

# CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL TREE SPECIES SOUTHERN SUPERIOR UPLANDS (SECTION 212J)



Wisconsin's forests will be affected by a changing climate and other stressors during this century. A team of managers and researchers created an assessment that describes the vulnerability of forests in Northern Wisconsin ([Janowiak et al. 2014](#)). This report includes information on observed and future climate trends, and also summarizes key vulnerabilities for forested natural communities. The Landscape Change Research

Group recently updated the Climate Change Tree Atlas, and this handout summarizes that information. Full Tree Atlas results are available online at [www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/](http://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/). Two climate scenarios are presented to "bracket" a range of possible futures. These future climate projections (2070 to 2099) provide information about how individual tree species may respond to a changing climate. Results for "low" and "high" emissions scenarios can be compared on the reverse side of this handout.

The updated Tree Atlas presents additional information helpful to interpret tree species changes:

- **Suitable habitat** - calculated based on 39 variables that explain where optimum conditions exist for a species, including soils, landforms, and climate variables.
- **Adaptability** - based on life-history traits that might increase or decrease tolerance of expected changes, such as the ability to withstand different forms of disturbance.
- **Capability** - a rating of the species' ability to cope or persist with climate change in this region based on suitable habitat change (statistical modeling), adaptability (literature review and expert opinion), and abundance (FIA data). The capability rating is modified by abundance information; ratings are downgraded for rare species and upgraded for abundant species.
- **Migration Potential Model** - when combined with habitat suitability, an estimate of a species' colonization likelihood for new habitats. This rating can be helpful for assisted migration or focused management (see the table section: "New Habitat with Migration Potential").

Remember that models are just tools, and they're not perfect. Model projections can't account for all factors that influence future species success. If a species is rare or confined to a small area, model results may be less reliable. These factors, and others, could cause a particular species to perform better or worse than a model projects. Human choices will also continue to influence forest distribution, especially for tree species that are projected to increase. Planting programs may assist the movement of future-adapted species, but this will depend on management decisions. Despite these limits, models provide useful information about future expectations. It's perhaps best to think of these projections as indicators of possibility and potential change.

**SOURCE:** This handout summarizes model results for the Southern Superior Uplands (Section 212J). Download the *Climate Change Field Guide for Northern Wisconsin Forests* and handouts for other Ecological Sections in northern Wisconsin at [www.forestadaptation.org/northern\\_WI\\_fieldguide](http://www.forestadaptation.org/northern_WI_fieldguide). A full description of the models and variables are provided in Iverson et al. 2019 ([www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/57857](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/57857)) and [www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/59105](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/59105)) and Peters et al. 2019 ([www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/58353](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/58353)).

## CLIMATE CHANGE CAPABILITY

### POOR CAPABILITY

Balsam poplar                      White spruce

Black spruce

### FAIR CAPABILITY

Balsam fir                              Red pine

Black ash                                Tamarack (native)

Eastern hemlock                      Yellow birch

### GOOD CAPABILITY

American elm                          Northern red oak

Bigtooth aspen                        Northern white-cedar

Black cherry                            Paper birch

Eastern white pine                    Quaking aspen

Green ash                                Red maple

Ironwood                                 Sugar maple

Jackpine                                 White ash

Northern pin oak

### MIXED RESULTS

American basswood                   Silver maple

### NEW HABITAT WITH MIGRATION POTENTIAL

American beech                        Hackberry

Bitternut hickory                      Sassafras

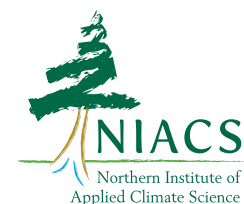
Black locust                              Shagbark hickory

Black oak                                 Slippery elm

Black walnut                            Swamp white oak

Eastern cottonwood                   White oak

Eastern redcedar



**ADAPTABILITY:** Life-history factors, such as the ability to respond favorably to disturbance, that are not included in the Tree Atlas model and may make a species more or less able to adapt to future stressors.

