



30x30 Conservation Agenda

Conserve 30 percent of lands and waters in the United States by 2030 through administrative actions to ensure we can meet the challenge of climate change and provide space for wildlife and communities to thrive.

Flourishing natural areas and parks are indispensable to people's health, prosperity, cultural traditions, and enjoyment. They also play a critical role in combating the climate and extinction crises.

Unfortunately, 1 million acres of nature are being lost to development in the US each year. One million species are at risk of extinction worldwide. In the last 40 years, wildlife populations have declined by 60 percent because of habitat loss, climate change, and other environmental factors.¹ All but one of the US's endangered species are vulnerable to climate change, according to a recent scientific study.

It is clear that we need to do more to combat the unprecedented threats ahead, including moving beyond historic conservation models to a more inclusive approach that promotes frontline and Indigenous leadership.

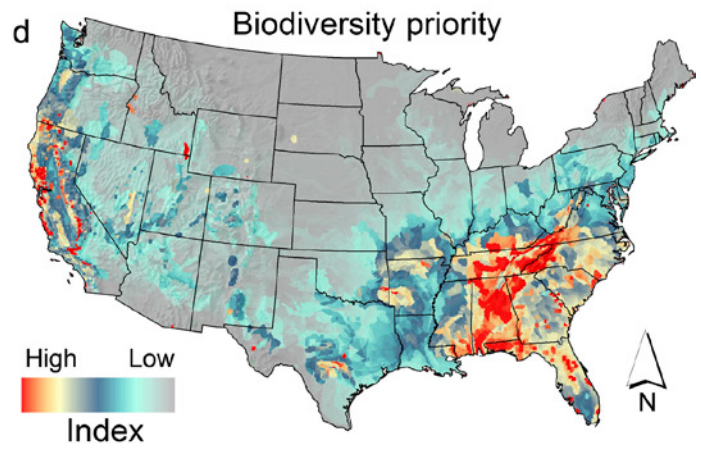
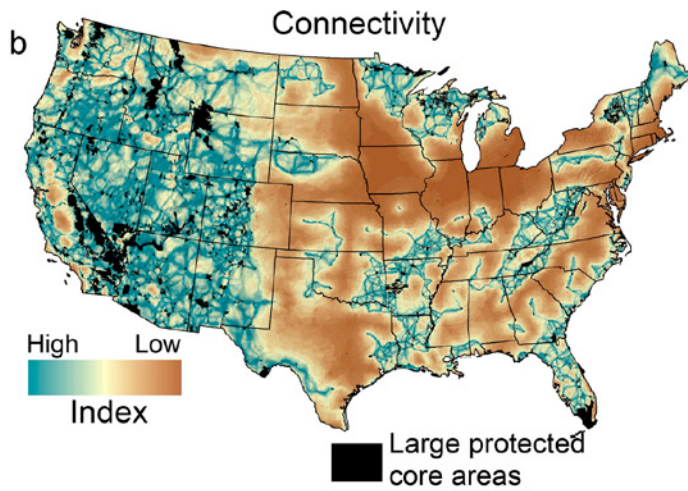
There is still hope, but we must act now, and we must be bold. We know that to combat the climate crisis, we have to quickly decarbonize our economy and draw down significant amounts of carbon pollution from the atmosphere. Conserving public lands can both decrease existing carbon pollution (by sequestering carbon) and help decarbonize our economy (by keeping all fossil fuels

on public lands in the ground). Studies have shown that with smart land conservation and management practices, we could offset up to 21 percent of US greenhouse gas emissions and preserve much-needed habitat for increasingly imperiled wildlife.

Path to Conservation

Leading conservation scientists, Indigenous leaders, and international organizations like the UN International Convention on Biodiversity say that in order to stop the dual extinction and climate crises and preserve clean water, clean air, and a stable climate, we need to conserve 50 percent of the planet by 2050. To get there, that means in the US we will need to conserve 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030. It's an ambitious goal, but one that's achievable if we all work together to:

- Conserve and restore large, intact landscapes and wildlife corridors
- Implement land conservation strategies that contribute to climate solutions
- Support the conservation and stewardship vision and priorities of Tribal Nations
- Conserve more open lands and parks near communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities



As we develop 30x30 conservation campaigns, we will prioritize conserving landscapes that provide critical habitat for wildlife and provide for connectivity to allow the wildlife to adapt to the impacts of climate change. (Ecological Applications, Volume 27, Issue 4, Pages 1050-1056, First published 6 March 2017, DOI: (10.1002/eap.1527)²

We Can Get There

Sixty percent of lands in the continental US are in a largely natural condition or could plausibly be restored to a natural condition. With an ambitious agenda and strong leadership, we can still conserve a substantial portion of remaining wildlife and natural areas.

Conserving 30 percent of US lands and waters by 2030 will require creative advocacy strategies and an energized grassroots movement. But the policies that need to be implemented are neither complicated nor entirely new. Federal, state, and local governments have an extraordinary range of conservation powers—from the executive reach of the president to the zoning authorities of city councils—and we’ll need to utilize the whole range of protections available to meet our goals.

On national public lands, this could include conserving roadless forest lands through the forest-planning process, presidential national monument designations, federal agency oil and gas leasing moratoriums, and wetlands restoration. State and local government agencies could potentially conserve 50 percent more land than they currently do through efforts like state-funded open space

programs, designation of wildlife corridors that safeguard lands within them, and the creation and expansion of state and local parks. Implementing the conservation and stewardship policies and principles of Tribal Nations on traditional and cultural lands could also result in significant additional protections.

A Better Future

We envision a just, equitable, and sustainable future where all people benefit from a healthy, thriving planet and a direct connection to nature. Working with and in communities across the country we can bolster locally led wildlife conservation efforts. Conserving more of our public lands and managing them to sustain wildlife and natural systems is our best chance to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and ensure that we leave a livable world for future generations. Conserving 30 percent of the US by 2030 represents the kind of transformational change that is needed to safeguard nature in the United States.

Endnotes

- 1 Living Planet Report 2018, https://c402277.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/publications/1187/files/original/LPR2018_Full_Report_Spreads.pdf
- 2 <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/eap.1527>

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