3\_2 notes – Human Impacts

Natural Resources

These are things found in nature that we use to meet our needs. They can be renewable (used at a rate that allows for natural renewal) or non-renewable (cannot be replaced naturally). Using a renewable resource to fast may cause it to be considered “non-renewable”. Sustainable means the resource being used at a rate that allows it to be renewable

Habitat loss

-When a natural environment is destroyed/damaged by either man-made actions or a natural disturbance, you loose habitat. When a large area (habitat) is cut up by the action of man (or a natural disturbance) the habitat is *fragmented*. Habitat loss is a major cause of species extinction (bears, caribou, marmots, black-footed ferrets, some amphibians and reptiles, etc.)

Introduced species

An Introduced Species is a species of plant or animal introduced to an area through the actions of people. These species often have no natural predators, and so their population explodes, and as a result they can over-predate natural species, leading to the extinction of the naturally occurring species in the area. They can often out-compete natural species, leading to the loss of habitat for the natural species, and possibly that natural species will become extinct.

Examples: rabbits in Australia, Dandelions, Feral horses, House Mouse, Black Rat, House Sparrow, Common Carp, Sea Lamprey, Water Milfoil, Diffuse Knapweed, Scotch Broom, etc.)

Air Pollution

Burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) contributes to air pollution (CO2, NOx, SOx, particulates, etc.) the greenhouse effect (diagram on page 3.12), and the release of methane from the ground (permafrost and other sources) are all contributing to climate change.

Water Pollution

Acid Rain is when pollutants in the air (SOx compounds) combine with water vapour to form acids, and when they fall as rain they cause lakes to become too acidic to support life. It also dissolves limestone (statues, grave stones, etc.). Pesticides and other liquids do similar damage.

Land Pollution

Landfills and garbage? Where does it go, what leaks out?

Endangered Species = “one that is nearly extinct”

Extinct = no longer exists on Earth

Threatened Species = “one that could become endangered” without significant changes to its existing environment (or lack there of)