

New methods used to follow land use

June 12 2006

Dutch researcher Koen Overmars has used a combination of analyses to gain insight into how land use is changing in San Mariano on the Philippines.

The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, which funded the project, says such an inventory of changes in land use can be used to analyze the ecological functions of the landscape, such as biodiversity, and to evaluate policy measures for nature conservation.

Researchers say changes in land use have major consequences for the global environment because, for example, they affect climatic and ecosystem functions.

Land use changes do not influence all regions in the world to the same extent. Much of the land in the Philippines was deforested during the last century due to intensive commercial timber activities and the expansion of agriculture.

The study was conducted in a part of San Mariano, situated in the northeast section of the Philippines. There an area of 118,600 acres has changed from a thinly-populated forested area into an area with intensive rice and maize cultivation that's home to 4,000 families.

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