**Transcript:** Recognizing Value In U.N. World Environment Day and Other Environmental Research

**Interviewee:** David Dzombak, the Walter J. Blenko Sr. Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Carnegie Mellon and faculty director of the Steinbrenner Institute for Environmental Education and Research

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**Question 1:** What are some of the greatest challenges for our environment as we move forward?

Dzombak: The greatest challenges for our environment as we move forward, while there is increasing awareness of the need to protect our resources, we have ever-increasing strains on the environment, starting with increasing population. While we work to reduce our environmental footprint, we think about our carbon footprint, our water footprint, and reducing our per person impact on the environment, the number of people in the United States and in the world keeps increasing at a rather significant rate. So in the United States, we’re at 306 million people and by mid-century, we’ll be over 400 million people. And every one of those people will have expectations of the same kind of lifestyle you and I lead. With implications of water consumption, energy consumption, use of automobiles, et cetera. That is a big challenge for the United States and for other areas of the world that have even more rapid population growth and in many respects are less able to accommodate it. Areas of the world that are already much more severely limited in fresh water resources, for example. Sub-Saharan Africa, with dramatic population growth, there are big crunches coming. The energy usage rate increases in India and China, nations with very large populations and growing populations, that increase demand for energy in those countries and elsewhere have implications for environmental resources. So that’s the central challenge for us – to think about new ways of generating and using energy or stewarding our water resources of new ways of transporting ourselves around that aren’t so impactful on the environment, not only in terms of energy use but in terms of road constructing, land clearance and so forth. The challenge is to think about new ways of doing things in different aspects of our lives – our individual lives and our community lives.

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