

The Nature Conservancy's Climate Change Adaptation Program: *Conservation solutions to climate change problems*



The Need

Earth's climate is changing, putting the plants, animals and natural communities we care about at risk and undermining the vital benefits that nature provides to people. We are already observing changes that pose urgent and serious threats to many of the places we protect and to the billions of people who depend on healthy ecosystems for water, food and livelihoods. As climate change continues, the risks to people and to our conservation mission grow larger and more severe. Our conservation mission and commitment to delivering long-term benefits for both people and nature give us a direct stake in developing and implementing strategies that can sustain nature in the face of unavoidable impacts. Impacts are already hitting coasts and water resources that are of vital importance for both biodiversity and people, and so these are areas for immediate action.

Our Goal

We aim to enhance the resilience of people and nature to climate change impacts by protecting and maintaining ecosystems that, even under changed climate conditions, can support biodiversity and continue to deliver the full suite of services that nature provides to people. We want such ecosystem-based approaches to be widely adopted as a proven and positive solution for climate change adaptation. Our commitment to adaptation is reflected, internally, in the rapidly growing list of domestic and international conservation projects that are integrating resiliency components. Externally, the Conservancy recently announced a three-year \$25 million commitment to the Clinton Global Initiative to test and prove the cost-effectiveness of ecosystem-based strategies for safeguarding nature and vulnerable human communities.

The Opportunity

Ecosystem-based adaptation strategies can improve water and food security and reduce vulnerability to natural hazards while also protecting biodiversity. This creates an exciting opportunity to integrate conservation into new climate policies and sustainable development plans. By aligning incentives and financing for nature-based solutions, we can dramatically increase the scope and scale of ecosystem-based adaptation. Billions of dollars have been pledged to support adaptation actions. We can show how to turn those resources into tangible global impact that benefit both people and nature. We have proven conservation tools to build on like reef-resilience and ecological flows. And because we speak from experience, not theory or ideology, the Conservancy is positioned as an important and influential advocate for public policies and funding internationally and especially in the U.S. Our constructive relationships with the private sector also raise the possibility that we could work in partnership with insurance or other business sectors that share an interest in reducing the risk of climate impacts to people and nature.

Our Strategies

- Making the case and setting global priorities for ecosystem-based adaptation by clearly defining what ecosystem-based adaptation is and is not, and showing where and what the needs and opportunities are.
- Building the know-how and can-do among practitioners and partners by supporting priority demonstration projects, facilitating learning, and developing tools and methods that others can use.
- Cultivating commitment, funding and capacity for ecosystem-based adaptation in other institutions like government agencies, development agencies, humanitarian/aid NGOs.
- Promoting public/private partnerships for ecosystem-based adaptation that deliver large-scale benefits for people and nature.

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