



# CANOPY

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM WWF'S INTERNATIONAL FOREST AND CLIMATE TEAM

## PROTECTING OUR PARTNERS IN A PANDEMIC

By Irene de la Rosa, Pia Escobar Gutiérrez, and Verónica Tellez Oliveros, WWF-Colombia

The Indigenous peoples of the Amazon, who have protected the forests of this important region of the planet through their traditional practices and customs for generations, now face one of the greatest threats in recent times: the COVID-19 pandemic.

It has been evident since colonization that the common flu is lethal for these communities, who, due to their way of life, have not been exposed to this sort of disease. Today COVID-19 is a threat to all of humanity but even more so to these communities who still live in remote environments and whose territories have very precarious conditions for accessing health services.

On June 29, the Colombian National Institute of Health reported 1,018 cases of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities and a total of 33 deaths. Of these 1,018



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nationwide cases, 676 were recorded in the department of Amazonas, where there are no intensive care beds. Patients who fall gravely ill must be flown to other cities, such as Bogotá, a flight that lasts about two hours and is difficult to arrange.

In Amazonas, the death rate is more than 63 times the national average, and Leticia, its capital, is the city with the

highest number of infections per million inhabitants, according to Sinergias, a public health organization in the Colombian Amazon. The situation in these territories, which are mainly inhabited by Indigenous communities, is critical.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



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FROM WWF'S GLOBAL FOREST  
AND CLIMATE TEAM

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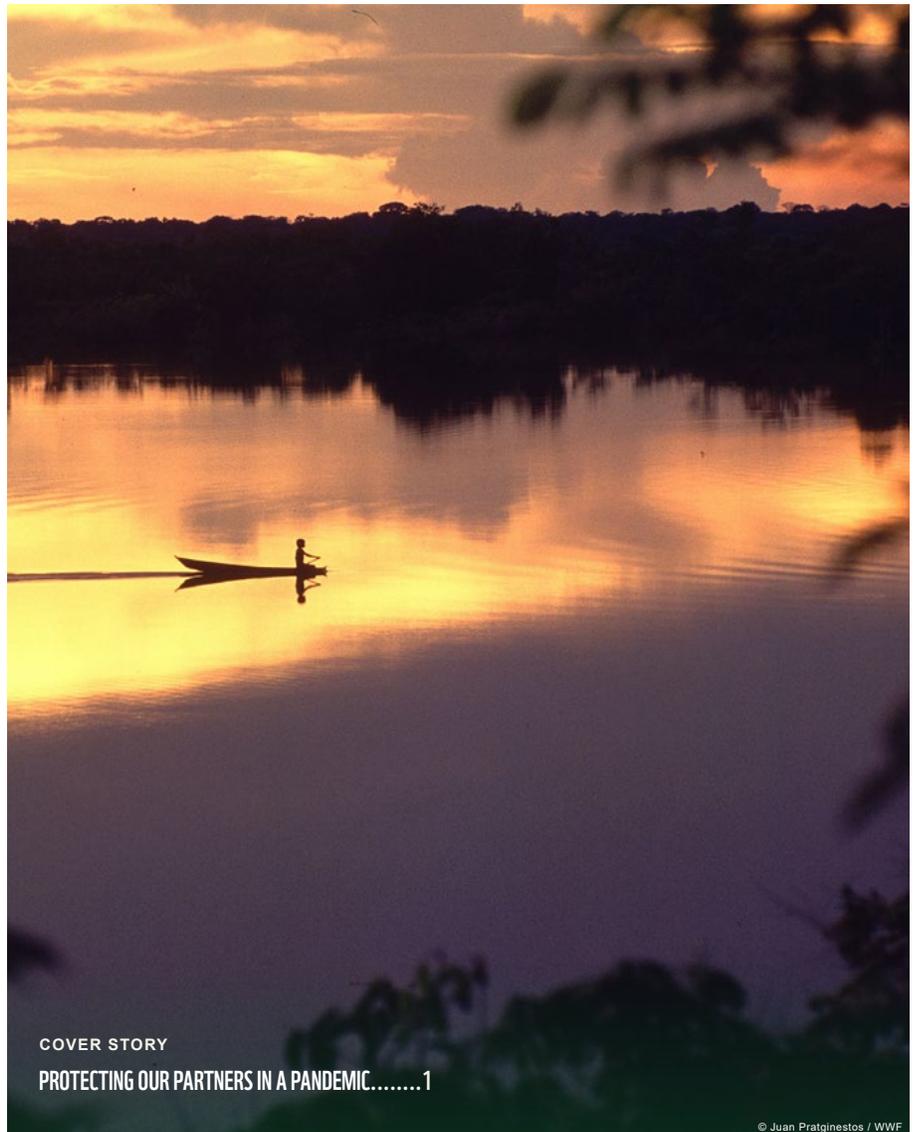
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## Our Vision

WWF's Forest and Climate team works to ensure that the conservation of tropical forests as carbon stores is secured by green economic development that benefits people, the climate, and biodiversity in transformational ways.

