



Climate Change

Position Statement

Climate change affects all life on Earth, but intact ecosystems, both on land and in the ocean, provide a natural defense in mitigating rising global temperatures. In the face of our world's climate crisis, planning and management of wilderness and wild public lands must aim to reduce the atmospheric carbon dioxide that causes climate disruption, and should prioritize natural carbon storage, biodiversity protection, and ecological resilience.

- Public land management should carefully weigh and minimize the climate impacts of resource development, livestock grazing, and extraction. Broads supports using the Social Cost of Carbon¹ to calculate the social and economic impacts of projects on federal public lands.
- Earth is nearing or surpassing several tipping points. Keeping fossil fuels in the ground is critical to maintaining liveable global temperatures and avoiding the most catastrophic impacts of climate change.
- Ensuring management of existing fossil fuel operations to dramatically minimize greenhouse gas emissions is critical to limiting climate change. Federal and state policies must not allow fossil fuel or energy corporations to shift the costs of climate disruption to society while reaping profits from public lands.
- Preserving intact ecosystems is essential to limiting climate change, especially as global warming has already diminished this capacity in some ecosystems. Public land management regulations and planning documents should consider and prioritize conservation of healthy wildlands that have high capacity for biologically storing and sequestering carbon – such as mature and old-growth forests, riparian areas, grasslands, deserts, soils and permafrost, coastal wetlands, and oceans.
- In the face of climate-driven drought, natural water cycles on public lands must be rigorously protected to benefit ecosystem health and resilience.

¹See <https://ceq.doe.gov/guidance/ghg-tools-and-resources.html> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_cost_of_carbon

²Goad, J., & Lee-Ashley, M. (2014, April 4). *The Clogged Carbon Sink: U.S. Public Lands Are the Source of 4.5 Times More Carbon Pollution Than They Can Absorb.* <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-clogged-carbon-sink-u-s-public-lands-are-the-source-of-4-5-times-more-carbon-pollution-than-they-can-absorb/>

Mining and fossil fuel extraction on public lands generate

4.5x

more carbon per acre than those lands absorb each year.²



The temperate rainforest region of the Pacific Northwest stores more carbon per acre than the Amazon.



Coastal ecosystems, such as estuaries, and oceans store

10x

the carbon per acre than forests thanks to photosynthesis by marine phytoplankton.

The activities undertaken by Great Old Broads for Wilderness are guided by the overriding principle that the focus of attention must be on what is best for the land and water, for Mother Earth.