

Protecting North Carolina's Communities, Economy and Environment from Global Warming

Global warming is already affecting North Carolina, and will continue to do so for decades to come. 5% of total allowance value generated from a climate bill should be invested in protecting public health and local economies across America by creating jobs that protect wildlife and natural resources from the effects of global warming.

Critical Issues for North Carolina:

- Rising sea level
- Damage to local economy
- Increasing temperatures
- Changing precipitation
- Decreasing water availability

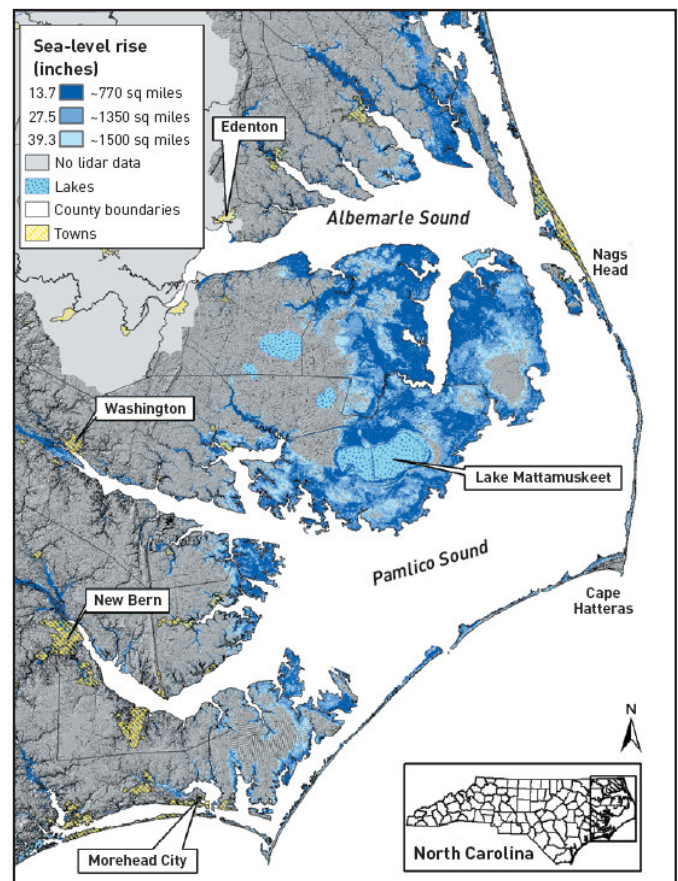
Is Global Warming Affecting Natural Resources in North Carolina?

Yes. North Carolina is warming. Since mid-century, **temperatures across the state have risen approximately 1.2°F,¹ and are expected to rise up to an additional 5°F by 2060.** A temperature rise of just 4° would cause central North Carolina to **resemble the climate of central Florida.²** In coastal North Carolina, projections show a decrease of up to 8 inches in annual rainfall by 2060.³ These changes are significant, and the impacts are already being felt.

Across the US, more than 80% of plant and animal species studied are shifting their ranges in reaction to less than 1° F of warming in the last century.⁴ The IPCC predicts further warming could result in **up to 30% of known species becoming extinct,** and the disappearance of over a fifth of the world's ecosystems.⁵

From the western forests to the coast, the affects of global warming are being felt across North Carolina. Many areas of North Carolina's coastline are sinking at a rate of nearly 7 inches per century, and studies predict that sea level rise of 18 inches is possible by 2080, **flooding more than 770 miles of the state's coast.⁶** Upland ecosystems are also affected as evidenced by a decline in high elevation spruce firs and associated endemic species, loss of brook trout habitat due to rising steam temperatures⁷ and the destruction of hemlock forests by invasive species.⁸

Possible North Carolina coastline after continued sea-level rise



Source: Ben Poulter, Duke University, and Sam Pearsall, The Nature Conservancy, 2003

What's at Stake?

Changes brought on by global warming are disrupting the careful balance of natural resources and having significant impacts on communities and businesses across the state.

- **Communities:** In four North Carolina counties alone, an 18-inch rise in sea level by 2080 could cause over \$2.8 billion in property value losses. In Bertie County, property losses are projected to be \$9.25 million.⁹ This will disproportionately affect low-income families who can least afford to move or take other preventive measures.



Protecting North Carolina's forests – and the valuable services they provide – will safeguard communities across the state.