[panda.org/forestclimate](http://panda.org/forestclimate)



## COVER STORY

PROTECTING OUR PARTNERS IN A PANDEMIC..... 1

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## IN THIS ISSUE

FOREST AND CLIMATE NEWS .....	3
PUBLICATIONS.....	4
PANDAS IN THE WILD.....	16
REDD+ SPECIES: BLEEDING TOAD.....	17
VIEWPOINTS.....	18

## REDD+ CAPACITY BUILDING

BENEFIT SHARING AT SCALE: TOOLS AND GOOD PRACTICES FOR RESULTS-BASED LAND-USE PROGRAMS .....	5
--	---

THE NDCS WE WANT- FORESTS IN THE FOCUS... 5

## REDD+ PEOPLE

BRITTANY WILLIAMS .....	14
-------------------------	----

## ARTICLES

MORE EVIDENCE BACKS ROLE OF FORESTS IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE, BUT WHEN WILL WE GET ACTION? .....	6
--	---

FIRST THINGS FIRST: AVOID, REDUCE ... AND ONLY AFTER THAT—COMPENSATE.....	8
---	---

REALITIES OF FOREST RESTORATION IN LANDSCAPES .....	11
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## FOREST AND CLIMATE NEWS



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## BIG WINS 2019: INCLUSIVE CONSERVATION

WWF-Colombia – Acknowledging the role that local communities play in conservation processes is the first step to secure the equilibrium of natural areas. This year, important progress was made to promote participation and leadership development with Indigenous and small farmer communities.

MORE: <https://bit.ly/39iqmGW>

## WHAT IS THE ATLANTIC FOREST AND WHY DO WE NEED TO SAVE IT?

WWF-US – Like the Amazon, the Atlantic Forest is a vital ecosystem teeming with unique plant and animal species. Unfortunately, that’s not all the two forests have in common: The Atlantic Forest is also critically threatened and needs our help.

MORE: <https://wwf.to/3eLV3Ft>

## PLANTING TREES THE RIGHT WAY

WWF International – Planting a tree is a universally recognized act—it’s a symbol of caring for our environment. From presidents to primary schoolchildren, we all want to get involved.

MORE: <https://bit.ly/3hktjco>

## SEEDS OF CHANGE

WWF International – In Oaxaca, Mexico, a long-running project is restoring forests, soils, water—and hope for the future.

MORE: <https://bit.ly/3eJ5FVv>

## THE “ZERO DRAFT” GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK WON’T SAVE OUR FORESTS

WWF Forests Practice – Given the current context and that bold and necessary efforts to change business as usual are lacking, the parties to the Convention should be under enormous pressure to deliver a framework with actionable targets.

MORE: <https://bit.ly/3jqWFrw>

## MADRE DE DIOS ANUNCIA LINEAMIENTOS DE GANADERÍA SOSTENIBLE EN ALIANZA CON EL MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA

WWF-Perú – Los lineamientos para la ganadería sostenible en Madre de Dios son elaborados en conjunto por el Ministerio de Agricultura y Riego y el Gobierno Regional de Madre de Dios y buscan contribuir a la trayectoria de descarbonización de Madre de Dios.

MÁS: <https://bit.ly/2OLc0VK>

## CONSIDER WHAT’S BELOW THE CANOPY, TOO, WHEN COUNTING UP FOREST AREAS

WWF International – It is long established that more and more of the world’s forests are becoming “empty” or “silent.” This has all kinds of ecological consequences but notably hinders a forest’s ability to regenerate and hence its ability to absorb and store carbon.

MORE: <https://bit.ly/30z0rH3>

PUBLICATIONS

The community of REDD+ practitioners and experts from around the world grows every day, and WWF's global Forest and Climate team is working to ensure that the capacity-building and informational materials it produces are available to a diverse audience.

## INSPIRING PRACTICES: CULTIVATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY PROCESSES IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

This Inspiring Practice describes how WWF and its partners worked with communities in the Mai-Ndombe province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to improve local governance through the participation of women and Indigenous groups in land-use planning, mapping, decision-making, and other activities essential to conserving the region's forests and wildlife, tackling deforestation and degradation while building sustainable livelihoods.

MORE: <https://bit.ly/2C3jbGc>

## CLIMATE, NATURE AND OUR 1.5°C FUTURE: A SYNTHESIS OF IPCC AND IPBES REPORTS

This report brings together the findings of four recent authoritative reports on climate change and biodiversity from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

MORE: <https://bit.ly/3fNbBya>

## LESSONS LEARNT FROM 15 YEARS OF WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AND FOREST RESTORATION: THE COPALITA-ZIMATÁN-HUATULCO LANDSCAPE IN MEXICO

The watersheds of Copalita-Zimatán-Huatulco in the south of Mexico cover an area of 268,023 hectares and include 26 of the country's 34 vegetation types. The landscape is home to numerous faunal and floral species. Yet, forest loss has had an impact on the land, biodiversity, water quality and quantity, and local people.

MORE: <https://bit.ly/2OIJFzK>

## UNSEEN FORESTERS: AN ASSESSMENT OF APPROACHES FOR WIDER RECOGNITION AND SPREAD OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT BY LOCAL COMMUNITIES

This report calls for greater recognition of the role of Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in forest management. The report shows that local models of governance can help protect forests better than many other forms of forest stewardship.

MORE: <https://bit.ly/3hhBB54>

## REDD+ CAPACITY BUILDING

WWF Forest and Climate learning sessions are free and are designed to leverage and share REDD+ knowledge and expertise. We invite experts to present on a key issue so that REDD+ practitioners can have access to the latest information relevant to REDD+.

To watch an archived learning lesson, please visit: [bit.ly/ForestClimateVideo](https://bit.ly/ForestClimateVideo).



© Karine Agnew / WWF-US

## THE NDCS WE WANT - FORESTS IN THE FOCUS

**F**ernanda de Carvalho and Shaun Martin from WWF provide background and context on the current international climate policy agenda and present WWF's recommendations on enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through nature-based solutions. Erin Beasley from Conservation International and John Verdieck from The Nature Conservancy elaborate on the role of forests in current NDCs, including concrete country examples, and provide recommendations on how countries can better integrate forests in their NDCs by COP26, including existing guidance by UNFCCC.

