

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/17/2025 10:34:24 PM

First name: Jazmin

Last name: Toledo-Verduzco

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service,

My name is Jazmin Toledo-Verduzco. I am a student at Clark College in Vancouver, WA currently completing my chemistry course focused on environmental health.

Large trees have provided me with an adventurous childhood and may have done the same for you. If you had a swing attached to a tree, sought shade under a tree on a hot, sunny day, had a picnic near a tree, hid easter eggs near a tree, or climbed a tree then you too depended on trees for creating lively memories. But keep in mind that this will not be something your loved ones and their generations will get to experience due to the harm you would be causing. The expansion of timber production will causing detrimental effects such as biodiversity loss and increased greenhouse gases that will escape into the atmosphere.

In cutting away trees, you are behaving like the Once-ler from the Lorax. The Lorax used to live in a beautiful environment where there was green grass, wet and blue ponds where the fish swam, clean clouds, singing of birds, and bright colored trees where animals got shade; there was life under, around, and even in the trees. These trees, however, also become used by another living creature - the Once-ler. It would make its home in the environment of other living creatures and exploit the trees for individual gain. It claimed the trees were its own treasure. It started off with cutting one tree until there were no trees left. But these trees are not yours nor are they the Once-ler's. They belong to the environment they are in, in which there are animals, fungi, plants, and where tribes may practice their cultural and spiritual rights, but do so with respect because they know they are not superior to nature but are one with it.

If you cut away even one tree, you are sending away the wildlife, which throws off the entire ecosystem. "Indeed, removing just one species can have huge consequences for all other species in the ecosystem, sending the entire ecosystem into a completely different system state" (<https://www.education.psu.edu/geog30/node/398#:~:text=Indeed%2C%20removing%20just%20one%20species,it%20exceeds%20the%20ecosystem's%20resilience>). And a lack of trees causes an even-drier environment, which allows for more fires to occur. Rachel Nuwer from BBC said that "without trees, formerly forested areas would become drier and more prone to extreme droughts. When rain did come, flooding would be disastrous" (<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190911-what-would-happen-if-all-the-worlds-trees-disappeared>). How do you plan on cleaning the air? Will you be the one to fill up your lungs and remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere? You can inhale air pollutants and other toxins, but it will make you ill. You cannot do what trees do - storing carbon and replacing it with oxygen, thus slowing climate change. "Trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, a process known as sequestration, and then store the carbon in their leaves, roots, and trunks, as well as in the soil" (<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/climate-change>). And "[t]he bigger a tree is, the more carbon it is storing, but as forests get older, the higher competition between trees reduces the amount of carbon taken in per year" (<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/climate-change>). Therefore, if you cut away the trees and realize your mistake it isn't easy to just grow new trees again to try to restore the forest. Big trees capture the most carbon, but it will take time for trees to reach this size once they are planted. Forests also depend on old trees. The old trees have myceliums which are like veins that spread and reach other trees in a forest. It is what connects the trees together and what forms the mycorrhizal network- similar to how we use technology to communicate with our family and friends, it involves fungi that allows trees to share resources and send signals to each other. "The oldest trees have the largest mycorrhizal networks with the most connections to other trees..." (<https://youtu.be/V4m9SefyRjg> 1:13-1:16). Lastly, it is us causing the most wildfires. It is not the forests' fault. "Nearly 85 percent* of wildland fires in the United States are caused by humans. Human-caused fires result from campfires left unattended, the burning of debris, equipment use and

malfunctions, negligently discarded cigarettes, and intentional acts of arson"
(<https://www.nps.gov/articles/wildfire-causes-and-evaluation.htm>).

I urge you to implement a plan that will protect the trees of the forest; to regard the health and sustainability of an ecosystem that is home to wildlife, plants, fungi, and to continue to implement tribal rights into your plans.

Sincerely,

Jazmin Toledo-Verduzco