



THE BIG PICTURE: ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES, AGENCY POLICIES, AND THE REGIONAL CLIMATE PROGRAM

Rio Grande Climate Adaptation Workshop | *October 25, 2022*

OVERVIEW

- National Direction
- USFS Climate Organization
- R2 Regional Climate Program
- Q&A



CLIMATE POLICY AND INITIATIVES

Executive Orders (E.O.)

- [E.O. 14008](#) – *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*
 - Calls for a 'whole of government' approach to prioritizing the climate crisis in domestic and foreign policy. Requires each Agency to submit a climate plan.
- [E.O. 14057](#) – *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability*
 - Sets ambitious goals and timelines for reducing emissions, requires agencies to develop adaptation and resilience plans, and more.
- [E.O. 14072](#) – *Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies*
 - Directs federal agencies to use sustainable forest and land management that is science-based, conserve old-growth, support indigenous traditional ecological knowledge, and more.

CLIMATE POLICY AND INITIATIVES

2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

- The BIL Program Direction states that “the Forest Service will tackle climate change and climate adaptation by expanding the restoration of impaired natural functions of forest, grassland, and aquatic ecosystems.”
- The Agency will work to ensure BIL-funded projects consider climate risks, develop climate adaptation actions, and support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CLIMATE POLICY AND INITIATIVES

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

- The funding in the Inflation Reduction Act includes \$2.15 billion for management of the National Forest System, including funding for hazardous fuel reduction or vegetation management projects on NFS lands, for inventorying and protecting old-growth and mature forests on NFS lands, and for improving environmental reviews.

CLIMATE POLICY AND INITIATIVES

Secretarial Memorandum 1077-004 – Climate Resilience and Carbon Stewardship of America’s National Forests and Grasslands

- June 23, 2022: calls for the Forest Service to “develop outcome-based performance measures and systems for tracking and reporting progress” on climate resilience, climate adaptation, and carbon stewardship, among others.
- Performance measures are being designed to ensure that Agency activities address climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE FOREST SERVICE

- Healthy forests and grasslands help mitigate climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in plants and soils.
- Impacts from climate change, extreme weather, and other disturbances threaten our ability to deliver our mission.
- To stay healthy and vigorous, our National Forests and Grasslands will need to adapt quickly to the changing climate.
- The Forest Service is incorporating the best ecological and climate science into its management to ensure that National Forests continue to produce the benefits that the American people enjoy.
- Our work expands beyond our public lands and jurisdictional boundaries to assist private, tribal, and state organizations

USFS CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN



- [USFS Climate Adaptation Plan](#) (July 2022)
- Presents a comprehensive approach to integrating climate change adaptation into the Forest Service's operations and mission
- Identifies six climate vulnerabilities with accompanying focus areas and supporting activities
 - Shifting Fire Regimes
 - Extreme Events
 - Chronic Stressors
 - Disruption in Delivery of Ecosystem Services
 - Disproportionate Impacts on Disadvantaged Communities & Tribes
 - Threats to the Agency Mission, Infrastructure, and Operations

[FS Climate Adaptation Plan Fact Sheet](#)

AGENCY CLIMATE ORGANIZATION

- The WO Office of Sustainability and Climate (OSC) is lead by Director Chris Swanston, the USFS Climate Advisor
- Other OSC staff include: Climate Adaptation Specialists, two Sustainable Operations Coordinators, a Carbon specialist, several GIS specialists, and more.
- Each NFS Region has one or more Climate Change Coordinators (Donna and Brian in R2)
- Within each Region, every NFS unit also has a climate coordinator (Judi on the RGNF)

R2 CLIMATE PROGRAM

Carbon and
Climate in
NEPA

Carbon White
Papers

Sustainable
Operations

Regional
Climate Plan

Climate Action
Tracker (CAT)

Climate Change
Vulnerability
Assessments

Climate
Adaptation
Workshops

Community of
Practice

QUESTIONS?

Contact Info:

Donna Shorrock (Donna.Shorrock@usda.gov)

Brian Ratcliffe (Brian.Ratcliffe@usda.gov)

Alison Foster (Alison.Foster@usda.gov)

RESOURCES: CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE USFS

- [Forest Service Climate Change Public-Facing Website](#)
- [Office of Sustainability and Climate SharePoint Page](#)
- [Managing forests in a changing climate](#): Article by Leslie Brandt, OSC
- [Forest Service Climate Adaptation](#): key messages, talking points, and communication resources

RESOURCES: CLIMATE ADAPTATION

- [Compendium of Adaptation Approaches](#), USFS Climate Change Resource Center
- [Climate Tools and Data](#), OSC
- [Adaptation Library](#), Adaptation Partners
- [Forest Adaptation Resources](#), Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science
- [Adaptation Workbook](#), Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science
- [Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments story map](#) and dashboard, OSC
- [PALS tip sheet for adaptation projects](#)

RESOURCE: SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

- Sustainability Stories application
- <https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fs-eu-liso/SitePages/sustainability-stories-home.aspx>

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Share Your Sustainability Story!". The form has a green header bar with the title and a logo on the right. Below the header, there are five tabs: "Story" (active), "Contact", "Location", "Details", and "Cost & Savings". The form contains several fields and sections:

- Title of Sustainability Story:** A text input field with the example "ex. Tankless Water Heater".
- Keywords (select multiple):** A dropdown menu with the text "Select one or more keywords".
- Fiscal Year Project First Implemented:** A dropdown menu with the text "Select the fiscal year completion date".
- Is the project or initiative completed:** A dropdown menu with the selected option "Yes - project completed".
- Is this a Greening Fire project or initiative:** A toggle switch that is currently turned off.
- Footprint Focus Area (select multiple):** A dropdown menu with the text "Select one or more footprint focus areas".
- How long did the project take from start to finish?:** A dropdown menu with the text "Select the length".
- Is this a Microgrant?:** A toggle switch that is currently turned on.