- + **HIGH** Species may perform better than modeled
- **MEDIUM**
- **LOW** Species may perform worse than modeled

**HABITAT CHANGE:** Projected change in suitable habitat between current and potential future conditions.

- ▲ **INCREASE** Projected increase of >20% by 2100
- **NO CHANGE** Projected change of <20% by 2100
- ▼ **DECREASE** Projected decrease of >20% by 2100
- ★ **NEW HABITAT** Tree Atlas projects new habitat for species not currently present

**ABUNDANCE:** Based on Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) summed Importance Value data, calibrated to a standard geographic area.

- + **ABUNDANT**
- **COMMON**
- **RARE**

**CAPABILITY:** An overall rating that describes a species' ability to cope or persist with climate change based on suitable habitat change class (statistical modeling), adaptability (literature review and expert opinion), and abundance within this region.

- ▲ **GOOD** Increasing suitable habitat, medium or high adaptability, and common or abundant
- **FAIR** Mixed combinations, such as a rare species with increasing suitable habitat and medium adaptability
- ▼ **POOR** Decreasing suitable habitat, medium or low adaptability, and uncommon or rare

SPECIES	ADAPT		LOW CLIMATE CHANGE (RCP4.5)		HIGH CLIMATE CHANGE (RCP8.5)		SPECIES	ADAPT		LOW CLIMATE CHANGE (RCP4.5)		HIGH CLIMATE CHANGE (RCP8.5)	
	ABUN	CHANG	HABITAT	CAPABILITY	HABITAT	CAPABILITY		ABUN	CHANG	HABITAT	CAPABILITY	HABITAT	CAPABILITY
American basswood	•	•	▲	△	●	○	Mountain maple*	+	-	▼	▽	▼	▽
American beech	•		★		★		Northern pin oak	+	-	▲	△	▲	△
American elm	•	•	▲	△	▲	△	Northern red oak	+	•	▲	△	▲	△
American hornbeam*	•	-	●	▽	●	▽	Northern white-cedar	•	+	●	△	●	△
Balsam fir	-	+	▼	○	▼	○	Paper birch	•	•	▲	△	▲	△
Balsam poplar	•	-	▼	▽	▼	▽	Pignut hickory	•		★		★	
Bigtooth aspen	•	•	▲	△	▲	△	Pin cherry*	•	-	▼	▽	▼	▽
Bitternut hickory*	+		★		★		Pin oak*	-				★	
Black ash	-	+	●	○	●	○	Post oak	+		★		★	
Black cherry	-	•	▲	△	▲	△	Quaking aspen	•	+	●	△	●	△
Black locust*	•		★		★		Red maple	+	+	●	△	●	△
Black oak	•		★		★		Red pine	-	•	▲	○	▲	○
Black spruce	•	•	▼	▽	▼	▽	Red spruce	-		★		★	
Black walnut*	•		★		★		Sassafras*	•		★		★	
Black willow*	-	-	▲	▽	▲	○	Scarlet oak	•		★		★	
Blackgum	+		★		★		Serviceberry*	•	-	▼	▽	▼	▽
Boxelder*	+	-	▲	△	▲	△	Shagbark hickory	•		★		★	
Bur oak	+		★		★		Silver maple*	+	-	●	○	▲	△
Cedar elm	-		★		★		Slippery elm*	•		★		★	
Chestnut oak	+		★		★		Sugar maple	+	+	▼	△	▼	△
Eastern cottonwood*	•		★		★		Sugarberry	•				★	
Eastern hemlock	-	+	▼	○	▼	○	Swamp white oak*	•		★		★	
Eastern redcedar	•		★		★		Sweet birch	-		★		★	
Eastern white pine	-	•	▲	△	▲	△	Sycamore*	•		★		★	
Flowering dogwood	•				★		Tamarack (native)	-	•	▲	○	▲	○
Green ash*	•	-	▲	△	▲	△	White ash	-	•	▲	△	▲	△
Hackberry	+		★		★		White oak	+		★		★	
Honeylocust*	+		★		★		White spruce	•	•	▼	▽	▼	▽
Ironwood*	+	•	▲	△	▲	△	Yellow birch	•	+	▼	○	▼	○
Jack pine	+	•	●	△	●	△	Yellow-poplar	+		★		★	
Live oak	•		★		★		Yellow-poplar	+		★		★	

\*Species with low model reliability based on five statistical metrics of the habitat models that affect change class. See maps and tables for more information ([www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/](http://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/)).