**MORE:** <https://bit.ly/3hffWvi>

## BENEFIT SHARING AT SCALE: TOOLS AND GOOD PRACTICES FOR RESULTS-BASED LAND-USE PROGRAMS

**K**atie O'Gara of the World Bank and Joanna Durbin of Conservation International explore key themes of benefit-sharing arrangements and highlight how these resources can provide practical and operational materials for countries to draw upon in preparing benefit-sharing arrangements.

**WATCH:** <https://bit.ly/2wMaPjM>



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# MORE EVIDENCE BACKS ROLE OF FORESTS IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE, BUT WHEN WILL WE GET ACTION?

*Will Baldwin-Cantello, Acting Lead, WWF Global Forest Practice*

*A new study confirms what we have feared for a long time—deforestation is diminishing the ability of tropical forests to absorb carbon dioxide, a critical function of forests in mitigating climate change. It also brings some surprising news, that boreal forests are serving an increasingly important role as a carbon sink, absorbing emissions at a faster rate.*

The study comes on the heels of another paper that tells us that embracing nature-based climate solutions would be enough for 20 countries to achieve carbon neutrality before 2030. These two studies combined make an even stronger case for avoided deforestation and for protecting stable forests, including intact forest landscapes, which make up a large portion of total global carbon storage in forests. The role of forest restoration and tree planting gained the attention of businesses and political leaders at Davos, which is important, but only part of the solution. These studies are two timely reminders of why our trillion trees vision encompasses and emphasizes halting loss of forests and maintaining their integrity.

The science is clear—safeguarding forests and halting deforestation can help achieve targets set out under the Paris Agreement and help keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius. What’s not clear is whether enough will be done to achieve this.

**This is an opportune moment for clear action, including:**

1. For countries to show leadership and include—with clear and quantifiable metrics—targets for forest protection, restoration and avoided deforestation in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This is important for all countries but particularly tropical countries, where deforestation is rising, and also for countries that are home to boreal forests. Much more can be done to reduce risks to stable forests and the important carbon sink function they provide, both within the NDC framework and in national policies that recognize the value of intact forest landscapes and high conservation value forests.

2. A clear need to connect NDCs to national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the new global framework to be agreed at the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference in October this year, given the important role that forest wildlife play in maintaining forest carbon.
3. Scaling up of public and private sector finance for forests. Only 3 per cent of climate finance goes to forests and land use despite the critical role of forests in mitigating climate change. This share should be increased and businesses I speak to are increasingly interested in connecting their work to national plans on climate mitigation and biodiversity loss too—which could be an additional important source of expertise and resources.
4. Clear recognition of the roles, rights and practices of Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), who are an essential part of the solution. There is clear evidence that areas in the hands of IPLCs have served as a buffer from deforestation and helped keep the important carbon function of forests intact. New research shows that Indigenous territories and protected natural areas in the Amazon have stored more than half of the carbon in the Amazon, but this environmental service is being lost due to increasing forest degradation and disturbance.

*2020 is a crucial year for the environment. It's time to put science into action.*

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**This story was originally published online here.**  
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# FIRST THINGS FIRST: AVOID, REDUCE ... AND ONLY AFTER THAT—COMPENSATE

By Martha Stevenson, Senior Director, Forest Strategy & Research & Chris Weber, Global Climate & Energy Lead Scientist

*Reflected in the number of companies setting science-based targets (SBTs) in line with climate science within the SBTi (Science Based Targets initiative), corporate climate progress has been striking, and we are seeing encouraging signs in the nature space as well (e.g., [Fashion pact](#), [Act4Nature](#), and [OP2B](#), etc.).*

Key questions in corporate climate and nature actions are the necessity to reduce impact in line with scientific and societal need and the potential role of offsetting schemes in such action. This has led to significant discussion around so-called “mitigation hierarchies.” Here, we provide a brief history of their evolution in natural resource management and highlight the increasing importance of adhering to the order they provide in facing some of the world’s most pressing challenges.

The temptation to skip to steps lower in the hierarchy that are easier or cheaper will at best provide a temporary bandage to these complex global challenges and at worst cannibalize efforts for meaningful change.

Mitigation hierarchies have been used for over a century in natural resource management and include prioritized steps that lead to the best outcomes for people and nature. These steps are generally Avoid, Reduce, Restore, Compensate/Offset,<sup>1</sup> however adapted

WASTE <small>Lansink 1979</small>	ENERGY <small>Wolfe 2005</small>	CARBON <small>Horgan 2011</small>	BIODIVERSITY <small>IUCN, UNGC 2012</small>	FOOD WASTE <small>Papargyropoulou 2014</small>
Prevention	Energy Saving	Avoid Wasted Energy	Avoidance	Prevention
Minimization	Energy Efficiency	Efficient Conversion	Minimization	Redistribute
Reuse	Renewables	Renewable Energy	Restoration	Animal Feed / Compost
Recycling	Low Emission			Energy Recovery
Energy Recovery	Conventional with Offset	Offset	Offset	
Disposal				Disposal

*A summary table of the multiple mitigation hierarchies discussed in this piece with our interpretation of horizontal equivalencies. These are examples for further elaboration as pathways to action on climate and nature become clearer for non-state actors.*

for the system to which they are applied. These hierarchies are inspired by Muir's Preservation theory (avoid/protect) and Pinchot's Conservation theory (reduce/compensate)—the basis of environmentalism in the United States and made manifest in the fact that many of our national parks, protected areas like Yellowstone or Yosemite or Shenandoah, are adjacent to or completely surrounded by national forests, managed for highest best use while sustaining impacts.