At the top right of the form, there is a small logo and the text "Stories Version 1.0.0".

RESOURCE: EMPLOYEE TRAINING

- The Climate Change Resource Center
- <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ccrc/education>

USDA **U.S. FOREST SERVICE**
Caring for the land and serving people
United States Department of Agriculture

CLIMATE CHANGE RESOURCE CENTER

EDUCATION TOPICS ADAPTATION TOOLS LIBRARY

Education

Start here to learn about climate change, how it may influence land management, and what options are open to natural resource managers for responding to these changes. Looking for a course on climate change? Explore the comprehensive learning modules. Interested in a quick look at how climate change affects our nation's forests? Check out the videos. Or explore our other education offerings.

Check out a Learning Module:

These comprehensive education modules were created using curriculum developed by the Forest Service Climate Change Advisor's Office, Climate Change Education and Training Team. They give an in-depth introduction to basic climate change science, the effects of climate change on forest and grassland ecosystems, and how we can respond to climate change with management.

Search CCRC

Natural Inquirer

Looking for educational resources for kids? The Natural Inquirer produces K-12 resources.

CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENCE AND MODELING

Learn about the climate system, greenhouse gases, climate models, current climate impacts, and future projections.

CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS ON FORESTS AND GRASSLANDS

Explore current and projected climate effects on water resources, vegetation, wildlife, and disturbances for forest and grassland ecosystems.

RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Review the adaptation options, resistance, resilience, and transition, and learn how to incorporate them into natural resource planning.

RESOURCES: CLIMATE ACTION TRACKER (CAT)

Mechanism for measuring and reporting progress towards Agency climate goals (replaces "Sustainability Scorecard")

Regional Deadline: **November 25, 2022**

Several adaptation-related CAT questions

Examples:

- *How many signed NEPA decisions explicitly incorporated climate change adaptation strategies to address climate vulnerabilities and/or impacts into the purpose and need, proposed action, and/or decision document?*
- *Which of the following current plans have explicitly incorporated climate change vulnerability assessments and/or adaptation strategies? (select all that apply)*
 - Land Management Plan, Watershed Restoration Action Plans, Comprehensive River Management Plan, Wilderness plan, etc.

The screenshot shows the 'Climate Action Tracker Survey' interface. At the top left are the USDA and UAS logos. The title 'Climate Action Tracker Survey' is on the right. A legend indicates that an asterisk (*) denotes mandatory fields. A help icon and the text 'Click on question mark' are also present. The form is divided into two main sections: 'Unit/Staff Area Info' and 'Topic Area'. The 'Unit/Staff Area Info' section contains a prompt to select unit/staff codes and three dropdown menus for 'Deputy Area', 'WO/Region/Station', and 'Unit/Staff Area/Station Name'. Below this is a text input field for 'What are the names of the individuals filling out the Climate Action Tracker?' with a placeholder 'Enter one or more names or emails'. The 'Topic Area' section contains a mandatory question: 'Which topic areas are you responsible for answering?' with three radio button options: 'Climate Change', 'Sustainable Operations', and 'Both'. A help icon is next to the 'Sustainable Operations' option. A 'Save and Proceed' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

For more information: [Climate Scorecard \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

RESOURCE: CLIMATE-READY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Transportation Resiliency Guidebook
- <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/FS-Transportation-Resiliency-Guidebook>



OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE (OSC) CONTACTS

- FS Climate Advisor and (Acting) Director: [Chris Swanston](#)
- Deputy Director: [Dixie Porter](#)
- Executive Assistant: [Krizia Campbell](#)
- Supervisory Climate Adaptation Specialist: [Leslie Brandt](#)
- Climate Adaptation Specialist: [Andy Bower](#)
- Climate Adaptation Specialist: [Todd Ontl](#)
- Climate Adaptation Specialist (fire focus): [Connie Flores](#)
- Climate Adaptation Specialist (fire focus): [Brooke Hagarty](#)
- Climate Adaptation Specialist (NEPA focus): [Kristen Schmitt](#)
- Climate Adaptation Specialist (NEPA focus): [Tanya Skurski](#)
- Sustainable Operations Coordinator: [Jennifer Hayes](#)
- Sustainable Operations Coordinator: [Kelly Jaramillo](#)
- Carbon Specialist/Natural Resource Management Specialist: *vacant*
- Natural Resource Specialist/Carbon Specialist: [Lauren Onofrio](#)
- Public Affairs Specialist: [Aurora Cutler](#)
- Program Analyst/Data Manager: [Erik Johnson](#)
- Geographic Information Systems Specialist: [Nathan Walker](#)
- Geographer (Resource Assistant): [Mark Adams](#)
- GIS Specialist (Resource Assistant): [Keren Crum](#)
- GIS Specialist (Resource Assistant): [Mary Powers](#)
- Climate Data Specialist (ACES Program): [Michael Cummings](#)
- Carbon Specialist (ACES Program): [Richard Birdsey](#)
- Soil Scientist (ACES Program): [Richard Pouyat](#)