

Biodiversity Guidelines

A 50-page book entitled *Evaluation of Biodiversity Projects* (National Academy Press, Washington, DC, 1989) sets forth criteria and guidelines for evaluating projects designed to protect or enhance biodiversity.

Michael E. Soulé, chairman of the prestigious seven-man committee that put the report together, prefaced the volume with the following words:

"It is regrettable that this document is needed. It is regrettable that the survival of biological diversity requires extraordinary initiatives such as 'biodiversity reserves.' Only a world on the brink of ecological suicide would resort to such artificial means. To the citizens of a balanced world, the phrase 'biodiversity reserve' would sound just as ridiculous as does the concept of 'developer reserve' to us.

"In denaturalizing most of the planet's tropical and temperate surface, in usurping virtually all unfrozen land and water, in polluting the highest reaches of the stratosphere, and in altering the heat balance of the atmosphere, we are fast approaching a new global, ecological threshold — our carrying capacity. As we cross this invisible barrier, less pushy species will be crowded out.

"Now 'experts' are being summoned to help slow and eventually reverse the human machine of population and denaturalization. This document was written by such experts — in the field of appropriate development and conservation biology — in response to a request for guidance in the selection, monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity-related projects in developing countries ..."

The report project that produced the book was approved by the Governing Board of the National Research Council, whose members are drawn from the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine. Copies of the report can be had from the Board of Biology, National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20418.