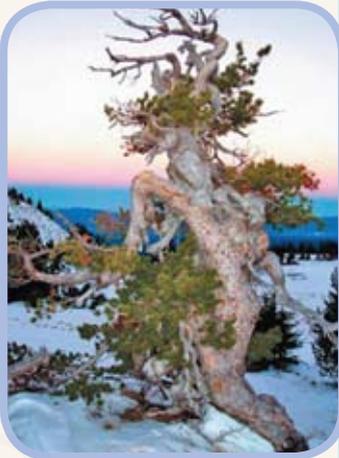


# The Nation's forests and grasslands are at risk due to the effects of climate change.



The many benefits we receive from forests and grasslands are threatened by climate change. The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, is working to improve the vitality of our forests and grasslands by restoring the functions and processes that are characteristic of healthy, resilient ecosystems. We can and will do more to sustain their health, diversity, and productivity for the benefit of present and future generations.

The core of the Forest Service response to climate change will center around adaptation (actions that reduce the vulnerability of species and ecosystems to the effects of a changing climate) and mitigation (activities that directly reduce or offset the greenhouse gas emissions that lead to climate change).



To help manage these challenges, the Forest Service designed *A Roadmap for Responding to Climate Change*. The roadmap, summarized here, will help the agency move from what it is already doing in response to climate change, through a range of additional immediate actions, to longer term investments in the future of America's forests and grasslands.



**“The Forest Service is responding to climate change through ecological restoration—by restoring the functions and processes characteristic of healthy, resilient ecosystems.”**

—Thomas L. Tidwell, Chief (April 20, 2010)



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## A Roadmap for Responding to Climate Change:

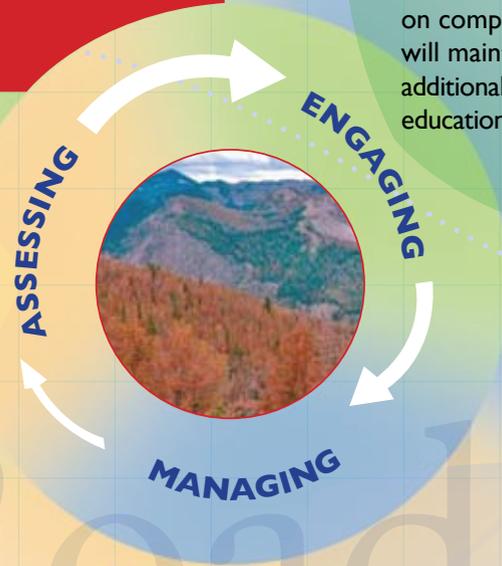
### A Summary



## Modes of Action

The Forest Service will respond to climate change in three interconnected ways:

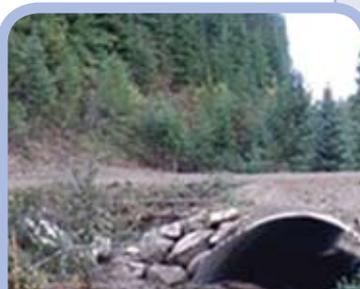
○ **Assessing** current risks, vulnerabilities, policies, and gaps in knowledge. Assessing potential climate change impacts on human and natural communities is the first step in an effective response.



○ **Engaging** employees and stakeholders to seek solutions. A successful response to climate change will require working with partners across boundaries to discover common goals, avoid duplication, and build on complementary assets. The Forest Service will maintain current partnerships, develop additional ones, and build understanding through education and outreach.



○ **Managing** through adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable consumption strategies. The Forest Service manages the national forests and grasslands for sustainability and works with States and partners to encourage sustainable forest management on private lands. Our goal is to reduce stressors and vulnerabilities, focusing on resources and areas that are most critical for social, economic, and ecological sustainability. Ecological restoration is a critical foundation of the Forest Service's adaptation strategy.



**Mitigation is dependent on adaptation.** The long-term capacity of ecosystems to capture and store carbon depends in large part on their ability to adapt to a rapidly changing climate. The Forest Service will work with partners to increase or sustain carbon storage in forest and grassland ecosystems; to generate forest products that reduce and replace fossil fuel use; and to balance these goals against all the other benefits that Americans get from healthy, resilient forests and grasslands.

## Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) definitions:

- **Adaptation** is an initiative to reduce the vulnerability of natural or human systems to expected climate change effects.
- **Mitigation** is an intervention to reduce the emissions or enhance the storage of greenhouse gases.

## The Way Forward—Tracking Our Progress

The roadmap points the way to a comprehensive, science-based approach to managing forests and grasslands in a rapidly changing climate. Employees in Forest Service units can use the roadmap to chart a course to the future based on local needs.



The Forest Service will use a scorecard system to track our progress in responding to climate change. The Climate Change Performance Scorecard will be administered annually to each national forest or grassland. The scorecard will help as the agency moves forward with research and education on climate change issues, adjusting land management strategies accordingly. It will help the

Forest Service document the steps it is taking to reduce energy usage, greenhouse gas emissions, water usage, and other environmental footprints.



Land and resource management are inherently fraught with risk and uncertainty. Climate change exacerbates both. In response, the Forest Service must be nimble, willing to learn from mistakes, and able

to incorporate lessons learned into future agency direction. The Forest Service is ready to work with and learn from others, sharing its knowledge, skills, and experience to make America's forests and grasslands sustainable for present and future generations, even in an era of climate change.