

Slashing and burning in the Amazon rainforest are killing our planet

Staff Editorial, The Pony Express

Everyone knows that trees give us oxygen to breathe. There are many comments today saying if we get rid of our trees, we get rid of our lungs. Well, the world's lungs are currently on fire.

Did you know the Amazon rainforest, which produces 20 percent of the world's oxygen, is currently burning away? We bet you didn't know about it until a few weeks ago, when the national media finally reported about the fires that had been burning across Brazil's Amazon rainforest for several weeks. Why did it take so long for us to hear about it?

There are loggers and cattle ranchers who are cutting down the trees of the tropical rainforest to make room for crops and cattle. To get rid of the trees that were cut down, they burned them. Research has shown that this slash and burn method has been used to clear land for thousands of years, but according to earthsky.org, dry conditions have caused the fires to burn out of control. The raging fires do not seem likely to die any time soon.

The other surprising fact is that there is not just one fire. Multiple fires have started along the edges and river basins of the Amazon. According to sciencealert.com, "Since August 15, more than 9,500 new forest fires have started across Brazil, primarily in the Amazon basin."

The fires are also in areas that have previously been deforested. The extent of the fires has gotten so bad that Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's President, banned the use of fire as a method of deforestation and, according to the New York Times, declared a state of emergency and "took the rare step ... of mobilizing the armed forces to help contain blazes of a scale not seen in nearly a decade."

With how fast these fires are starting and spreading, they don't seem to be stopping any time soon. The Brazilian government is finally trying to contain the situation, and there have also been many environmental organizations taking donations to help the cause and try to tame the flames. As of now though, the rainforest – and our planet – continues to be destroyed every day. What are you going to do about it?

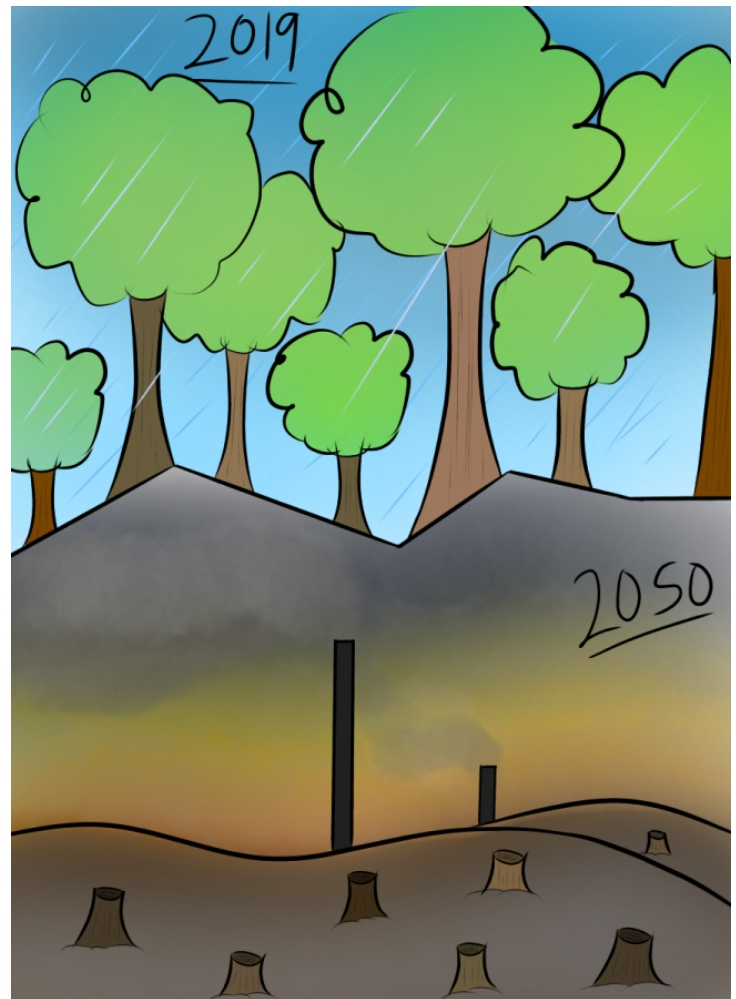


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