

FORESTS

glossary

biodiversity: the variety of life on Earth from the level of genes to ecosystems. It can also include the evolutionary, ecological, and cultural processes that sustain life.

boreal forest: also known as taiga, a large, dense coniferous forest found south of the tundra in North America and Eurasia that receives two meters or less annual precipitation, often in the form of snow.

carbon dioxide (CO₂): a naturally occurring greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, concentrations of which have increased mostly due to human activities, such as the combustion of fossil fuels.

carbon sequestration: the long-term storage of carbon in plants, soils, and oceans that occurs naturally and as a result of human activities.

clear-cut: all trees cut and removed from an area of forest.

deforestation: the loss of forest due to overcutting of trees.

ecosystem: a community of living organisms that interacts with each other and their physical environment.

ecosystem services: the life-sustaining benefits provided by nature that are necessary for environmental and human well-being.

hectare: a metric unit of measurement for area equal to 10,000 square meters, or about 2.47 acres.

global warming: the increase in the average temperature of the Earth's surface.

greenhouse gas (GHG): gases which allow sunlight to enter the atmosphere freely, then absorb infrared radiation and trap heat in the atmosphere. Common examples include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons, and ozone.

methane (CH₄): a greenhouse gas that remains in the atmosphere for approximately 9-15 years, emitted from a variety of natural and human-influenced sources, such as landfills, natural gas and petroleum systems, agricultural activities, coal mining, stationary and mobile combustion, and wastewater treatment.

old growth forest: a forest that is typically older than 200 years with large trees, dense canopies, and an abundance of diverse wildlife.

selective cutting: a logging process whereby harvesters cut only the trees they wish to sell, leaving the rest of the forest intact.

slash and burn agriculture: a method of cultivation often used in the rainforest, which involves cutting or burning large areas of land (usually for pasture or agriculture), and can leave soil infertile for many future generations.

supply chain: a network linking the entities that produce and distribute a specific product to consumers. This network includes suppliers, producers, distributors, retailers, and the consumers.

sustainable forest management: the environmentally, socially and economically beneficial management of forests for present and future generations that balances extracting forest products with maintaining forest integrity.

temperate forest: forests found in the moderate climates between the tropics and boreal regions in both the Northern and Southern Hemisphere. They may also be called “four-season forests” because the midlatitude climates harboring them tend to experience four distinct seasons. A vast diversity of different forest types make up this broad category, from the broadly distributed temperate deciduous forests to pine woods and relatively geographically restricted temperate rainforests.

tropical rainforest: a large, dense forest which grows near the equator, between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer, that receives four to eight meters of rain each year.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 17 interconnected goals that provide individualized guidelines and targets to help every nation develop sustainably, protecting the planet and ensuring all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The SDGs are meant to build on the Millennium Development Goals (2000 - 2015) and also focus attention on addressing new problems such as climate change, economic inequality, and sustainable consumption among other priorities.