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Sudden aspen decline, dubbed S.A.D. by many, is a phenomenon that has plagued North American aspen populations for decades. Through reviewing several related research documents surrounding sudden aspen decline, I've made an infographic poster that summarizes the key points of this complex disease.

Like many climate-related problems, there are a number of compounding factors that contribute to the continued mortality of quaking aspen in the Colorado Rockies. As noted by the United States Forest Service, 139,000 acres of Colorado aspen were affected by sudden aspen decline in 2006, and many areas are either still in recovery or continuing the trend by consequence of drought, pathogens, and climate change-related shifts in temperature and snowpack.

Aftermath of the 2002 Colorado Plateau drought stands as a model for how water stress can negatively impact aspen populations on a large scale, dramatically changing the landscape. As less moisture becomes available to the plant colonies, they become high risk for other factors like aspen bark beetle species invasion, which can cause less sprouting and result in the decline of biodiversity.

Any of these instances can leave an aspen population with predisposed factors making them unable to reproduce. This, in turn, will cause older growth to eventually die out with no younger generation to continue on. Conifer dominance

and lack of biodiversity makes it nearly impossible to reintroduce the species once S.A.D. has decimated an area.

While there is not a current solution to sudden aspen decline, I made this infographic with the hopes to inspire students to pursue a future in STEM, where we can come together to preventatively protect the planet and get this kind of crucial information into the minds of policy makers.