

# WORLD POPULATION BALANCE

Population education — promoting awareness about stabilization to benefit **everyone!** \*

\* Pro-life and pro-choice members respectfully agree to disagree in order to promote fair and humane population stabilization.

September, 2002

## Bicycle Tour Nets Media Attention For Biggest Story in History

By Ben Stallings

On May 20, I hitched a trailer to the back of my bicycle and began a solo journey of more than 775 miles across Minnesota and Iowa. The trailer contained camping gear, tools, clothes, and my World Population Balance presentation materials.

Everywhere I went in the next three weeks I got media attention because of the bicycle, and in every interview I spoke about population growth and the need for stabilization. My total count for the trip was 15 radio interviews, 5 TV

stations, and 10 newspapers. For an issue that almost never gets news coverage, this was a tremendous opportunity.

When interviewers asked how I got the idea of a bicycle trip to raise awareness about population growth, I always replied that I had wanted to do some speaking for World Population Balance, and I had wanted to do some bike touring, and I just put the two together. That answer satisfied them, but as the miles rolled by I realized there was a better answer. Now that I'm

back in Minneapolis, I'm ready to share the real reason for the trip.

### The Biggest News Story in History

Never before in the history of the world has one species claimed more than half of the world's resources -- both renewable and non-renewable -- for its own use. Never has the face of the planet changed so rapidly, with mountains transformed into valleys, deserts into orchards, and prairies into deserts, all in a matter of years instead of millennia. Never has a single species destroyed other

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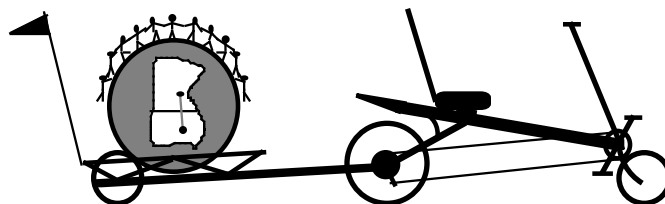
We are tremendously excited about a recent challenge grant from The World Population Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation. They generously awarded World Population Balance a one-for-one matching grant of up to \$25,000 for contributions raised from individuals during the next twelve months.

**This means that every dollar you contribute to World Population Balance will be matched dollar-for-dollar, thus doubling your gift.**

This challenge comes at a very critical as well as exciting time in World Population Balance's life. Last year we saw tremendous expansion of our activities and educational impact upon Americans about the critical issue of stopping population growth to the benefit of all humankind. With your generous support we will increase our impact to significantly greater levels during the coming months.

Our thanks to each of you who have contributed to our educational mission in the past, and we look forward to your continuing support during this special twelve-month opportunity.

see *Bicycle Tour* on page 3



### Population Conference Oct. 25-26

World Population Balance and 15 other organizations have teamed up to present a two-day population conference at the Science Museum of Minnesota, October 25-26.

Programming on the 25th will be workshops for educators and students. Saturday's conference is open to all and includes national speakers Alan Durning, Ann Hancock, and Bill Ryerson, as well as a group exercise to calculate the ecological footprint of the conference itself!

Seating is limited. For more information or to register for the event, follow the link on our Web site (<http://worldpopulatonbalance.org>) or call Dawn Cameron at 1-800-221-9444.

## From the President

By David Paxson

What a busy and exciting summer!

Our video of Minnesota's population growth is nearing completion. We relocated our office. We received two very generous grants from The World Population Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation. We established the Stabilization Sponsors Society of supporters who contribute a thousand dollars or more to help sustain our educational mission. Ben Stallings successfully educated thousands of people during his bike tour. We are co-organizing the October population conference at the Science Museum of Minnesota. Most importantly: we continue to educate additional thousands about the critical importance of stopping population growth on the planet.



The second week of September was especially productive. I gave nineteen presentations in southern Minnesota, including radio, television and newspaper interviews. As a result, thousands more people learned about the critical issue of stopping population growth in the world. Live talks included three churches, four Kiwanis clubs and seven high school assemblies.

