

Hot Air - Myths and Facts About Forests and Climate

Deforestation has played a significant role in contributing to global warming and the future management of forests will play a large role in any future efforts to mitigate the effects of global climate change. A significant body of research has shown that forests are best suited to prevent future adverse climate changes if they are allowed to grow and mature. Northwest forests are specifically suited to capturing and storing carbon pollution that amplifies the greenhouse effect and contributes to global warming. The following is a list of myths and facts about forests and their role in combating global warming.

Myth #1 Fast-growing young forests absorb more carbon and are better for the climate than slow-growing old forests.

Fact: Most old forests are still growing and absorbing carbon. Old forests store far more carbon than young forests. Mature forests cannot be converted into young forests without losing most of the carbon to the atmosphere.

Myth #2 Forests outside the tropics are unimportant because they do not contribute significantly to global carbon storage.

Fact: Pacific Northwest temperate rainforests can attain the greatest biomass per acre of any ecosystem on earth. Temperate and boreal forests are very extensive and currently serve as net carbon sinks.

Myth #3 It's better to store carbon in wood products than in forests.

Fact: Carbon is stored more securely in long-lived forests than in short-lived wood products. In fact, the process of logging a forest and converting it to forest products releases most of the stored carbon. Only 15% of carbon stored in a live tree is stored in the final wood product.

Myth #4 Forests are not good places to store carbon because forest fires release stored carbon through combustion.

Fact: Fire is an essential ecological process that helps forests stay healthy. Carbon release from logging is far greater than release through natural fire. Most carbon remains on site after forest fires and large dead trees can last for many decades –

See more at: <http://www.oregonwild.org/forests/climate-change/myths#sthash.punqBgQu.dpuf>