- **Clean Water and Agriculture:** With rising temperatures and decreasing precipitation, economic losses from droughts, particularly in the agricultural sector, can be expected to worsen. In 2002 alone, droughts caused over \$600 million in losses to agricultural and other sectors—and affected over 4,000 jobs.¹⁰ With 98% of public supply systems drawing from ground water sources, water shortages from coastal flooding, saltwater intrusion into aquifers, and increased droughts will have severe effects.¹¹

- **Health:** The Center for Disease Control considers increased risks associated with air pollution, heat waves, extreme weather events, water and food borne infectious diseases to be major public health issues in the face of climate change.¹² Increased health risks bring with them increased costs. Asthma, expected to worsen as climate change decreases local air quality, cost North Carolina \$631 million in 2003.¹³

- **Local Businesses:** North Carolina's outdoor recreation industry is dependent on healthy ecosystems—businesses that support fishing, rafting, and camping are being threatened by the effects of global warming, putting at risk North Carolina's \$7.5 billion outdoor recreation economy.¹⁴ The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, a World Heritage site and one of the most visited parks in the US, is losing its iconic Fraser firs.¹⁵ As the health of North Carolina's forests suffers, a range of businesses and vital natural services are likely to be negatively affected, such as North Carolina's \$100 million per year Christmas tree industry.¹⁶

Economy at Risk:
\$7.5 Billion
Annual contribution of outdoor recreation to state's economy

Protecting Natural Resources, Creating Jobs

Restoring ecosystem health helps ensure species have the best possible chance to adapt to the effects of global warming. Ecosystem adaptation projects, such as establishing wildlife corridors for animals migrating in search of needed habitat, are critical to the survival of many species. **Investing now in natural resources is the most cost-effective way to protect our treasured landscapes and the clean water, clean air and jobs they provide.**

Of the total allowance value generated from an energy and climate bill, 5% should be invested in protecting communities and local economies across America by protecting natural resources from the effects of global warming. This funding will allow North Carolina's wildlife and land management agencies, as well as the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Forest Legacy Program, to ramp up important conservation projects.

This dedicated funding will allow scientists, engineers, construction crews, and others to be employed across North Carolina:

- Repairing damaged watersheds to ensure clean water for communities through removing impediments and deteriorating structures, restoring eroding river banks, and repairing in-stream habitat.
- Acquiring land and establishing migration corridors to increase species' survival as climates change.
- Monitoring wildlife, their habitat and local climate and developing appropriate adaptation responses.
- Restoring native landscapes to increase resiliency in a warming world by removing unnecessary roads and barriers, constructing riparian buffer strips, and removing invasive species.

This work will protect and create American jobs – providing new skills and income to workers and their families across the state.



Restoring river habitats protects ecosystems, jobs, and drinking water

Investing in Solutions for Families, Businesses and the Planet

The risks to North Carolina and the nation from global warming are significant—and require an extensive and sustained commitment to reducing heat-trapping pollution, protecting our natural resources, and the communities that rely on them. A cap-and-invest system that reduces pollution and auctions emission allowances will provide billions of dollars for combating the climate crisis.

Revenues from a cap-and-invest system must be directed to three primary solutions:

- **Invest 5% of the total allowance value generated in annual dedicated funding for natural resource protection** in order to create jobs while increasing resiliency across landscapes, protecting important ecosystem services and safeguarding communities.
- **Offset increased energy costs for at-risk consumers** by allocating roughly 14% of allowance auction revenues to consumers through existing mechanisms such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.¹⁷
- **Invest in areas such as clean energy choices, job training, and business assistance**, which will aid businesses and communities in transitioning to a clean energy economy, while creating jobs and reducing heat-trapping pollution.

North Carolina and the country need your support for reducing carbon pollution and protecting communities by safeguarding our natural resources.

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Text Box: Outdoor Industry Association. 2007. "State by State Active Outdoor Recreation Economy Report." Available from: http://www.outdoorindustry.org/research.php?action=detail&research_id=52

Map: Munger, Amber and Michael Shore. 2005. "Understanding Global Warming for North Carolina. Sound Science for Making Informed Decisions." Environmental Defense Fund. Available from: http://www.edf.org/documents/3053_NCClimateReport.pdf

Photo Credits: Thanks to USGS, the State of North Carolina, the State of Massachusetts, and US FWS.

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⁶ Bin et al. 2007. "Measuring the Impacts of Climate Change on North Carolina Coastal Resources." National Commission on Energy Policy. Available from: <http://econ.appstate.edu/climate/NC-NCEP%20final%20report.031507.pdf>; Munger and Shore. Pg. 11

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Available from: <http://www.forestthreats.org/news-events/in-the-news/Blue-Ridge-Country-article.pdf>

⁸ Nuckolls, April E. 2008. "Hemlock Declines Rapidly with Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Infestation: Impacts on the Carbon Cycle of Southern Appalachian Forests." In: *Ecosystems*. December 2008. Available from:

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¹¹ Center for Integrative Environmental Research. 2008. Pg. 12.

¹² Frumkin, Howard. 2009. Testimony before the Committee of Energy and Public Works. "Update on the Latest Global Warming Science: Public Health." February 25. Available from: http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore_id=aeafa9ec4-cb40-449e-a5d0-b5660a508f90

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¹⁴ Outdoor Industry Association. 2007.

¹⁵ National Parks Conservation Association. "Unnatural Disaster: Global Warming and our National Parks." Available from:

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¹⁶ North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. "Marketing Division – Christmas Trees." Available from:

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¹⁷ Stone, Chad and Hannah Shaw. 2009. "Extending "Climate Rebates" to Include Middle-Income Consumers." *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*.