



Forests: Environmental Issues, Global Perspectives

James Fargo Balliett

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Forests are considered the lungs of the planet, as they consume and store carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. These biomes, defined as ecological communities dominated by long-lived woody vegetation, historically have provided an economic foundation for growing nations, supplying wood for buildings, firewood for fuel, and land for expanding cities and farms. For centuries, industrial nations in Europe and the United States have relied on large tracts of forestland for economic prosperity.

The research presented in this book reveals that population pressures are causing considerable environmental distress in even the most remote forest areas. Three detailed case studies are presented. The first provides an assessment of illegal logging deep in South America's Amazon rain forest, a region closely tied to food and product demands thousands of miles away. The second examines the effect of increased hunting in Central Africa's Congo forest, which threatens wildlife, especially mammal species with slower reproductive cycles. Finally the third describes encroachment on old-growth tropical forests on the Southern Pacific island of Borneo, which today is better managed thanks to the collective planning and conservation efforts of the governments of Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

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