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Forests can store more carbon emissions than previously thought

13:29, July 15, 2011

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A latest study showed that the role of forests as carbon dioxide (CO2) stores was much bigger than previously thought. The findings were published in the latest issue of the journal "Science" on Thursday.

From 1990 to 2007, 8.8 billion tones of CO2 were released in the world through the use of fossil fuels, but around one third of them were absorbed by forests, according to the study.

The woods are responsible for the entire terrestrial storage of CO2 while agricultural land, grassland and tundra played no role at the global level as CO2 are absorbed as much as they emit, said one of the authors, Anatoly Shvidenko, from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg near Vienna.

The conclusion was made after analyzing the relationship between the area change of the forests and green fields and the content change of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The important role of forests as a global "vacuum cleaner" of climate-damaging greenhouse gas CO2 has long been clear but the new data have proved their higher importance as terrestrial CO2-sink, the IIASA said.

Figures showed that the still not destroyed tropical rain forests are responsible for the inclusion of more than 1 billion tons of carbon per year.

The boreal coniferous forest in northern zones, primarily in Canada and Russia, swallows some 500 million tons per year, while the forests in the temperate zones stores annually around 780 million tons of carbon.

The study also confirmed that, currently, there are now nearly 4 billion hectares of



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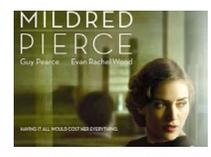


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forest absorbing more than 860 million tons of carbon, mainly in forest soils and plants. However, deforestation releases 2.9 billion tons of carbon every year.

It is therefore necessary to prevent the deforestation of rain forests so that the accumulation of CO2 in the atmosphere can be limited, said Yude Pans, the lead author of the study, .

Source: Xinhua

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