

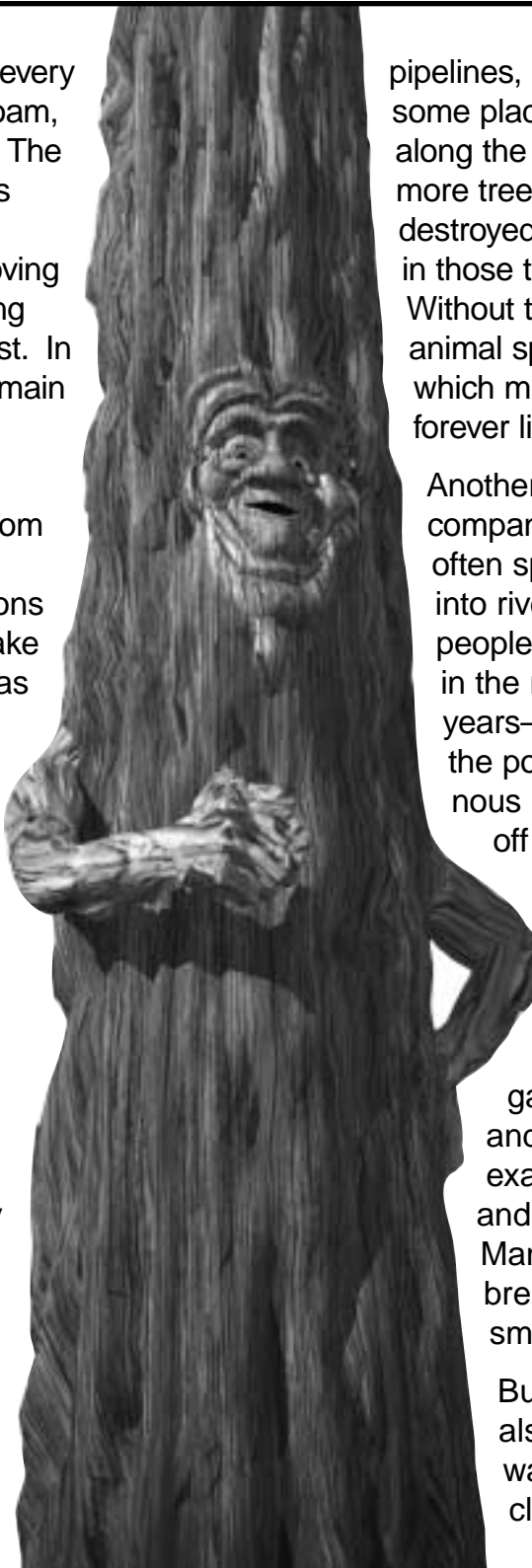
# FACTS ABOUT OIL

Many products that we use every day—including gasoline, styrofoam, and plastic—are made from oil. The oil used to make these products often comes from beneath the ground in the rainforests. Removing the oil from the ground, or drilling for oil, is harmful to the rainforest. In fact, drilling for oil is one of the main causes of rainforest destruction worldwide.

Oil, or petroleum, comes from the fossils of dinosaurs and plants that lived on Earth millions of years ago. Oil is used to make fuels, called fossil fuels, such as gasoline. Oil is also used to make plastic bags, bottles, and cups, styrofoam, and synthetic fabrics like polyester and nylon.

Large oil companies drill for oil on millions of acres of rainforest. The companies then sell the oil in order to make money. There is nothing wrong with making money, but when companies destroy the rainforests to make money they destroy not only the forest, but also the lives of the animals and people who live there.

Oil drilling harms the rainforests because lots of trees are cut down to make room for oil roads, oil



pipelines, and oil machinery. In some places, people then move in along the roads and cut down even more trees. When these trees are destroyed, all the animals that lived in those trees are homeless. Without their forest homes, these animal species face extinction, which means they could disappear forever like the dinosaurs.

Another problem is that when companies drill for oil the oil is often spilled onto the soil and into rivers. Indigenous peoples—people whose families have lived in the rainforest for thousands of years—often become sick from the pollution. Sometimes indigenous peoples are even pushed off of their lands, or displaced, by oil projects.

Oil also creates air pollution after it's turned into gasoline. Burning fossil fuels like gasoline (by driving cars and flying airplanes, for example) makes our air dirty and unhealthy to breathe. Many people get sick from breathing in too much of this smog or dirty air.

Burning oil and gasoline also makes the planet get warmer and creates climate change. This

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means that weather patterns around the world start to change in dangerous ways. Winters become colder, summers become hotter, and storms become fiercer and more frequent. These changes in climate are hard on the forests. One third of the world's forests are threatened by climate change.

## Oil Is Not Necessary

Even though oil and oil products are currently used to drive our cars, fly our planes, operate our factories, and warm our homes, we don't have to use oil for these things. Instead, we can use renewable sources of energy, like the sun and the wind. Energy from the sun and the wind is called renewable because it never runs out. Light and heat from the sun can be used to make solar power and windmills can be used to capture the power of the wind. The sun and the wind are great sources of energy because they don't destroy the rainforests or harm the planet.

We can also use things other than oil to make plastic, such as corn. Corn can be grown on farmland that has already been cleared for other crops, so it does not hurt the rainforests or the planet.

## What Can We Do To Help?

Until our energy supply comes from renewable energies like the sun and the wind, many of us will need to use oil in our daily lives. By reducing the amount of oil we use, however, we can make a big difference for the rain-forests. There are many ways we can reduce the amount of oil we use.

**First**, instead of driving our cars, we can walk, ride a bike, carpool, and take the bus,

train, or subway whenever possible. We can also write to automobile companies and ask them to make cars that run on alternative fuels that do not come from oil.

**Second**, we can use energy from the sun as much as possible. We can hang our laundry outside to dry, warm up special bags of water for fun solar showers, and ask our parents to install solar heating panels. Although solar panels may be expensive to buy, over time they'll save a lot of money—and they'll help save the rainforests!

**Third**, we can use less plastic by using glass, ceramic, metal, and cloth instead. Take a cloth bag with you to the market and use it instead of a plastic grocery bag. Use a glass or a ceramic mug to drink from instead of plastic cups, and buy drinks in glass bottles instead of plastic bottles. If you do use plastic containers, make sure to reuse them as much as possible before recycling them.

The **Forth** thing you can do is write to Ford Motor Company. Currently, Ford vehicles account for approximately one month of the United States' annual oil consumption, an amount equal to the annual oil consumption of Italy. A few years ago Ford promised to make cars that use less oil, but they have broken that promise. Please write to Ford and ask them to make cars that use cleaner technologies, like hybrids and fuel cells.

Write to:

**Mr. William Clay Ford, Jr.  
Chairman and CEO, Ford  
Motor Company  
The American Road  
Dearborn, MI 48120**

*revised 2/04*

