

## High Country Eco-Footprints

By Kristan Cockerill

Thank you to everyone who has responded to our original column. Here are scores for the eco-footprints we've tabulated to date:

Respondent Code	Ecofootprint (global acres)
6548 [? See below]	11
2441	18
DORS	20
28692	23
1630	23
1066	28
0084	29
Average	22
US average	24

Remember, an eco-footprint measures our resource use (demand) relative to nature's ability to regenerate those resources (supply). It is reported in "global acres," which represent the area of biologically productive land and water required to supply resources and absorb waste. This means that if everyone in the world had the same standard of living as respondent 2441 (18 global acres) we would need 3.9 planets. To live like respondent 1066 (28 global acres) we'd need 6.2 planets.

To illustrate ways to reduce our footprint, let's compare some responses and the subsequent scores. Respondent 6548 had by far the lowest eco-footprint, with 11 global acres. The most significant reason for this low score is in the shelter component. This respondent reported two people living in 500 square feet in row housing. Compare this to respondent 0084 (29 global acres) who reported 3 people living in a free-standing house that is at least 2,500 square feet. In the US we tend to have more square feet per person in our living quarters than anywhere in the world, and this translates into heavy resource use. To reduce your overall footprint, think about smaller living quarters or adding more people to larger quarters. Adding energy efficient appliances, lights, and contributing to "green energy" through your power company will help lower a shelter score too.

Transportation also contributes significantly to an eco-footprint. Respondents 6548 and 28692 had the lowest transportation-related scores because they reported few miles (10-100) traveled by car each week in a vehicle that gets at least 25 miles per gallon, and they rarely travel alone. Conversely, respondent 1630 had the highest transportation score, because although he/she almost never drives alone, he/she drives 100-200 miles per week in a car that gets lower gas mileage, and he/she flies 25 hours each year. None of the respondents reported using public transportation or

alternative forms of transport (e.g., walking). To lower an eco-footprint, driving less can do wonders. Flying less can do even more.

We will continue to calculate eco-footprints and report the results here. If you have not yet had a chance to submit an eco-footprint form, you can download one from the MountainKeepers website: <http://www.mountainkeepers.org> Fill it out and mail it to MountainKeepers, PO Box 21DST, Boone, NC 28607