

Do Not Write On

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LATIN AMERICA DEFORESTATION ACTIVITY

What is Deforestation?

In recent times, mankind has felt the wrath of nature. More and more natural disasters are taking place due to human induced climate change. This has led to an increasing awareness of our impact on the planet we call home and its natural resources. Forests are some of our most abused habitats due to the fact that wood is a raw material with a wide range of uses and fill virtually all of our basic needs particularly food, fuel and shelter.

Another important influencing factor for deforestation is the need for more land, so forests are cleared to make way for industrial development, housing or agriculture (either livestock or crops) or even a dump.



By Definition

Deforestation is the clearing or removal of trees from an area of woodland or forest for many differing reasons usually commercial. Deforestation usually doesn't apply to cases where the trees are replaced, usually as saplings, in the same or alternative location in order to replace those that were cut down. Also usually refers to large scale clearing of whole areas rather than limited or selective clearing.

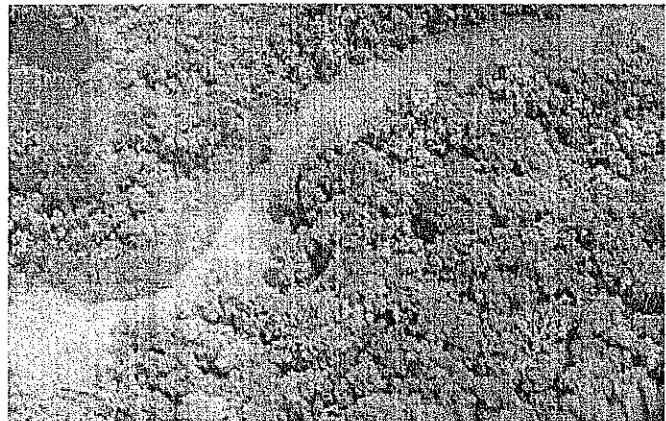
Man has cut down trees since we first appeared, changing and adapting the environment to suit our needs in order to provide the things we require to live successfully. For kindling, shelter, weapons and in more modern times paper, furniture and housing. Thousands upon thousands of acres of forest have disappeared worldwide to fill our insatiable appetite for wood and land, yet they also have to meet the demands of the vast majority of the world's other species both plant and animal.

Amazon Rainforest Deforestation

The Amazon is the largest and most incredible of the world's rainforests.

Where is the Amazon rainforest?

Located in northern part of South America it spans 9 different countries including 60% of Brazil. The Amazon basin is a giant record-breaking river system, its waterways densely crowded by trees, plant and animal life. The diversity and scale of the Amazon rainforest is



plants and animal to recover and recolonize.



Illegal logging is difficult to tackle yet governments need to have legislation and effective means of enforcing that legislation in order to protect their forests and natural resources. In countries that are struggling with these issues outside help and cooperation maybe needed if possible.

Legal logging need to be tightly monitored to ensure it is done in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way as possible ensuring that workers and those who protect the forests are paid a decent wage.

Money can also be raised through tourism to these beautiful and diverse places. Again the right legislation and enforcement is required, though this is difficult to achieve in some places it should be worked towards if possible. Ideally a balance will be struck between supplying what is needed and protecting the habitat for wildlife. This is possible through sustainable management and replanting programs.

The need of land for agriculture, industrial and living purposes is an ever-increasing pressure on wild areas and forests and a major contributor to deforestation. This is one issue that is not easily resolved. Again a balance needs to be struck between the need to have and preserve a certain amount of forested land and development. Ultimately we have to accept that the planet can only support and physically have room for a certain number of people and the expansion in our numbers cannot and will not go on forever.

Consequences of Deforestation Humans have always and probably always will depended on forests to a lesser or greater degree. Trees provide food, shelter from the elements and predators not just to humans but the vast majority of life on land. Unfortunately the forests resources and appeal is its downfall.

