

Celebrating Writers and Writing in our Communities

Volume 3

Article 18

2020

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Recommended Citation

Bailey, Chloe (2020) "Deforestation," *Celebrating Writers and Writing in our Communities*: Vol. 3 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/rwc/vol3/iss1/18>

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Deforestation

By Chloe Bailey

Could you imagine a place where 137 species of life forms are driven into extinction every day? Sadly, there are many forests that are being destroyed to benefit humans and their wallets. By clearing out forest, wildlife is affected, natural resources are becoming limited and a negative long term result is appearing. Although deforestation may benefit humans at the moment, the long term effects to the environment will be greater than imagined and should not be ignored.

It is shocking to think of the number of species that are being torn from their habitat, injured or even killed due to deforestation. Logging contributes to the extinction of wildlife and other organisms, because many cannot survive in a different environment. In fact, worldwildlife.org says “Many tree kangaroo species are incredibly rare and most are decreasing in number. They face habitat loss through deforestation.” (worldwildlife.org) These living creatures are losing their homes and being forced to either adapt to new living conditions or die. As their environment decreases, their food supply becomes scarce, making it harder for them to survive. By removing parts of the forest, we must acknowledge that there may be consequences that can never be reversed.

While trees are being reduced drastically, natural resources are too. When deforestation takes place, carbon dioxide in the air increases because the trees are not there to help filter it, which in turn decreases oxygen production. Once trees are removed there is an increase in soil erosion after the first rain, because the trees were there to help hold the soil into the ground. Some cities experience drought, because they rely on the natural resources from the rainforest for their drinking supplies. According to Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, “More than half of the Amazon’s water supply is held in its plants, so when these trees are burned, the water is lost. Deforestation can also often lead to soil erosion, resulting in poor water quality and the inability for citizens to stay healthy.” (blogs.nelson.wisc.edu) People believe that deforestation is helpful because it makes room for homes and it increases supplies like lumber. “From an economic perspective, deforestation is also a process for obtaining valuable goods from the forest.” (blogs.nelson.wisc.edu) Although an increase in wood is helpful, more resources are being lost for every tree that is cut down. By causing many natural resources to decline, deforestation affects more than just its specific site, but it's also causing cities to become desperate for supplies.

While logging companies are only focused on cutting trees to make a profit, they may forget about the long term effects. Without trees there is nothing to help control excess water from rain and soil becoming soaked which can lead to flooding. Global temperatures are impacted by tree removal, because more sunlight reaches the forest floor and less is retained which

can cause severe changes in temperature. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations states, “Most people assume that global warming is caused by burning oil and gas. But in fact between 25 and 30 percent of the greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere each year is caused by deforestation.” (Fao.org) Many people may not be aware that certain medicines may be lost due to deforestation. There are medicines that can be created from trees and plants that exist only in specific regions that are being torn down. By ignoring the long term effects, there may be huge regrets and struggles that could unexpectedly appear.

As a result, deforestation may not always be a crucial issue, but people need to be informed of its pros and cons. Deforestation causes many issues including the extinction of species, increase in carbon to the atmosphere, and the long term effects such as global warming. Deforestation is depleting our wildlife, natural resources, and causing many horrible long term effects. People may think that they are benefiting from deforestation, but the negatives outweigh the positives. If people knew that an area the size of 20 football fields is lost every 20 minutes, they may rethink their actions and realize the amount of animals and resources that are being destroyed in such little time. By having knowledge, people can work together to overcome and help solve the obstacles that revolve around deforestation.

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