When I reflect upon the planet's current situation and the low level of awareness about population stabilization, I recall a conversation with a friend about a decade ago. He said: "Look at it this way. If stopping population growth were an easy thing to do, someone else would have done it already!"

Over the years his comment has given me some comfort. It reminds me that population stabilization is a monumental issue -- for the entire planet! Also, many great people throughout the world have spent much more time and energy on this issue than we have. Yet, they have not stopped population growth yet, either!

When it comes to understanding this issue, you and I are among a relatively small number on the planet who "get it". It is incumbent upon **us** to educate others. When enough people are educated, collective awareness and concern will shift, and only then will population growth stabilize.

**Let us continue with these critical efforts!**

## World Population Awareness Week October 20-26, 2002

The 18th annual World Population Awareness Week is fast approaching. In the wake of the Johannesburg Earth Summit -- where population was not even officially on the agenda -- it is more important than ever to let our elected officials and news media know that world population -- fast approaching 6.3 billion even as our resources continue to decline -- is a major driving force behind the world's environmental and social problems.

Please take a few minutes soon to write or call your mayor and governor. Ask them to proclaim World Population Awareness Week.. A sample letter and proclamation are at <http://worldpopulati onbalance.org> . Your request may make the difference!

### Mobility Study Documents Cost of Population Growth

A recent study by Texas A&M University calculated the environmental and social costs of traffic congestion in American cities. In doing so, it has also demonstrated the hidden costs of urban population growth.

For example, the length of "rush hour" in the Minneapolis - St. Paul region has increased steadily by more than 15 minutes per year over the 18 years of the study. During the same time, population of the region has increased by an average of more than 40,000 per year. There is a high correlation (97%) between the region's population size and the length of its rush hour.

In 1982, rush hour in the Twin Cities lasted only 2.7 hours. By 2000 it had stretched to 7.6 hours! The researchers estimate that this delay -- in the Twin Cities alone -- cost more than \$1.2 billion in lost productivity and 108 million gallons of wasted fuel.

If the population of the metro region continues to increase, rush hour could exceed the 9-hour workday as soon as 2006.

The study is available to be read online at <http://mobility.tamu.edu>

Bicycle Tour *continued from page 1*  
 species' habitat so rapidly, causing one of the highest extinction rates in the history of the world. Never before the 20th century had the human population doubled within a single lifetime, let alone doubled twice in a hundred years. And never have so many people been forced to exist in poverty and starvation due to resource scarcity.

From the perspective of history, ecology, sociology, biology, and even geology, the rapid population growth of the last 150 years is the biggest news story in the history of the world . . . not just on Earth Day, but every single day of every year. Yet we almost never hear about it on the radio or read about it in the newspaper, because it's "not news:" it didn't just happen today or yesterday; it's been happening every day for generations.

I bicycled 775 miles because that's what it took to turn the biggest story in history into "news." While I rode through a town, population growth was worth a front-page article or a few minutes of air time because it was immediately relevant.

Looking for an Excuse

Every reporter I spoke to was sympathetic to the message I brought. Several were so knowledgeable about population and related issues that they developed the story beyond what I had said in the interview. Not one tried to argue with me or take an opposing viewpoint. I was left with the strong impression that the news media, in general, already know how important this story is; they're only looking for an excuse to cover it.

If that's the case, we need to give them more excuses. Whether the news of the moment is suburban sprawl, traffic congestion, unemployment, international ten-

To learn more about Ben's trip, including newspaper stories, photos, and excerpts from his travelogue, visit <http://worldpopulationbalance.org/bike.html>

sion, homelessness, hunger, or affordable housing, we need to be ready to ask our news media, "What about population growth?" We need to have facts, quotes, and convincing arguments at hand so that we can write letters to editors and call into talk shows. The sample letter now on our Web site for World Population Awareness Week is a first step toward this goal.