Later in the 20th century, as the focus of the environmental movement expanded beyond land, river, and wildlife management principles to addressing the ever-increasing impact or footprint of industrial activity—these same principles have been adapted to sustainable materials management. In 1979, [Lansink's Ladder](#) was introduced in the Dutch Parliament as the first waste management hierarchy. This ladder or hierarchy included the steps of "Prevention: Reuse: Recycle: Recover: Dispose" and went on to become the basis for waste management the world over. Indeed, many readers will remember learning about "Reduce/Reuse/Recycle" as one of their first environmental lessons. In the early 2000s, strategies for renewable energy transitions took hold and hierarchies for [renewable energy strategies](#) were adopted and later [food waste management hierarchies](#).

Compensation mechanisms (including offsets) are less featured in waste management frameworks and more prevalent in biodiversity/nature and climate action frameworks. Building on mitigation offsets for wetlands and endangered species habitat, the biodiversity-conservation mitigation hierarchy was expanded in 2012 with a publication from UN Global Compact and IUCN presenting a [corporate action framework](#) at Rio +20 and the International Finance Corporation's



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[Performance Standard 6](#) for clients to manage environmental and social risk (complemented by the World Bank's standard updated in June 2019). While these guides focus at a project level, as we march toward the next set of globally agreed Convention on Biological Diversity goals (replacing the Aichi targets)—the focus of the discussions on "no net loss of ecosystem extent and condition" will force us to reconcile what implementing the [mitigation hierarchy means at all scales](#): country, jurisdiction, project, and enterprise.

Within the climate debates, hierarchies have emerged through slightly different approaches. The concept of offsetting (or compensation) was first introduced in the Kyoto Protocol commitments for Annex I countries through the Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism, two "flexible mechanisms" for developed countries to meet their emission reduction obligations under the Protocol. However, the Kyoto Protocol did not adequately incentivize developed countries to prioritize emission reductions over offsets. A step forward came in the introduction of the [REDD+](#) program in 2005 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which recognized the need to take action at the system scale, rather than small-scale forest offset projects, to tackle the drivers of deforestation and degradation.<sup>2</sup>

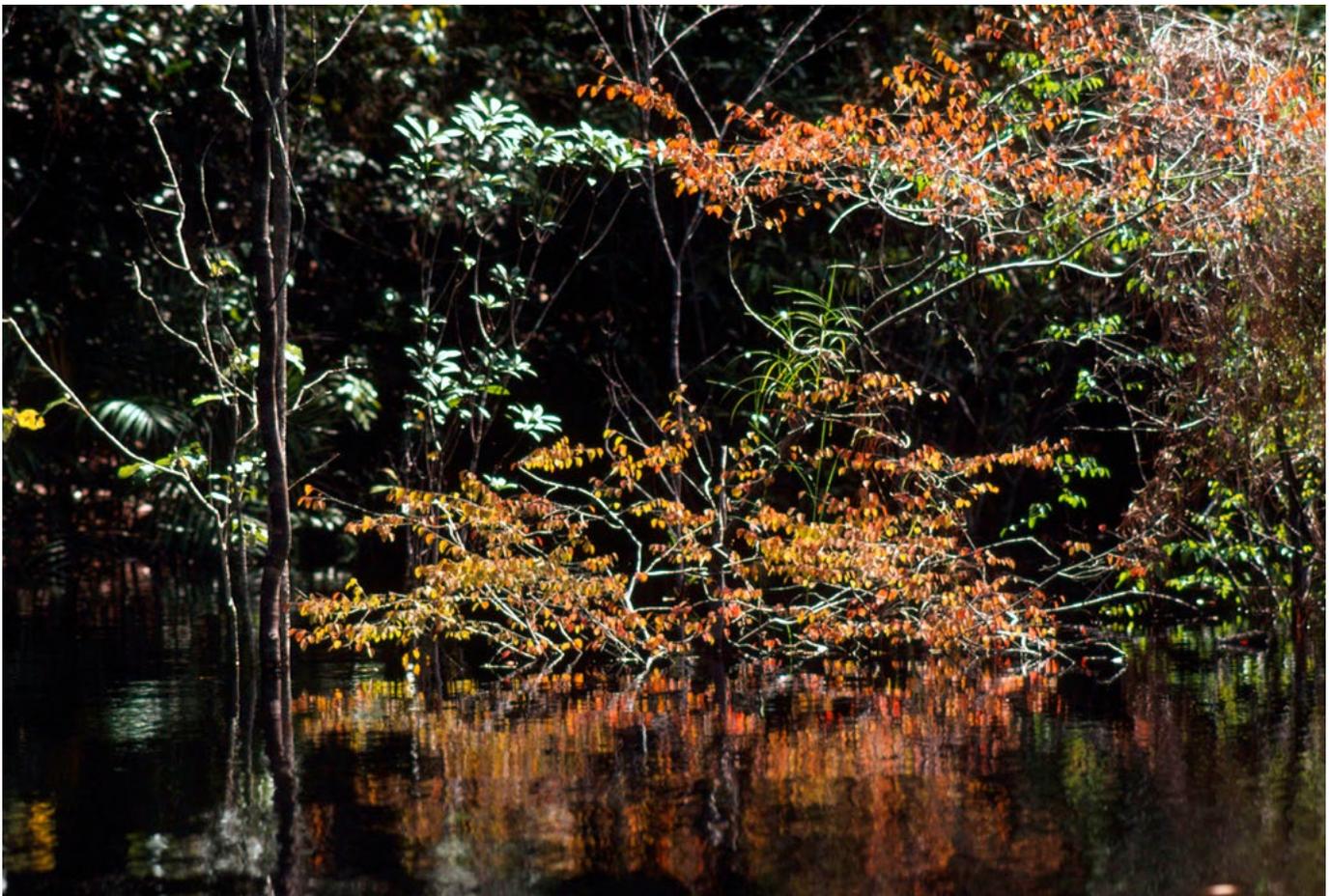
The debate around reductions versus compensation advanced further as climate science evolved and introduced the concept of large-scale "carbon dioxide removal" (CDR) in the IPCC's [Fifth Assessment Report](#) and further in the [Special Report on 1.5C](#) (SR1.5). At the same time, SR1.5 suggested an urgency for action to reduce emissions, reflecting that negative emissions at large scale were not likely to be achievable before 2040 and near-term emissions reductions must be steep (roughly halving global emissions by 2030).

