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Keeping Forest Management Great

Forests, home to many and a place where humans can experience nature are very important on more than just our survival. Growing up in Idaho and living here all of my life, I have been camping pretty much my entire life. Now, imagine camping without a forest, just some plains or the desert. That would be immensely boring and you wouldn't have the cool feeling of being surrounded by the forest and all of its sounds. The trees are what make up the forests and they supply food, water, and shelter to animals. They are crucial to the survival of so many organisms.

The state of Idaho has approximately 21.5 million acres of forest land. Approximately forty percent of Idaho's land is covered in trees which is a huge portion of land. According to the Idaho Forest Products Commission, "Idaho forests cover an area larger than the states of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island combined". This shows how important forests are. Management has to be taken seriously because with proper forest management, we can help forests last longer and that would be very beneficial to our survival as well as watershed protection, preventing soil erosion and mitigating climate change.

Forests face many threats such as natural catastrophes and even diseases. If a growing forest is healthy, then the chances of these threats are diminished. With active forest management, we can help forests stay healthy and prevent threats like fires and disease. One way that forests can be managed for a healthy future is through the process of thinning. In this

process, forests are reduced in density which helps reduce bark beetles and other diseases to the trees. This can also make fires less likely since trees would be in farther proximity. Another way that forest management can be done is through prescribed fires. This is where small and controlled fires are started which help burn up the underbrush and also help remove excessive amounts of trees. This form of management also encourages new vegetation to grow.

Healthy forests can help the present and future inhabitants thrive. *The Importance of Forests*, written by Fatima says, “Animals, big and small, depend on healthy forests, which provide them with the fruits, nuts and plants they need to thrive”. In addition to the survival of humans, forests are home to many different kinds of animals and organisms. These animals are important to the ecosystem because they each have different jobs. A couple of animals such as raccoons and opossums for example help the decomposition process of dead animals. Without proper care of forests, these ecosystems would be in a mess.

Through maintaining and keeping our Idaho forests protected, we are not only helping ourselves in the long run, but are also helping the well being of so many organisms and the health of all that depend on it. Help our forests thrive and you will thrive. Our world depends on it.

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