

Woodland

YOUR CONNECTION TO AMERICA'S FORESTS



A Publication of the



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Foundation



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Thank you for your support!

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP) to get us this far! Whether you are a landowner, donor, forester, credit buyer, investor, or any of the other members of our community, your contributions make our mission possible. Your partnership is crucial to unlocking the potential of family forests to combat climate change and empower family forest owners.

Now, we want to hear how you prefer to stay engaged.

Please let us know if you are interested in attending future events, field trips, or other ways you want to follow and be part of FFCP's progress. We appreciate your feedback, ideas, and partnership.

**Contact Nate Meehan with any suggestions
at nmeehan@forestfoundation.org.**



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BY RITA HITE
PRESIDENT & CEO
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

You Help Us Deliver the Best Markets for Landowners

This past month I had the opportunity to gather with our entire American Forest Foundation staff team one week, and then the next week our entire AFF Board of Directors. In both cases, we toured numerous family forest landowner properties enrolled in our Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP). I talked with both groups about our organizational values—and in our next edition of *Woodland* magazine, we'll dive even further into those. However, it's imperative for you to know that we are planet and people-centered. Every decision we make at AFF is based upon the fact that we know family forest owners have long made vital contributions to our nation's conservation efforts and that, with your support, we can do even more for our environment and our economy—all while providing family forest owners the opportunity to achieve their goals.

So how do we ensure we are setting up the best opportunities for family forest landowners? In this edition of *Woodland*, you will read about the bedrock of how carbon offsetting works and what makes an offset considered additional, further enhancing the integrity of the marketplace. You will not want to miss this feature on additionality beginning on page 10. We are focused on building the highest quality forest carbon credits while improving forest health and creating value to rural communities and your support makes this possible.

Having high-integrity carbon credits and working with family forest landowners allows us to attract investors who care about the same things we do.

Continued On Next Page

“You make everything we do possible. Thank you for your continued support and your advocacy for family forest landowners.”



AFF Staff Retreat in West Virginia, May 2023.

We will need many of those investments between now and 2050 and beyond to succeed in our mission. On page 14, you'll read a corporate profile about Pokémon and see the value alignment between their investment and what we're trying to accomplish together. One of the things they said hits at the core of our dedication to people and the planet, **“We choose to partner with the American Forest Foundation (AFF) because, like us, they are committed to mitigating climate change swiftly, effectively, and responsibly. Additionally, we appreciate how AFF's work with family forest landowners addresses multiple social and environmental issues at once, like carbon storage and sequestration, biodiversity conservation, wildfire reduction, clean water, clean air, and supporting rural communities.”**

Also, in this edition, I am excited that we are sharing our Midwest expansion of the FFCP with you. If you are a landowner in Michigan, Minnesota or Wisconsin, I hope you'll consider learning more

about how you can be a part of our program and partner with us (page 6). I also completely relate to what one of our talented Senior Foresters, Brittany VanderWall, also featured in “Meet the Staff” on page 20, said about being a forester in Michigan. I think perhaps you might relate with this, too, as a forest enthusiast: “I always get a rush after spending an afternoon with a landowner and they are excited about how much more they know about their forest.”

Finally, I cannot encourage you more to read the inspiring landowner stories beginning on page 16 and then the policy update on page 9, and if you are a landowner, we need you. We are preparing for our fly-in; your voice is more important than ever, and your story matters. Please consider participating in our fly-in and engaging with our policy team as we meet with lawmakers.

You make everything we do possible. Thank you for your continued support and your advocacy for family forest landowners. 🌲

Family Forest Carbon Program Expands into Midwest United States

BY KATIE TAYLOR, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

The Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP), a partnership between American Forest Foundation and The Nature Conservancy, expanded into the Upper Midwest in April, advancing the carbon market practice to thousands of rural private forest owners in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Now, Midwestern landowners are eligible to enroll in 16 select counties, and the program plans to expand into several more counties throughout the three states in summer of this year. The Program’s rapid growth sets the tone for the American Forest Foundation’s (AFF) goal to meet the needs of rural family forest owners and the planet.

WHAT IS THE FAMILY FOREST CARBON PROGRAM (FFCP)?

