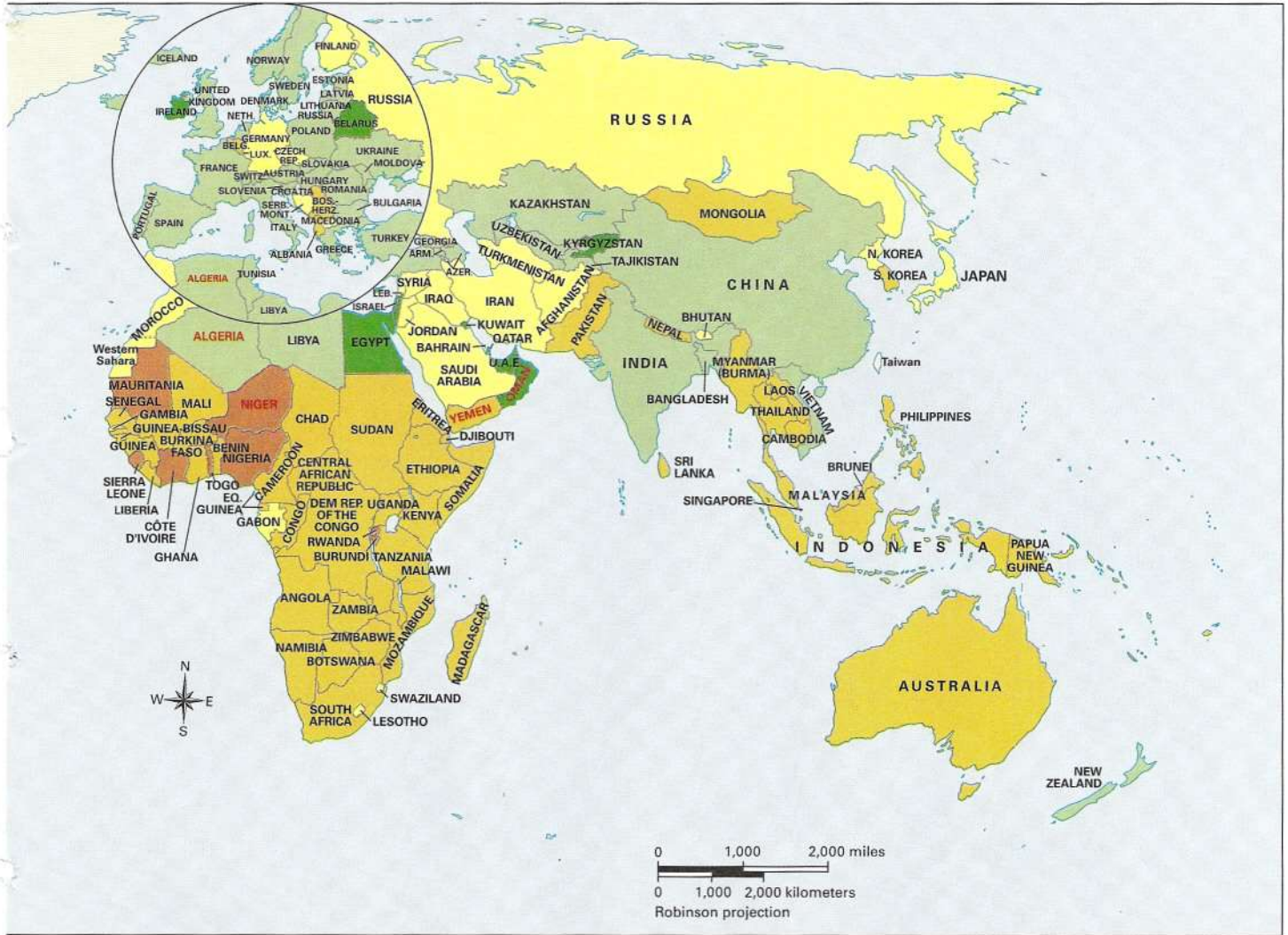
**What is the best way to use and preserve the world's forests?** Each country has to find its own answer to this question. In recent years, deforestation has slowed worldwide. This slowing trend suggests that some countries are doing more to preserve their forests. Still, both rich and poor countries are continuing to lose forests, and some of these forests may be gone forever.



**Per Capita GDP of Neighboring Countries with Different Rates of Forest Loss or Gain**

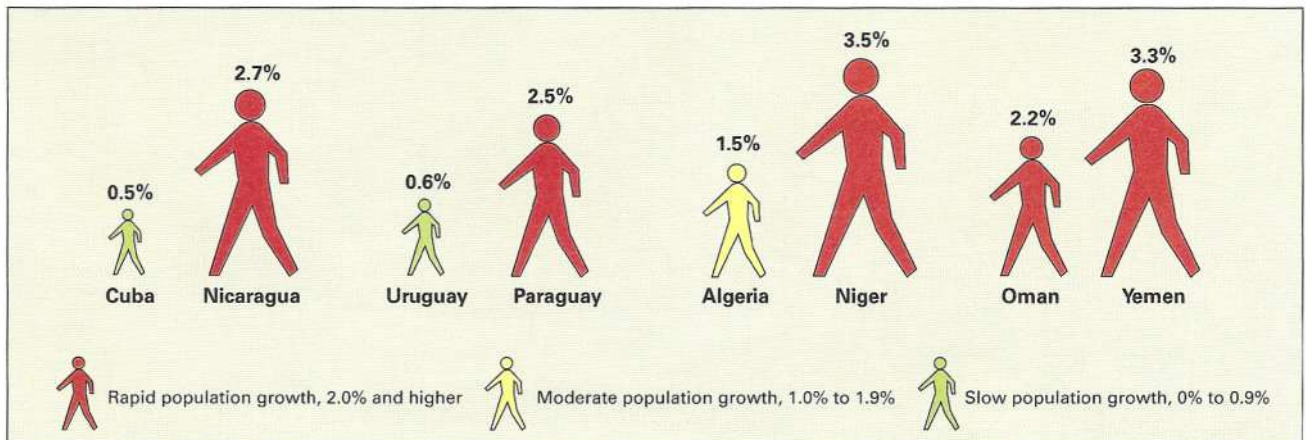






Source: Penguin State of the World Atlas, 7th ed., by Dan Smith, New York: Penguin Group, 2003.

### Population Growth of Neighboring Countries with Different Rates of Forest Loss or Gain



These two graphs show neighboring countries that have different rates of forest loss or gain. The color of each country on the bar graph matches its color on the map. What connections do you see between deforestation, poverty, and population growth?