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A Natural Source of Products



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1.1 Tropical Rain Forests

At least a quarter of all pharmaceutical products are derived from tropical rain forests. This is an impressive statistic when you consider that less than one percent of all Amazon plants have been intensively examined for their medicinal properties.

Tropical rain forests have provided us with treatments for leukemia, Hodgkin's disease, breast, cervical, and testicular cancer as well as a wide array of analgesics, antibiotics, heart drugs, enzymes, hormones, diuretics, anti-parasite compounds, ulcer treatments, dentifrices, laxatives, dysentery treatments, and anticoagulants. Vast quantities of rubber from the rain forests provide such everyday items as tires, gum, and running shoes.

1.2 North American Forests

The symposium on the Impact Assessment Study was organized by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). It was hosted by the American Institute of Biological Sciences. The June 1976 event took place at historic Markham University. Critical attention was directed at new trends in techniques and considerations that are methodological in their nature.

1.3 North American Deserts

This symposium focused on how the biological significance of environmental impacts can be both evaluated by ecologists

and described to decision-makers in the environmental impact assessment process.

Perhaps the two most difficult questions that biologists repeatedly face in assessing environmental impact are also the two most important:

- How can the Impact Assessment Study be evaluated?
- How can these evaluations be meaningfully described in order to enlighten and influence public decision-makers in the environmental impact assessment process?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and similar laws and regulations in many states established the process of environmental impact assessment as a significant factor in public decision-making on issues like the Impact Assessment Study.

1.4 Canadian Tundra

The importance and value of this process, as well as its points of weakness, are well known to the nation's ecologists—a sizable number of whom have participated in it. The symposium permitted ecologists to voice their views on improving the process.

The difficulty of these questions (as well as their scope) is intimidating on both conceptual and practical grounds.

1.5 Pacific Northwest Kelp Beds

With the advent of the environmental movement, and particularly in response to the National Environmental Policy Act and other legislation, the environmental baseline study has become an accepted element of many federal resource development and environmental protection programs.