



# FOREST-CLIMATE WORKING GROUP

## 2022 Policy Priorities

### Maintain and Expand Forest Cover

Forests are our best natural climate change solutions and a foundational force for carbon mitigation efforts. Maintaining and expanding well-managed tree cover on public and privately-owned forest lands, as well as in rural and urban communities, is critical to effectively managing increasingly devastating climate and health crises.

#### Did you know?

*Forests absorb nearly 15% of all U.S. emissions from burning fossil fuels, and we can increase this number with the right policies and incentives.*

#### Why does forest cover matter?

The co-benefits of forests extend beyond the tree line, helping to improve economies, health outcomes and more.

- Forests create nearly 40 jobs in rural communities for every \$1 million invested in reforestation and forestry sector jobs.
- Forests provide critical habitat for at-risk wildlife; filter water for aquatic species and for the 55% of Americans who get their drinking water from forested land; and help keep our air clean.

Protecting existing forests and restoring degraded forests enhances our present and future emission-capturing capacity.

*If fully reforested, our national forests could sequester more than 6 billion tons of carbon dioxide annually!*



*The FCWG reflects the diversity of forest sector leaders dedicated to conserving, protecting and managing America's forests, including: forest sector businesses, conservation nonprofits, academic institutions, carbon markets, government agencies, state foresters and private landowners.*



## 2022 Policy Priorities

# Proposed Solutions to Help Maintain and Expand Forest Cover

### On private lands:

#### **Incentivize sustainable management and continued investment in forests**

- Retain or enhance tax policies to retain working forests, including the current federal capital gains tax treatment of timber income and the permanent federal tax credit for conservation easements on working forests.
- Enhance existing funding and policies for retaining private forests, including the Forest Legacy Program, which funds the purchasing of forest land or conservation easements for forest land; the USFS Community Forest Program; and outlining dedicated funding levels within the Land and Water Conservation Fund for USFS and DOI acquisition and easements.
- Provide market-based incentives for the purchase of easements and other interests in land for forests of high carbon value at risk of conversion (assuming cap and trade or carbon tax policy).

#### **Encourage reforestation by continuing to invest in federal support for planting trees in recently harvested areas and reforesting lands that have previously been farmed or ranched.**

- Maintain the existing federal tax deduction for replanting after harvest.
- Maintain Conservation Reserve Program authority and funding to support reforestation of marginal or abandoned agriculture land.
- Direct resources at areas and forest owners identified as lacking robust forest stocks.

### On public lands:

#### **Provide additional resources for reforestation to recover burned landscapes, improve water quality, restore and establish wildlife habitat, and increase carbon capture.**

- Increase appropriations for reforestation through USFS/Vegetation and Watershed Management Account.
- Grant USFS authority to implement post-fire reforestation treatments for up to three years on lands unlikely to recover naturally - similar to the Burned Area Rehabilitation program at DOI.
- Establish a new federal matching grant program for states, local governments, tribes and NGOs to implement climate-informed reforestation.

#### **Make greening our urban spaces and communities easier by providing grants and other financial incentives for tree planting in underserved urban areas.**

- Increase funding for the USFS Urban and Community Forestry Program.
- Establish a new matching grant program, prioritized for underserved cities and neighborhoods, to plant urban forests as a complement to technical assistance provided by USFS through the Urban and Community Forestry Program.