FFCP helps bring affordable carbon market options to private landowners. The Program provides annual payments and a tailored forest management plan to improve the health and value of the landowner’s woodlands, promote wildlife habitats and increased carbon storage.

The Midwest expansion of FFCP includes the following counties:

Michigan Counties:	Wisconsin Counties:	Minnesota Counties:
Baraga, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Marquette, and Ontonagon	Ashland, Iron, and Vilas	Becker, Cass, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Morrison, and Wadena

BASIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for these practices, one must:

- Have forested property in the above counties.
- Own 30 or more acres of non-planted, naturally regenerating trees on the property.
- Have the legal right to harvest on the land.
- Be able to commit to a 20-year agreement.

THERE ARE TWO PRACTICES THAT FAMILY FOREST OWNERS MAY NOW ENROLL IN:

The Growing Mature Forests practice is designed to allow forests to grow older and larger trees than average forests in the local area, promoting long-term forest health and increased commercial value of the trees, all while allowing landowners to maintain a working forest.

The Promoting Diverse Forests practice increases the number and diversity of living trees left uncut during coppice or clearcut harvests, allowing landowners to balance the financial and ecological benefits of harvesting, while enhancing wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and resiliency.

AFF’S EXPERT FORESTERS IN THE MIDWEST

One of the best parts of our Family Forest Carbon Program is our expert foresters. They are not only savvy in forestry but are also down-to-earth-folks who have a true passion for helping landowners figure out how to care for their woodlands. Our Midwest foresters live in the areas they are assigned to and are ready to walk your property with you and answer all your questions.

Brittany VanderWall, AFF's Midwest Senior Forestry Manager, is one of the foresters assigned to the Midwest region and loves spending time with family forest owners: "It is fun and fulfilling to teach others about the natural world. The best day in the woods is one where you share a new idea with someone who enjoys being in the forest. I always get a rush after spending an afternoon with a landowner and they are excited about how much more they know about their forest. Teaching others brings a greater self-awareness and understanding of the material as well." You can learn more about Brittany Vanderwall on Page 21.

VanderWall was featured in several news publications during the Midwest launch, including WLUC TV-6 (NBC Michigan): "The program is specifically designed for non-industrial private forest landowners and the reason why is the way we count our carbon—we compare landowners that are enrolled with real-time lands outside of the program to make these comparisons," Vanderwall said.

Chrissy Shaw, AFF's Senior Forestry Manager, is another highly skilled and passionate forester assigned to the Midwest region. She and her family spend every June fishing at their cabin in Backus, Minnesota. Among her many talents, Chrissy is aware of and specializes in helping families mitigate the impact that climate change has on their woodlands: "With climate change on the horizon, there are many more difficulties that the future may hold for us. Forests, and the trees within them are not exempt. Luckily, the American Forest Foundation and The Nature Conservancy have been working hard to bring a program that would provide some relief to our forests in the face of climate change, along with providing additional income to help finance sustainable forest management goals for Minnesotans' forests."

You can learn more about Chrissy Shaw on AFF's Family Forest Blog.

As the launch has grown in popularity, several state-based news sources have picked up the story. Wisconsin Public Radio featured FFCP's benefits in the state and featured the support that major organizations and legislators have for the Program in their region.

Matt Dallman, Deputy State Director for The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin discussed how FFCP's affordability makes it stand out from the rest of the carbon markets, which are too expensive for family landowners to access. "It's about looking at nature's ability to be a climate solution, and forests are some of our best, most efficient carbon sequestration systems out there," Dallman said.

WORD OF MOUTH

Our currently enrolled family forest owners are some of our best spokespeople for the benefits of the Program.

Jarrold Hatfield is enrolled in FFPC's West Virginia practice. He did so to help offset the cost of taxes to his property, to preserve his land for his children and to put wealth back into his community. Hatfield inherited the property from his father, Rodney, an avid outdoorsman: "He was a simple guy. He loved just hanging out on the property if it just meant riding back and looking at a walnut tree," Hatfield said.

"I always get a rush after spending an afternoon with a landowner and they are excited about how much more they know about their forest."

