

Forest Keepers

When you think of natural resources, do you think of trees? Trees are a natural resource people have been using for a very long time. Trees are burned for fuel and used to build homes and to make paper. Many people rely on timber from BLM forests.

But forests do much more than just provide trees and wood for people. Healthy forests provide habitat for wildlife, plants, and fungi. Healthy forests have healthy streams that are home to fish and other aquatic life. They also provide people with the chance to enjoy nature.

How can you tell when a forest is healthy? A healthy forest has many different kinds of trees growing in it—young and old trees, and different species as well. A healthy forest even has logs on the ground and standing dead trees, called snags. Many fungi and mosses live on these dead trees. A good mixture of trees and other plants means a variety of animals will be able to live in the forest. The food, water, and shelter that animals need to survive can all be found in a healthy forest.

We've learned many things about how to keep a forest healthy. We've also learned that roads in forests can be a big problem. Many of these roads were built to make it easier for timber companies to get logs out of the forest. Some of these roads can cause serious erosion. Soil in forest streams is harmful to fish and other creatures that depend on clean water for their survival. In some places, old logging roads are now being used by people interested in recreation. More traffic and people on forest roads disturb wildlife. BLM is working to protect wildlife habitat in its forests by removing some forest roads. The roadbed is dug up; then the area is replanted with a variety of seeds and seedlings.

As you can see, keeping forests healthy is no easy job. But it certainly is an important one! After all, people need forests, and so do many other living things.

