

California Forest Carbon Plan

Managing Our Forest Landscapes in a Changing Climate

Securing California's wildland and urban forests as healthy, resilient net sinks of carbon that provide a range of priceless ecosystem and societal benefits.

California is blessed with 33 million acres of forestland and an urban forest canopy that together capture and clean our water supply, provide habitat for countless wildlife, cool our cities, support local economies, and serve as spiritual and cultural centers for indigenous and local communities across the state. Forested lands also are the state's largest land-based carbon sink, drawing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in wood and in forest soils. Growing evidence, however, suggests forests will become a source of overall net carbon emissions if actions are not taken to enhance their health and resilience and to reduce the threats they face from wildfire, insects, disease, and a changing climate.

Decades of fire suppression, coupled with drought and the stressors associated with climate warming, have dramatically increased the size and intensity of wildfires and bark beetle infestations and have exposed millions of urban and rural residents to unhealthy smoke-laden air. These conditions—highlighted by recent wildfires that have been the deadliest, most destructive, costliest, and largest in state history—threaten progress toward meeting the state's long-term climate goals. The Forest Carbon Plan presents opportunities to reverse recent and historic adverse trends and firmly establish California's forests as a more resilient and reliable long-term carbon sink.

The California Forest Carbon Plan was developed by the Forest Climate Action Team—composed of state, federal, and local agency representatives—under the leadership of the California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Essential public input came through multiple presentations and workshops held across the state, draft document reviews, and written comments. The Plan assembles the best available science to summarize current and projected forest conditions and directs actions to achieve healthy and resilient wildland and urban forests. These actions will protect and enhance forest carbon and the broader range of public benefits from all forests in California and are integral to the state's Natural and Working Lands goals established by the updated 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan. In a nutshell, the Forest Carbon Plan goals are:

- Significantly increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed improvements on nonfederal forest lands through incentives and other mechanisms.
- Support Federal goals and actions to improve forest and watershed health and resiliency on Federal lands.
- Prevent forest land conversions through easements and acquisitions, as well as land use planning.
- Innovate solutions for wood products and biomass utilization to support ongoing sustainable forest management activities.
- Protect and enhance the carbon sequestration potential and related benefits of urban forests.
- Support key research, data management, and accountability needs.

The Forest Carbon Plan provides multiple strategies to achieve these goals through working collaboratively at the watershed or landscape scale across all forest types and ownership categories. Achieving these goals will require a sustained commitment of effort and funding from the state and federal governments. To add to the forest areas receiving health and resiliency treatments using public funds, revenue-generating sustainable timber harvests on working forests also are needed. Further, non-fiscal measures, such as technical assistance, efficient permitting processes, and ongoing commitment to collaborative efforts are critical to facilitate the accomplishment of the goals of the Forest Carbon Plan.

The California Forest Carbon Plan document is available at: <http://resources.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/California-Forest-Carbon-Plan-Final-Draft-for-Public-Release-May-2018.pdf>