Mitigation hierarchies and the order they bring are road maps to achieving the global goals and should guide societal and business plans. In the climate space, all of the desirable pathways within the [IPCC models](#) point to the need for fossil fuel emission reductions before carbon dioxide removal (from forests or technology). And the story is no different when we look to the [IPBES global assessment](#) on the state of biodiversity and ecosystem services. To continue to

benefit from ecosystems—whether wood provisioning, disease regulation, or water filtration—we need to stop deforestation and habitat loss before we jump to “tree planting.” Skipping over avoid and reduce to go straight to compensate is like submitting an extra credit project having turned in no previous assignments throughout the semester.

Every sector and every company has a role to play in supporting the pursuit

of the global goals. Aligning corporate ambition with these international commitments is the measuring stick defining leadership, and mitigation hierarchies provide the road map to prioritize actions and timing. As companies develop their 2030 goals, prioritize avoid and reduce to align pathways with science and only then focus on “extra credit” compensation mechanisms.



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1. **Avoid:** measures taken to avoid creating impacts from the outset or set aside key conservation areas; **Reduce:** measures taken to reduce the intensity and/or extent of impacts that cannot be completely avoided; **Restore:** measures taken to restore degraded ecosystems or capture some energy/material benefit; **Compensate:** measures taken to compensate for any significant residual, adverse impacts that cannot be avoided, reduced, and/or restored; **Offset:** a type of compensation measure, and while offset and compensate are used synonymously in the market, we differentiate here in that an offset is used to combine with an impact to produce a “net” or “neutral” outcome.

2. Unfortunately, the ambition of the program has not been matched by action given the temptation to develop small-scale projects to access finance and sacrifice geographic scope (jurisdiction or national) or temporal scope (long-term investment). The outputs of these smaller-scale interventions have often been used as compensatory offsets. Improvements to REDD+ programs seek to tackle these challenges toward scaled impact.

