



Western Forestry Issues:

CLIMATE CHANGE



Western and Pacific Island forests play a critical role in strategies to address climate change. It is essential that these forests and the benefits they provide, including carbon sequestration, forest products, clean air, and clean water, be part of regional and national climate solutions.

Climate change is an issue of particular significance for the Pacific Islands where people, as well as many populations of endemic species, are restricted to small geographic areas and are therefore highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. These effects include sea level rise, coastal erosion, freshwater contamination, and extreme weather events. With more frequent flooding, natural disasters, and the permanent loss of coastal lands, the livelihoods and food security of hundreds of thousands of people are at continued risk.

In order for western and Pacific Island forests to adapt to a changing climate and continue to mitigate the effects of climate change, continued support for forested landscapes is key.

Western and Pacific Islands forests are continually faced with new stressors and challenges such as:

- Catastrophic wildfire
- Drought
- Deteriorating forest health
- Native and invasive species and disease
- Fragmentation and conversion of forests

The impacts of climate change are wide-ranging. Sustainable forest management and forest conservation are needed to ensure that western and Pacific Island forests continue to remove carbon from the atmosphere, improve soil and water quality, and reduce wildfire risk¹.

In order to maintain and enhance western forests' critical role in climate and carbon strategies, management strategies must include:

- Incentives for keeping forests as forests
- Mitigating forest loss due to catastrophic wildland fire
- Vibrant forest products markets and biomass opportunities
- Reforestation programs
- Increased forest resilience across large-scale landscapes

¹ [The President's Climate Action Plan](#)