Karren DeSeve's family owns woodlands in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania and has enrolled her forest into FFCP because she and her family wanted to preserve the land for future generations, "The program united our family around the idea of being multi-generational stewards of the forest as a carbon asset. We began to move past the idea of 'holding the line' by just maintaining the forest as it was, and instead began exploring new opportunities for generating lasting climate benefits," said her son, Gerry.

Chris Johnson and his family steward around 450 acres of forestland in Lincoln, Vermont. They eat from the property's apple trees in the fall, harvest timber for the winter and collect sap for the family's organic maple syrup operation in the spring. Johnson knew enrolling in FFCP just made good sense for his business and land, "The nice thing is [FFCP] allowed us to continue the maple sugaring without any changes, so that was huge."

We at AFF are proud to work with family forest owners and would love to talk with you about your property and your goals. To learn more about the Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP), and how you can enroll, please visit www.familyforest.org. 🌲

The Family Forest Carbon Program helps landowners **care for their woods while helping the planet.**

Family forests provide a wide array of ecosystem benefits, including wildlife habitat, clean air, and natural water filtration. They also help protect the planet by sequestering and storing carbon. The Family Forest Carbon Program creates a marketplace for landowners to sell carbon credits to environmentally conscious companies working to reduce their carbon footprint. Landowners can earn extra income to help achieve their goals for their land.

The Family Forest Carbon Program is uniquely designed to help forest owners adopt long-term sustainable management that improves carbon sequestration and storage while balancing other essential forest benefits. The program provides expert guidance from a forest professional, creating a forest management plan, and annual payments to implement practices.

Now available in Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Learn more at www.familyforestcarbon.org



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The Nature
Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.



AFF Policy Team Update

BY SARAH JEWELL
POLICY MANAGER,
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

While the rest of the nation prepares for summer adventures, the 118th Congress continues to work on the most imminent priority—the debt ceiling. Although negotiations on the debt ceiling are still underway, the House passed H.R. 2811 (Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023). This proposal raises the debt ceiling in conjunction with blunt spending cuts including provisions cutting a number of clean energy tax credit and climate spending provisions passed last year with Congressional Democrats and the President's Inflation Reduction Act. At the time of this writing, however, negotiations have excluded landmark investments in forestry and conservation within the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Forest Service. AFF's Policy Team continues to monitor this development closely.

In addition to the intense political jockeying around the debt ceiling, Capitol Hill's summer will also be spent on the Farm Bill—a multiyear policy that governs a range of agriculture, conservation, and forestry programs. With the bill expiring at the end of September, the clock is quickly ticking down for Congressional action. After deliberation with key landowners and partners, AFF has finalized its Farm Bill priorities. Some of these Farm Bill priorities include tools for low-cost financing benefiting family forest owners such as the Rural Forests Market Act and the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act's Landscape Scale Restoration provisions. Other tools benefiting landowners included in our priorities are ensuring the reauthorization and full funding for two critical cost-share programs: the

Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program. For a complete list of AFF's Farm Bill priorities, please use the QR code below.

To further advocate for AFF's Farm Bill priorities and engage with Capitol Hill, AFF is organizing an in-person legislative fly-in on July 26th. This year's fly-in will bring landowners from across the U.S. to the Capitol, to advocate for forest priorities in the Farm Bill. The fly-in will allow landowners to share their stories and experiences directly with policymakers and network with other landowners, partners, and AFF staff. Fly-ins are an important tool for advocacy because sharing your personal experiences as a landowner is one of the best ways to educate and persuade Members of Congress on landowner and forest issues.

Landowners interested in participating in advocacy efforts should fill out the landowner engagement form using the QR Code below. 🌲



Landowner Engagement Form
bit.ly/45paleC



AFF's Farm Bill Priorities
bit.ly/3ITTXJO

Additionality:

The Foundation of Carbon Offsetting

BY LYNN RILEY

SENIOR MANAGER, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

What makes an offset an offset? When carbon credit producers put their stamp of quality on a carbon credit (usually a metric tonne of carbon dioxide), how does a buyer have confidence that what they're buying is equivalent to the metric tonne of carbon dioxide the buyer emitted and wanted to offset through a carbon credit purchase?