# REALITIES OF FOREST RESTORATION IN LANDSCAPES

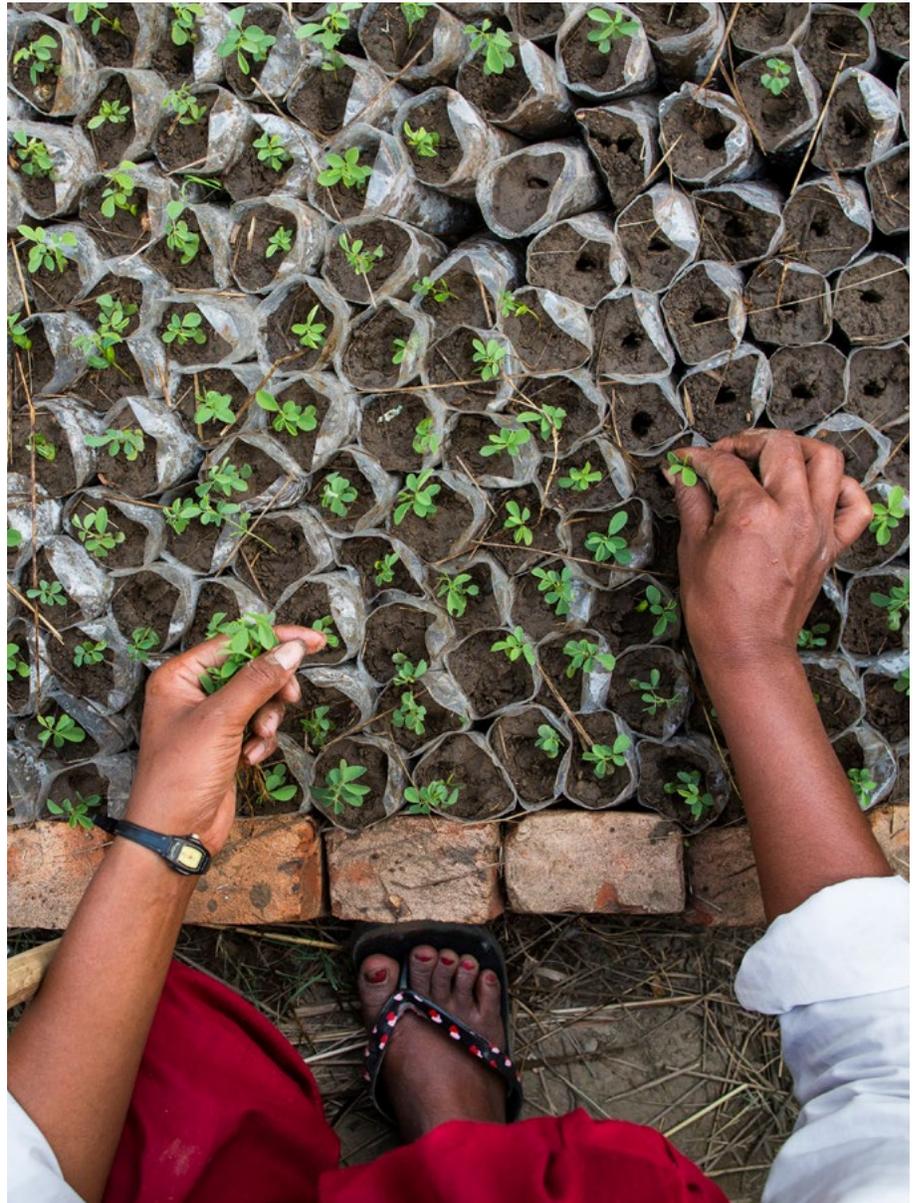
By Craig Beatty, WWF-US

*During the history of life on Earth, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have **only twice** been at or above current levels.*

In both cases, natural processes led to reductions: through the colonization of land by plants and then by the evolution of flowering plants. Also, in both cases, millions of years passed before CO<sub>2</sub> levels lowered to what we would consider normal, the type of time commitment humanity cannot currently afford.

Fortunately for us, we can commandeer the very same natural processes that nature evolved to deal with high CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the past without needing to wait millions of years. Combined with a transformational shift away from heavily carbonized systems that drive massive emissions and land degradation, comprehensive forest and landscape restoration is one way we can hit fast forward on reducing the amount of carbon in our atmosphere.

Perhaps ironically, [a significant portion](#) of the elevated concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere comes from the degradation and conversion of past forests and landscapes themselves. With each indrawn breath, we take



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in a portion of all the ecosystems that have been degraded and converted in human history, which are [about half of those that ever even existed](#). Restoration—which should include activities like afforestation, reforestation, ecological restoration, agroforestry, land management, and other types of regeneration—has the potential to reclaim those losses and is the only climate action ready to be implemented at a scale that can potentially lead to negative emissions.

Forest and landscape restoration is a key nature-based climate solution, and its important role in mitigating climate change is strongly supported by climate science. To achieve a 1.5°C climate pathway, [100–1000 GtCO<sub>2</sub>](#) will need to be removed from the atmosphere in addition to carbon emission neutrality. The lower end of [that range](#) is roughly the equivalent of the total historical CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Russia, and the higher end is about the equivalent of the total historic emissions of Asia, Africa, and the

Americas combined.

Forest and landscape restoration can make significant contributions to meeting those removal needs. Some studies report annual mitigation potentials from afforestation and reforestation as high as [10.1 GtCO<sub>2</sub>](#) while others find that the restoration potential of trees is [between 133.2 to 276.2 GtC](#) and that [one-fifth of cost-effective climate solutions](#) involve the restoration of native forests and wetlands. Though they each define restoration uniquely, the implication of restoration as a necessary climate action is clear.

Restoration efforts can be rolled out with the urgency the climate crisis requires. Working within existing restoration frameworks and platforms—or co-opting conservation and land management platforms for restoration initiatives—[can fast-track restoration opportunities assessments](#) that can be comprehensive, inclusive, and completed in under one year.

*The broad support of tree-planting initiatives is a testament to the notion that a world with more trees is not a bad thing.*

Global campaigns like the Bonn Challenge, and regional efforts like AFR100, Initiative 20x20, or ECCA30, have spurred the creation of consultative bodies to discuss landscape issues and further stakeholder engagement in the emergent definition of degraded land and restoration opportunities in dozens of countries. Combined, national and subnational commitments to restoration

exceed 170 million hectares worldwide across over 63 jurisdictions, and still more countries are undertaking forest and landscape restoration without committing to these platforms.

However, the reality of forest and landscape restoration at such scales requires more than evidence, opportunity, and will. It also requires an alignment of these objectives with the people who have the rights, motives, and ecological and cultural understandings that are unique to each landscape. Without their consultation and participation, restoration initiatives focused solely on delivering maximized climate mitigation outcomes are often divorced from local reality and risk strong opposition unless they demonstrate how restoration supports the needs and concerns of local people. While national commitments and initiatives can help generate interest and can support research and programs that generate real benefits for people, restoration is something that can only happen locally by engaging people to invest in degraded landscapes and to work to improve the ecological conditions within their landscapes.

Most people who work in restoration understand this and are diligently endeavoring to ensure that restoration is defined broadly enough so that it can include thousands of different types of actions that meet the needs of local people and economies; generate multiple benefits for different stakeholders within the same landscapes; prioritize the conservation of existing ecosystems; and support the ecological restoration of areas important for wild and agricultural diversity.

If we view restoration as a process

that can contribute to solving urgent problems—the climate crisis, poverty, human health, the rapid extinction of species and ecosystems, food security, access to natural resources, desertification, forced migration, and many, many more—we must ensure that restoration realizes its potential to deliver in different ways for different people, not just the objectives of one particular group.

Every single restoration initiative should be directed toward creating these transformational conditions, and there are dozens of examples for how partnerships between governments, the private sector, WWF, and local representatives can work together to [transform degraded landscapes](#). To dismiss any of the social, economic, or ecological complexities of how people might ultimately engage in restoration in order to quickly scale up will miss the mark of what restoration is ultimately designed to deliver in perpetuity, no matter your perspective.

In this respect, there is a right way and a wrong way to start considering restoration. And, while we need to act with urgency in the face of the climate crisis, we also can't afford to waste our efforts by cutting corners, counting trees, or skipping steps. Coupled with swift and deep cuts to current emissions, we can [take a little time](#) to make sure our forest restoration efforts comprehensively engage local people, plan for how we meet the needs of diverse stakeholders, and deliver the climate benefits we need to put us on a long-term pathway to a 1.5°C world.