Deforestation is probably one of the greatest challenges we face. We need the forests to maintain the atmosphere alongside the burning of fossil fuels our destruction of the forests is a major contributory factor to the rising levels of carbon dioxide and global warming, the effects of which we are only now beginning to feel.

Large-scale deforestation for agricultural and industrial purposes transforms rich and diverse habitat in barren arid land. The resources are quickly repeated and another



This biodiversity took many millions of years to evolve and can be destroyed with the swipe of a powerful saw. There is no possibility of getting back the estimated 50,000 species that go extinct every year a figure that is increasing. The chance to explore this forest world is disappearing fast and won't come again once it's gone, a chance future generations won't thank us for denying them.

Not only are countless species being lost but also the chance to increase or knowledge of the world, chemicals and medicines unknown to science are out waiting to be discovered. The preservation of the rainforest also means the chance to explore these opportunities and make new discoveries and advance human knowledge.

Effects of Deforestation on Society

The indigenous people, whose home and way of life is turned upside down by the arrival of the lumber lorries, will feel much of the effects of deforestation. They survive by living in harmony with the forest and its inhabitants but are often forced to leave or change their way of living in order to survive. This displacement of people and the consequent loss of that culture makes the human race a little poorer. Those that live on the edges of the forest are also affected, as they can no longer gather resources from it for themselves.

These people are unused to living in towns and cities a totally alien culture and are unlikely to have the money, skills or education to make a decent living having learned to live off the land.

The global community too suffers enormously. Deforestation is contributing to the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and global warming. Attributed devastations will most likely depress economies and force people into poverty, causing a higher output of pollution and intensifying the situation as a whole. Tropical forests are mainly confined to third world countries, but they are not only meeting national needs, but through economic globalization, the wants of the world are on them too. Bearing down on developing nations is: direct causes of deforestation are agricultural expansion, wood extraction (e.g., logging or wood harvest for domestic fuel or charcoal), and infrastructure expansion such as road building and urbanization.

Nature cannot be completely replaced by our own efforts even after all our recent advances in technology she does it better than us. Nature serves us in far better ways than the best designed structures and industry, yet we treat her with nothing but contempt and unless we stop the consequences will be dire

Solutions to Deforestation

The safe keeping of our precious planet lies with each and every member of its human population. We are the ones accountable for our actions even though it is ourselves we are accountable too. We have the power and knowledge to turn this planet into a green and pleasant place to live or to completely destroy all life. Deforestation is one of the



alternatives to choose from.

Which ever method or combination of method we use the important thing to work together and all put our full support behind it as that is the only way we can succeed in eliminating deforestation.

Can deforestation be stopped?

The answer to this rests with us, it is this generation at the eleventh hour who have the knowledge and ability to act. If we leave it to the next generation it will simply be too late and the forests won't be there to save. There are many differing groups that will have to work together to achieve an end to deforestation environmental and conservation groups, governments, consumers, corporations as well as those who actually work in the forests. We need each and every one of us to take a stand and do our bit

Raising Consciousness

Humans are roused to action when an issue directly affects them. This is undoubtedly the reason



people are more aware than ever of the effects of deforestation as more and more people become affected by climate change and extreme weather events.

It is these effects that are the most effective way of showing people the benefits forests provide and why it is so vital the little we have left be protected at all costs. The depletion of the forests has a number of detrimental effects on the environment and climate. There are two main thrusts to this argument. The first is the environmental services that forests provide such as maintaining our atmosphere and slowing global warming and protecting us from floods. The second is the need to ensure a reliable and sustainable supply of natural resources. I.e. if they are being used and managed properly and ensuring reforestation occurs.

First the environmental benefits forests help maintain the balance of gases in the atmosphere particularly oxygen and carbon dioxide. The trees ability to take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and trap it is our most important weapon in the battle against climate change. Cutting down and burning trees releases the green house gas back into the atmosphere worsening the problem. It is these green house gases that are causing global warming and extreme weather events.

In many cases the timber is simply burned to clear the land quickly which is the worst possible thing to do especially when it could be put to good use providing for those who might be in need