



Getting the Whole Job Done: Safeguarding Natural Resources, Storing Carbon

Protecting our natural resources from the impacts of climate change will help ensure our forests, wetlands, and other natural lands remain resilient in a warming world. Safeguarding natural resources through conservation, restoration, and careful management will create jobs and help maintain the ability of our forests and other natural areas to absorb and store hundreds of millions of tons of carbon dioxide, a chief greenhouse gas. Investing in natural resource adaptation is a one-two punch against climate change: 1) protecting America's natural systems from climate-driven damage and 2) securing and in some cases enhancing the ability of these lands to slow climate change by capturing and storing carbon dioxide.

America's natural lands are both at risk from the climate crisis and an essential part of the solution.

Current land-use and forestry practices in the U.S. remove a net 799 million metric tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere each year— more than is emitted annually by the entire U.S. fleet of passenger cars.¹ Our lands' ability to store carbon will rise or fall depending on how much land is conserved and if healthy ecosystems are restored and protected. *If America's forests, grasslands, and other natural systems are developed, degraded, or poorly managed, less carbon will be stored and the climate crisis will worsen.*

The United States currently loses the equivalent of two Rhode Islands every year due to development.² *The U.S. Forest Service projects that 44 million acres of forest alone will be developed by 2030,³* disrupting ecosystems and their ability to store carbon. When development is combined with climate-driven changes to our lands, such as drought and insect outbreaks, our forests and other natural areas come under increased stress. In their currently degraded state, ecosystems are more vulnerable to climate change than they need to be. But if we invest in natural resource adaptation funding, we can restore the resilience of these ecosystems, create jobs, and protect and potentially enhance their capacity of these natural systems to store carbon.

Dedicated natural resource adaptation funding from a comprehensive energy, jobs and climate bill will provide the tools we need to conserve, restore, and carefully manage our lands in the face of climate change. **Helping America's lands adapt to climate change will protect our natural resources for the future, protect carbon stores and potentially foster additional carbon dioxide reductions outside of the cap and trade system – a crucial insurance policy for America's emissions goals.**



Road removal projects in our nation's forests put people to work protecting natural services- including carbon storage- from the effects of global warming.

Dedicated funding to natural resources adaptation will:

- Create jobs to begin the conservation work necessary to safeguard America's vast natural landscapes on public and private lands from the devastating impacts of rapidly changing climates
- Provide funding and resources for agencies and landowners to restore lands damaged by extreme weather events – such as floods or hurricanes – which will become increasingly severe
- Ramp-up over-due projects including re-planting wetlands, addressing invasive species, repairing fish culverts, monitoring global warming's effects on species and landscapes, and removing unwanted roads in forests

Natural resource adaptation is part of the greenhouse gas solution.

To maintain the health of our economy and our planet, robust natural resource adaptation funding is critical to ensuring that our natural lands are preserved for generations to come.

For more information please contact:

- Bill Lee – American Rivers (202) 243-7070
Alexandra Adams – Defenders of Wildlife (202) 772-0270
Marty Hayden – Earthjustice (202) 667-4500
Jon Hunter – Endangered Species Coalition (202) 476-0669
Mark Wenzler, Elise Russell –
National Parks Conservation Association (202) 223-6722
Derek Brockbank – National Wildlife Federation (202) 797-6666
Desiree Sorenson-Groves – National Wildlife Refuge Association (202) 292-3961
Tom Fry, Jennifer McKnight – The Nature Conservancy (703) 841-4525
Chris Lyons – Restore America's Estuaries (703) 524-0248
Athan Manuel, Myke Bybee – Sierra Club (202) 547-1141
Keith Curley – Trout Unlimited (703) 284-9428
Jad Daley – The Trust for Public Land (202) 543-7552
David Moulton, J.P. Leous – The Wilderness Society (202) 429-2681
Kelly Keenan Aylward – Wildlife Conservation Society (202) 624-8195



Protecting wildlands from the effects of climate change will safeguard vital natural services-- from cleaning air and water to storing carbon.



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¹ Congressional Budget Office. *The Potential for Carbon Sequestration in the United States*. 2007. ; Bureau of Transportation Statistics. 2009. "Table 1-11: Number of U.S. Aircraft, Vehicles, Vessels and Other Conveyances." Available from:

http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/html/table_01_11.html

² U.S. Forest Service. 2006. "Four Threats to the Health of Nation's Forests and Grasslands." U.S. Department of Agriculture. Available from:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/four-threats/>

³ Stein, Susan M. et al. 2007. "National Forests on the Edge: Development Pressures on America's National Forests and Grasslands." U.S. Department of Agriculture: Forest Service. Available from: <http://www.fs.fed.us/openspace/fote/GTR728.pdf>