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In my area of Idaho (Northern Panhandle) logging is a big deal. I am constantly seeing logging trucks filled to the brim, hauling logs to the mill. I hunt the clearcuts that are made by loggers, and I see firsthand how logging can positively affect the economy, as well as the environment. Logging for building material, or any other use, creates thousands of jobs in our community, as well as creates premier habitat for the wildlife.

Logging has a huge effect on the economy, and without it, our little town of Spirit Lake wouldn't even be a place on the map. The Spokesman Review wrote an article on the history of Spirit Lake where it stated, "In building Spirit Lake, Frederick A. Blackwell created such a jewel, though it is apparent his interest was totally focused on logging, milling and railroading". Though the old mill is gone, there is now a new one, the Chilco Mill, right down the road. This mill has provided thousands of jobs to everyone from mill supervisors, to log truck drivers.

Logging can benefit the environment as well. It can imitate fires which thin out the brush and weaker trees, and makes room for young, strong trees to mature. Areas can either be clear-cutted, or selectively cut. Both these have different cycle timing. Clear-cutting requires a much larger cycle time before you can take mature trees out of that area again. Selective cutting uses a much shorter cycle because you are leaving some mature trees behind to cut a few years later. Logging also creates fantastic habitat for wildlife. In our class, we were taught how loggers will specifically leave a few dead trees for birds like the pileated woodpecker to inhabit.

Some say that using lumber for building materials is not the most eco-friendly way to go. The Worldwide Steel Buildings website states, "The timber industry likes to remind consumers that for every tree harvested during clear cutting, two saplings are planted in its place.

What they don't like to acknowledge is that it can take decades before the saplings are ready for harvesting, with the highest value trees being forty-nine years old at harvest." All this is correct, however they aren't taking into account that if a forest is managed properly, the cycles of harvest can be timed. This means we would never be at a shortage for trees and lumber.

Overall, I know that using wood as a building material, especially in my area. Economically, it provides jobs to thousands of people in my community, and can be very eco-friendly. It creates a good habitat for animals to live in and is a safe way to imitate wildfires. There are critics, but if you do enough research, you'll find that lumber is typically the best choice to use. With the right goals in mind, logging can be used in extremely beneficial ways.

Works Cited

- Spencer, Keith. "Spirit Lake History, Part 9." *Spokesman.com*, The Spokesman-Review, 30 June 2009, www.spokesman.com/stories/2008/apr/10/spirit-lake-history-part-9/.
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