

Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (PECS)
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Ruth DeFries

Ruth DeFries is the Denning Family Professor of Sustainable Development at Columbia University in New York City. Her research investigates the relationships among human transformation of the land surface and the biogeochemical and ecological processes that regulate the Earth's habitability. The research uses satellite imagery as a lens to examine changes in the land surface over large areas. The overall thrust of the research is to develop underlying science for balancing the needs of human society to transform the landscape for food production, settlements and other requirements while maintaining long-term habitability of the planet.

Ruth DeFries holds a PhD from Johns Hopkins University and BA *summa cum laude* from Washington University. She is a member of the US National Academy of Sciences, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a recipient of the MacArthur Foundation 'genius' award, a fellow of the Aldo Leopold Leadership Program, and a fellow of the American Geophysical Union.