

Glossary

LAND

D

deforestation the process of clearing forests

E

ecosystem services the role that organisms play in creating a healthful environment for humans

G

geographic information system an automated system for capturing, storing, retrieving, analyzing, manipulating, and displaying geographic data (abbreviation, GIS)

H

heat island an area in which the air temperature is generally higher than the temperature of surrounding rural areas

I

infrastructure the basic facilities of a country or region, such as roads, bridges, and sewers

L

land-use planning a set of policies and activities related to potential uses of land that is put in place before an area is developed

O

overgrazing the depletion of vegetation due to the continuous feeding of too many animals

R

reforestation the reestablishment and development of trees in a forest land

rural describes an area of open land that is often used for farming

U

urban describes an area that contains a city

urban sprawl the rapid spread of a city into adjoining suburbs and rural areas

urbanization an increase in the ratio or density of people living in urban areas rather than in rural areas

W

wilderness a region that is not cultivated and that is not inhabited by humans