The idea is not to singlemindedly say "population" in response to everything. The idea is rather to see -- and to help other people see -- that population is a primary driving force behind many of the issues that are in the news every day, and we cannot afford to continue omitting it from our discussion of those issues.

What I Learned

It's clear that a bicycle tour is an effective and inexpensive way to gain media attention for a cause. I was able to arrange interviews from the road without any staff or volunteer support. I was able to stay on schedule, so that I could have visited schools as well as the news media, had school been in session at the time. And the whole trip, including all equipment, meals, and lodging, could have been funded by a very modest grant.

I had a wonderful trip, and I'm extremely grateful for the good fortune I enjoyed during those 23 days. I am also grateful for the hospitality of friends and strangers. And I'm grateful to World Population Balance for giving me three weeks to try something new! I look forward to applying what I've learned to the projects in the future, and I hope you're as excited as I am to benefit from this experience.

*-3- Ben Stallings is a staff member of World Population Balance.*

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 CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM**

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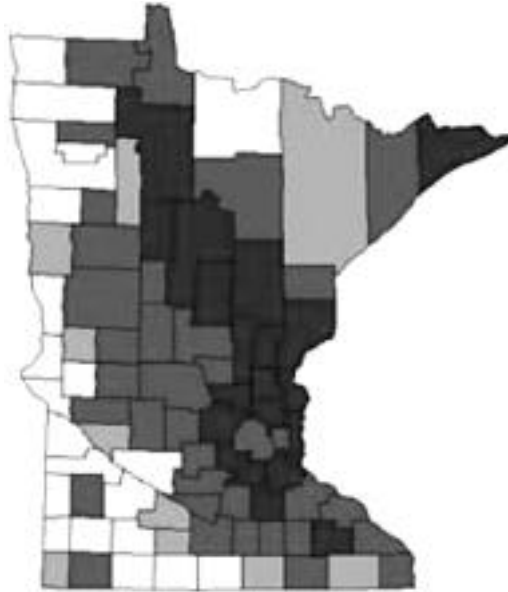
## Human Footprint 20% Too Large

Humanity's use of natural resources, or "Ecological Footprint," has exceeded the regenerative capacity of the Earth since the 1980s and now exceeds it by at least 20% per year, according to a paper published by the *National Academy of Science* in June.

The paper's authors, led by Mathis Wackernagel of Redefining Progress, compared humanity's demand on the environment to the earth's supply of bio-productive areas over the past 40 years.

By the 1980s, demand had risen to match total global supply, and by 1999 demand exceeded supply by at least twenty percent. That means humans are using 20% more of Earth's resources each year than the biosphere is producing. We must stop this deficit by halting population growth and reducing consumption and waste production.

The paper is available for purchase from <http://www.pnas.org>.



## New Minnesota Video

We will soon release our first professionally produced video. It will clearly show the history of Minnesota's population growth and its impact on several major resources. We are very excited and believe this video will be a powerful teaching tool with all Minnesotans.

Inspired by the "World Population" video that has long been an important part of our presentations, the new video depicts Minnesota population as dots on a map. Each dot represents 5,000 people living in a region. Bar graphs beside the map represent the state's iron reserves, wheat production, and topsoil loss.

If you would like to order a copy of this important visual teaching tool, please call

our office at 612-869-1640 or e-mail us at: [wpb@worldpopulationbalance.org](mailto:wpb@worldpopulationbalance.org).

### Current Population

World: 6,263,794,980 -- doubling time 57 years  
 U.S.: 280,718,950 -- doubling time 78 years  
 Minnesota: 5,062,039 -- doubling time 59 years  
 Extrapolated from United Nations, U.S. Census,  
 and Minnesota Planning data

**WORLD POPULATION BALANCE**  
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World Population Balance is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to raising awareness about the benefits of population stabilization. We present our message through public presentations and conferences, appointments with elected officials, written articles, our newsletter, and media interviews.

### Our Mission

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