

Press Release

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Full text of report, *Utah Vital Signs 2007: The Ecological Footprint of Utah*, data files, and high-resolution charts are available at www.utahpop.org/vitalsigns.

Living Beyond Our (Ecological) Means

- Utah group conducts the first-ever calculation of Utah's "Ecological Footprint," and announces that, as of 2003, Utah was in "ecological overshoot."
- Utah is the first state in the country to gauge this international measure of sustainability.

A Salt Lake City-based organization has found that Utahns are consuming more natural resources than nature can regenerate. Utah Vital Signs, a project of the Utah Population and Environment Coalition, measured Utah's contribution to the world's "Ecological Footprint" in a nine-month study. According to the group's report released today, the average Utahn requires land the size of about 20 football fields without the end zones to support his or her consumption of food, housing, energy, goods, and services.

The Ecological Footprint is a leading sustainability tool that tracks the extent to which human demand on nature exceeds what planet Earth can regenerate. It answers the question, "Are we living beyond the means of nature?" The calculation method has been standardized by the Global Footprint Network, a nonprofit organization whose goal is to make sustainability measurable by advancing the Ecological Footprint. Utah Vital Signs is a partner of the Global Footprint Network.

With this study, Utah is the first state in the country to gauge this international measure. Two years, 1990 and 2003, were measured. Utah Vital Signs is a project of the Utah Population and Environment Coalition, an educational group in Salt Lake City. Utah Vital Signs empowers Utah

citizens and key decision-makers to make better decisions about their future by providing clear, well documented information about key indicators of environmental sustainability in Utah.

The group's research found that Utahns are using 9.9 global hectares per person, while Utah's lands are providing 8.9 global hectares per person. A global hectare is a measure of the land's bioproductivity standardized across the world's productive lands. As a result of this "ecological overshoot," or difference between what is provided by the Earth and what is consumed by humans, Utah has an ecological deficit of about 2.4 million global hectares per year. Utahns are demanding 11% more than Utah's land can provide on a renewable basis.

The Ecological Footprint has been calculated for the Earth as a whole since 1961, by the Global Footprint Network (www.footprintnetwork.org) and WWF International (www.panda.org). The Footprints of over 150 countries are calculated annually, and countless footprinting studies have been conducted for cities, counties, businesses, and educational institutions. This measure of the supply and human demand on nature is indispensable for tracking progress, setting targets and driving policies for sustainability. A personal footprint calculator, available at myfootprint.org, has been used by hundreds of thousands of individuals to determine their contribution to the consumption demand on the planet.

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