## COVER STORY CONTINUED ...

In these precarious times, WWF-Colombia is committed to protecting our Indigenous partners and is working to support them despite the physical distance that now separates us.

One of the processes we have been developing at WWF-Colombia to support Indigenous peoples in the Amazon is the Capacity Building Programme on Indigenous Territorial Governance (PFGTI, for its acronym in Spanish). PFGTI seeks to strengthen the governance capabilities of Indigenous peoples within their territories. The second cohort of students began their courses in the department of Putumayo in June 2019, with 29 participants from the Kichwa, Camëntsä, Inga, Quillasinga, and Siona peoples.

Originally, the program structure included face-to-face sessions as well as work by the students in their respective communities, but the health emergency caused by the pandemic has prevented us from holding any face-to-face meetings this year.

### *So how will we continue with this supportive work when we can't safely meet with participants in person?*

We are changing our approach and adapting our methodology to meet the challenges of the time presented by the pandemic to further advance the tapestry of knowledge.

We have produced a digital booklet that includes the topics we have already covered in the training program, and the second version will soon be released with the topics that we were not able to cover in person. This booklet will be sent via WhatsApp to the participants who have access to the internet, and a paper copy will soon be sent to every student,

observing a biosecurity protocol that avoids the risk of disease spread.

In general, radio is the most widely used communication channel in communities without internet access and smartphones. In this regard, we have also worked on designing a new communications plan that allows us to transmit educational content through a radio program or podcast. We will include some of the topics that had already been discussed at the end of 2019 and some that were planned for 2020, which will be addressed through interviews with special guests, teachers, or experts.

Transmitting information is one thing but interacting with students is quite another. We keep in permanent touch with PFGTI participants through the telephone and, in some cases, through WhatsApp, where we hold chats with students. Questions are asked about the topics in the booklet, audios are shared with stories of traditions and practices from the participating communities (in their own voices), and dialogue about this information is encouraged. We have also planned some virtual meetings with our invited guests to encourage the participation of as many students who can connect from their homes and territories and to generate spaces for sharing dialogue and the tapestry of knowledge.

However, not all students have easy access to these media. We performed a study to identify those who have the possibility of accessing the internet with assistance so that we can provide them with data plans that allow them to connect and participate in these strategies for weaving knowledge and know-how from the virtual space.

The Indigenous organizations are helping to support these students as well. We are working with the leaders of OZIP, the Indigenous partner organization that is leading the development of PFGTI

in Putumayo, by sending them internet connection packages, as well as some computers, to facilitate connectivity and communication from their territories.

This strategy allows us to continue with the training process without holding more workshops or face-to-face meetings with the communities and without promoting meetings or working gatherings that could put facilitators or students at risk. It may be more difficult or inconvenient, but these are ways to protect the participants from COVID-19 and support the Indigenous communities' decisions to remain in their territories and not allow any outsiders to enter.

For now, we work from home and continue weaving, looking for ways to continue these processes while we take care of ourselves and each other. Protecting the Indigenous communities of the Amazon is something we are all committed to.



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## REDD+ PEOPLE

# BRITTANY WILLIAMS

*Not all forest work happens under the canopy—sometimes you need a conference room (or a Zoom call in the midst of a pandemic). WWF-US's Brittany Williams brings her roots in fieldwork to her efforts in the policy space. We sat down with her to learn more.*

## What is your role at WWF?

I am the senior program officer, policy for forest and climate. In this role, I lead our team's policy and advocacy activities that promote increased forest conservation at scale to avert the worst impacts of climate change, safeguard livelihoods, and protect invaluable natural habitats. This translates into actively engaging in global policy negotiations, discussions, and events to support governments, companies, and civil society in their development and implementation of forest-related nature-based solutions.

## What are you currently working on?

I am coordinating a process to update WWF's position on forest carbon across the network. The current WWF position on forests and climate change mitigation was written before the REDD+ Warsaw Framework was adopted at UNFCCC's COP19 in 2013, the Paris Agreement was adopted at UNFCCC's COP21 in 2015, and the International Civil Aviation Organization's emission mitigation approach CORSIA was adopted in 2016. All these events, especially the solidification of the Paris Rulebook, have significantly changed the shape of voluntary and compliance carbon markets, and our position needs to be updated to reflect these changes in order to provide up-to-date principles and guidance for WWF offices as well as for our corporate partners.

## How did you get involved in this kind of conservation work?

I grew up in Northern California, and my family took full advantage of the good weather and beautiful landscapes to spend lots of time outdoors—picnicking, biking, hiking, camping, and swimming. Those experiences, combined with my love of animals, instilled a deep wonder of nature in me from a young age. By the time I entered university, I delved into courses on rural development policy, political ecology, environmental justice, and environmental philosophy and ethics, subsequently obtaining degrees in international development and environmental policy. Upon graduation, I served as an agroforestry extension agent with the Peace Corps in Guinea for two years, where I got to combine my interest in sustainable development with my passion for conserving nature by





© Brittany Williams / WWF-US

supporting community-based projects focused on reforestation, apiculture, and food security. After several more years working on agricultural development for a USAID contractor, I returned to school pursuing a master's in environmental management to reground myself in my dual interests in climate change action and sustainable land use and then found my way to join WWF's amazing Forest and Climate team.

