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Tom Rudel conducts research on land use change. He has researched the driving forces behind tropical deforestation both through case studies in the Ecuadorian Amazon and through quantitative analyses at the global scale. The latter set of studies has included work on 'the forest transition'. He has also done research on the forces that have driven suburban sprawl, primarily through field studies in the northeastern United States. Currently, he is working through the implications of these processes for global warming and writing a book about how environmentally friendly behaviors in localities can in some instances have global scale effects.