



Clean Forests are Healthy Forests

Idaho is covered by over 21.4 million acres of forest that require constant management to keep them healthy. These forests provide Idaho with valuable resources such as clean water, wildlife, recreational areas, and wood. Wildfires, pollution, insects, disease, and much more harm our forests every year. To protect against these disasters we need to stop them before they begin. I believe this can be accomplished by removing overgrowth and pollutants from the forest floors.

Taking care of our forests is an important task that requires the joint efforts of Idaho's industrial/private landowners and the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). To keep our forests healthy, IDL has acts such as the Forests Protection Act to keep our land and water free of pollution. The Forests Protection Act "promote[s] active forest management and ensure[s] that the health of forest soil, water, vegetation, wildlife, and aquatic habitat is maintained during the growing and harvesting of forest trees in Idaho." (Rjohnson) With this act in place, industrial and private landowners are required to help protect the land they harvest by keeping pollutants out of the water and replanting the vegetation they destroy. The IDL works tirelessly to protect the land, water, and wildlife of Idaho's forests using acts, regulations, and human capital to keep the forests' ecosystem intact.

Based on the 2021 Idaho Fire Season in Review from IDL, 1,201 fires burned a total of 425,092 acres state-wide. Due to the efforts of the IDL Fire, two Timber Protection agencies, rural volunteer fire departments, and many more agencies the fires

of 2021 were suppressed. Although the valiant efforts of these companies were enough to stop the fires, they were unable to prevent them. To solve the problem, I believe that a plan to clean the forests is in order. My plan to accomplish this is to separate the forests into sectors based on the density and volume of the overgrowth. The density and volume of overgrowth will be calculated by servers on foot or through the use of drones when applicable. After all the needed data is recorded a map of sectors can be drawn based on the fire risk, overgrowth density/volume, and accessibility. The map will then be used to identify the sectors that require the most cleaning and allow us to determine where to begin. This plan should aid in the prevention of forest fires and can be adapted to help prevent the spread of disease and insect infestations that also plague our forests.

Idaho is covered by over 21.4 million acres of forest that require constant management to keep them healthy. These forests provide Idaho with valuable resources such as clean water, wildlife, recreational areas, and wood. These resources need to be protected from climate change, wildfires, and pollution. Wildfires, pollution, insects, disease, and much more harm our forests every year. I believe my plan could help to prevent future disasters and keep our forests healthy, as a clean forest is a healthy forest.

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