

## What Can You Do?

Every American can take a few simple steps. Multiplied by tens or hundreds of millions, the impact would be enormous.

- Plant a tree. As it grows, it will take up carbon from the atmosphere and provide shade and beauty to your home or neighborhood.
- Calculate your own carbon footprint and take steps to offset it. For help, see the National Forest Foundation website at <http://www.becomeafriend.org/carbon/>.
- Join a neighborhood stream cleanup or water quality monitoring effort.
- Calculate the amount of water used in your household and take steps to reduce it.
- Take a child outdoors. Show him or her what it was that you found so special about the natural world as a child.
- Encourage and support conservation education in your neighborhood school.



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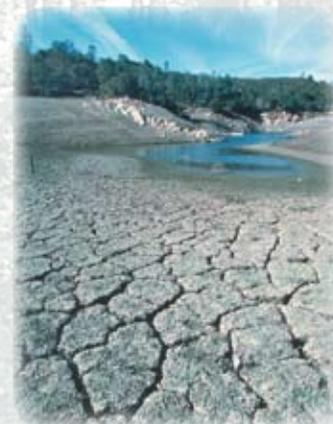
## National Forests and Grasslands: Today's Challenges and Opportunities



The American tradition of conservation dates to the 19th century. For more than a hundred years, the Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has built on that tradition by caring for the land and serving people. Over time, the challenges we face have changed. Today, three great challenges cut across the conservation work we do. The Forest Service is acting on a national scale to meet these challenges, and we invite you to join us.

## Climate Change

Since the 1980s, Forest Service researchers have contributed to a growing scientific consensus that the climate is changing on a global scale and that people can do something about it. Atmospheric gases such as carbon dioxide, known as “greenhouse gases,” insulate and warm the Earth. Greenhouse gas emissions are increasing,



primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal and gas. Rising temperatures are leading to hotter summers, earlier snowmelt, declining snowpacks, more water shortages, and worsening wildfires and outbreaks of forest pests and diseases. Landscapes will change as plants and animals migrate in response.

### *What is the Forest Service doing?*

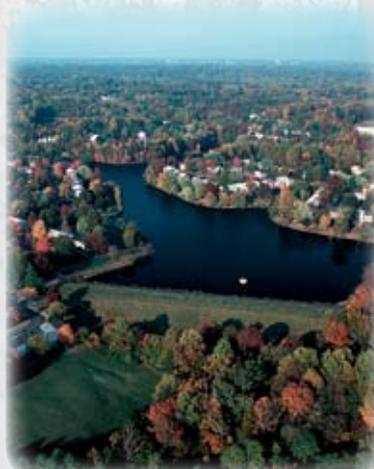
- We are managing national forests and grasslands to make them more adaptable to the effects of climate change.

- We are working with people to increase tree planting. Trees and forests absorb carbon from the atmosphere, offsetting carbon emissions.
- We are exploring ways of using wood for energy—renewable biofuels that can replace fossil fuels.
- We are reducing the Forest Service’s own carbon emissions through energy conservation, more energy-efficient vehicles, and other means.

## Abundant Clean Water

America’s water resources are increasingly over-subscribed. From California to Georgia—water battles make headlines.

Healthy forests, fisheries, and wildlife depend on healthy watersheds. Large open spaces help to maintain watersheds that store and supply clean water. Over 180 million people depend on forest lands for their drinking water. Climate change will affect water



supplies, and the number of thirsty Americans is expected to rise by some 270 million over the next century.

### *What is the Forest Service doing?*

- We are managing the national forests and grasslands to improve their ability to store rain and snowfall and recharge streams and aquifers.
- We are researching effects of climate change on water resources to improve prediction of the rate, quality, and timing of flows for forests, grasslands, and communities.

- We are helping communities find ways to invest in their municipal watersheds, giving private landowners upstream incentives to keep their lands open and sustainably managed.

## Kids in the Woods

The challenges associated with climate change and water will not be resolved in a few years. It will take generations. Unless the children of today and tomorrow understand why wildlands are so valuable, they will do little to protect them for future generations. Yet children today have fewer opportunities for the kinds of activities in woods and fields that past generations had—and that taught them to treasure the outdoors.

### *What is the Forest Service doing?*

- The Forest Service reaches hundreds of thousands of kids each



year through ongoing conservation education programs in classrooms and in the field.

- The Forest Service has launched “Kids in the Woods,” a program sponsoring dozens of partnership projects all over the country to get kids outdoors, up close and personal with nature.