**2020 will be an interesting year for global climate negotiations. What do you think should be prioritized on the global stage?**

With the world facing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the next UNFCCC Conference of the Parties, COP26, in Glasgow delayed until 2021, we are having to rethink the opportunities in 2020 to continue the momentum needed to achieve forest-related climate mitigation commitments

and action globally. I think this is the year to really focus on non-Party stakeholder engagement by strengthening involvement of and collaboration between subnational governments, civil society, Indigenous peoples, and the private sector. One such venue to do this is the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, which aims to connect the work of governments with the many climate actions taken by cities, regions, businesses, and investors.

**What does success look like from your point of view?**

I would pluralize the word to say that it comes down to accomplishing a steady series of successes. These successes all look different, but they build on each other to move the world toward a sustainable future with a stabilized climate, healthy ecosystems, including forests, and thriving livelihoods. Examples in the policy realm that come

to my mind include the inclusion of forests in the Paris Agreement text, the growing presence and participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities in global climate policy discussions, and the Green Climate Fund's commitment of US\$500 million to operationalize REDD+ results-based payments.

**Can you share a source of inspiration for your work?**

There is a particular valley in the Fouta Djallon region of Guinea that shocks your senses with its beauty (pictured above). Sitting on a cliff and looking down upon its lush expanse of forest and waterfalls, teeming with life, I remember being overcome with wonder. Even years later, my mind can be transported to that place when I need a fresh dose of inspiration. I work my hardest so that landscapes like that one can exist and flourish for generations to come.

PANDAS IN THE WILD

In January, **Naikoa Aguilar Amuchastegui**, WWF forest and climate senior director for forest carbon science, was accepted to the UNFCCC [Roster of Experts](#) for REDD+ on behalf of Spain. In this role, he will be among those assessing reference level and biennial updated report submissions to UNFCCC by Parties to the Convention. Dr. Aguilar Amuchastegui will contribute his decades of experience in the realities of MRV and REDD+ design and implementation along with his specialization in forest carbon science.



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WWF Forest and Climate was on the ground at UNFCCC COP25, raising awareness and advocating for forests as an important player on the climate stage. **Josefina Braña Varela**, WWF-US's vice president and deputy lead for forests, moderated a featured panel on finance for forests and land during the [Marrakesh Partnership](#) for Global Climate Action Land Use Event while in Madrid. The event also featured Paul Simpson of CDP, Gustavo Fonseca of GEF, Ulf Johansson of IKEA, Jigme Tenzin of [Bhutan](#), and Jennifer Morris of CI as panelists. The session was opened by [Maka Monture Păki](#), WWF-US's inaugural Youth Leadership Award recipient.

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## REDD+ SPECIES

## BLEEDING TOAD

Common Name:

*Bleeding Toad*

Scientific Name:

*Leptophryne cruentata*

Location:

Indonesia

Status:

Critically Endangered

Found in the mountains of the Indonesian island of Java, the bleeding toad is aptly named. These medium-sized, slender amphibians feature dark-red to purple bodies with blood-red to yellow marbling and secrete a chemical cocktail when under stress that has antifungal and antibacterial properties. Little is known about the behavior of these rare toads, but slow-moving streams are necessary for their breeding and reproduction, suggesting watershed management might be necessary for conservation.

The population decline in bleeding toads was once thought to be linked to the eruption of Mount Galunggung, but current observations suggest chytridiomycosis, an infectious disease in amphibians. Other threats include loss of range from climate change, habitat decline, population fragmentation, and, at one waterfall site, impacts from tourism.

Read more:

[IUCN Red List](#)

[Edge of Existence](#)



## VIEWPOINTS

### On global climate action

**“FAILING TO ACT NOW AND IMPEDING THOSE WHO ARE WORKING IN GOOD FAITH TO RISE TO THIS CHALLENGE IS DANGEROUSLY IRRESPONSIBLE. IT WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.”**

- Vanessa Pérez-Cirera, Deputy Leader of WWF International's Climate & Energy Practice

### On Australian fires

**“WE WAITED ON THE WATER’S EDGE ALL NIGHT. THE SMOKE WAS DENSE. EVEN THOUGH WE WERE WEARING SWIMMING GOGGLES, OUR EYES STUNG. OUR THROATS WERE RAW. TO HELP US BREATHE, WE USED MEDICAL MASKS AND A TORN-UP SARONG WRAPPED AROUND OUR FACES.”**

- Jonathan Veal, Environmental Planner, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

### On human and planetary health

**“WE MUST URGENTLY RECOGNIZE THE LINKS BETWEEN THE DESTRUCTION OF NATURE AND HUMAN HEALTH, OR WE WILL SOON SEE THE NEXT PANDEMIC ... THERE IS NO DEBATE, AND THE SCIENCE IS CLEAR; WE MUST WORK WITH NATURE, NOT AGAINST IT. UNSUSTAINABLE EXPLOITATION OF NATURE HAS BECOME AN ENORMOUS RISK TO US ALL.”**

- Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International

### On plans for the future

**“CONSIDERATION OF FORESTS IN PANDEMIC RECOVERY EFFORTS WILL DETERMINE IF THE TREE COVER LOSS NUMBERS PIVOT UP OR DOWN IN THE YEARS TO COME.”**

- Frances Seymour, Distinguished Senior Fellow at WRI

### On choices

**“BY THE END OF THE COMING DECADE WE WILL BE ON ONE OF TWO PATHS. ONE IS THE PATH OF SURRENDER, WHERE WE HAVE SLEEPWALKED PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN, JEOPARDIZING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET. DO WE REALLY WANT TO BE REMEMBERED AS THE GENERATION THAT BURIED ITS HEAD IN THE SAND, THAT FIDDLER WHILE THE PLANET BURNED? THE OTHER OPTION IS THE PATH OF HOPE.”**

- António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

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