To answer this question, let's start with the logic of carbon offsets. If Company A emits 1,000 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2023 and wants to offset those emissions, they can either remove that carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, avoid emitting 1,000 tons, or some combination of both. In the context of family forests, this means planting new trees, adjusting emissions-producing harvest behavior, or managing a forest such that it grows more efficiently and store more carbon than they would have otherwise.

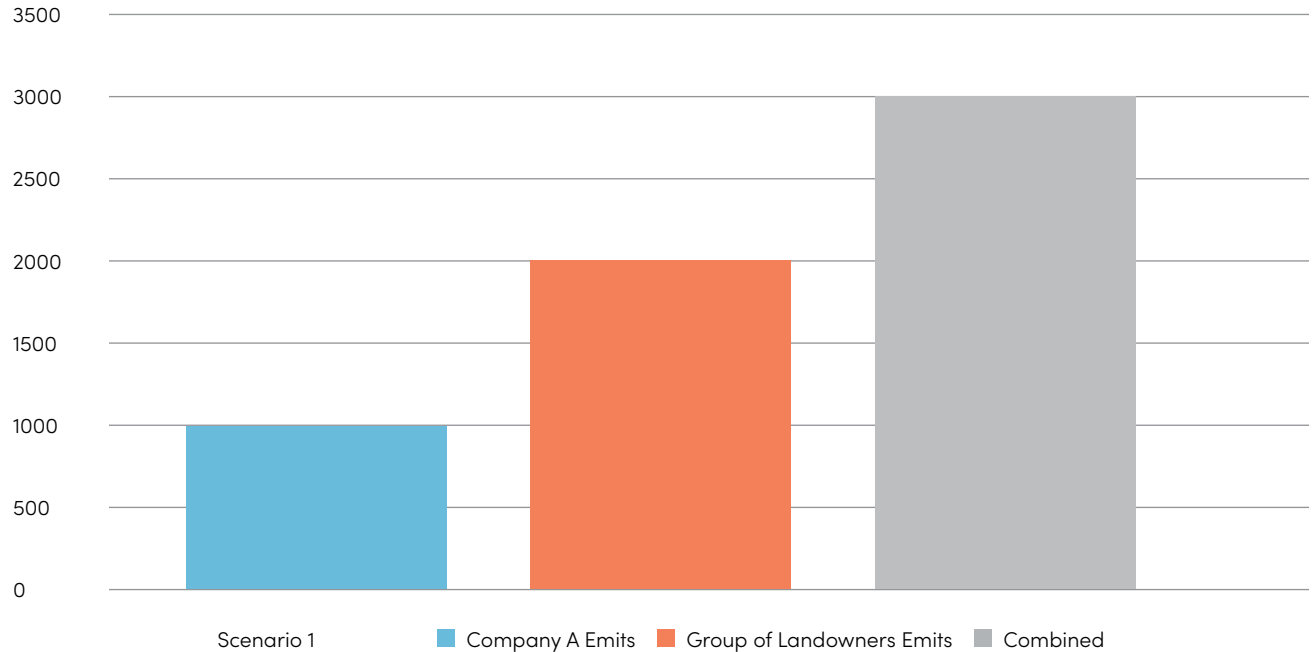
When a buyer is paying for one of the above behaviors, though, there is a critical consideration: **additionality**. This is a term used to describe whether the carbon sold as a carbon credit was a result of the program—that it's not carbon that "would have been stored anyway." Carbon credit producers and buyers are interested in this

question of hypothetical scenarios because it is the key to understanding what actually happens to the atmosphere. Let's consider two scenarios:

1. Company A emits 1,000 tons of carbon into the atmosphere, and a large group of family landowners all do intensive harvests, releasing 2,000 tons of carbon to the atmosphere from the limbs and crowns of trees that are not incorporated into harvested wood products and are left to decay.
2. Company A emits 1,000 tons of carbon into the atmosphere, and a large group of family landowners use an improved forest management strategy to only emit 1,000 tons of carbon to the atmosphere, improving the health of their forest along the way.

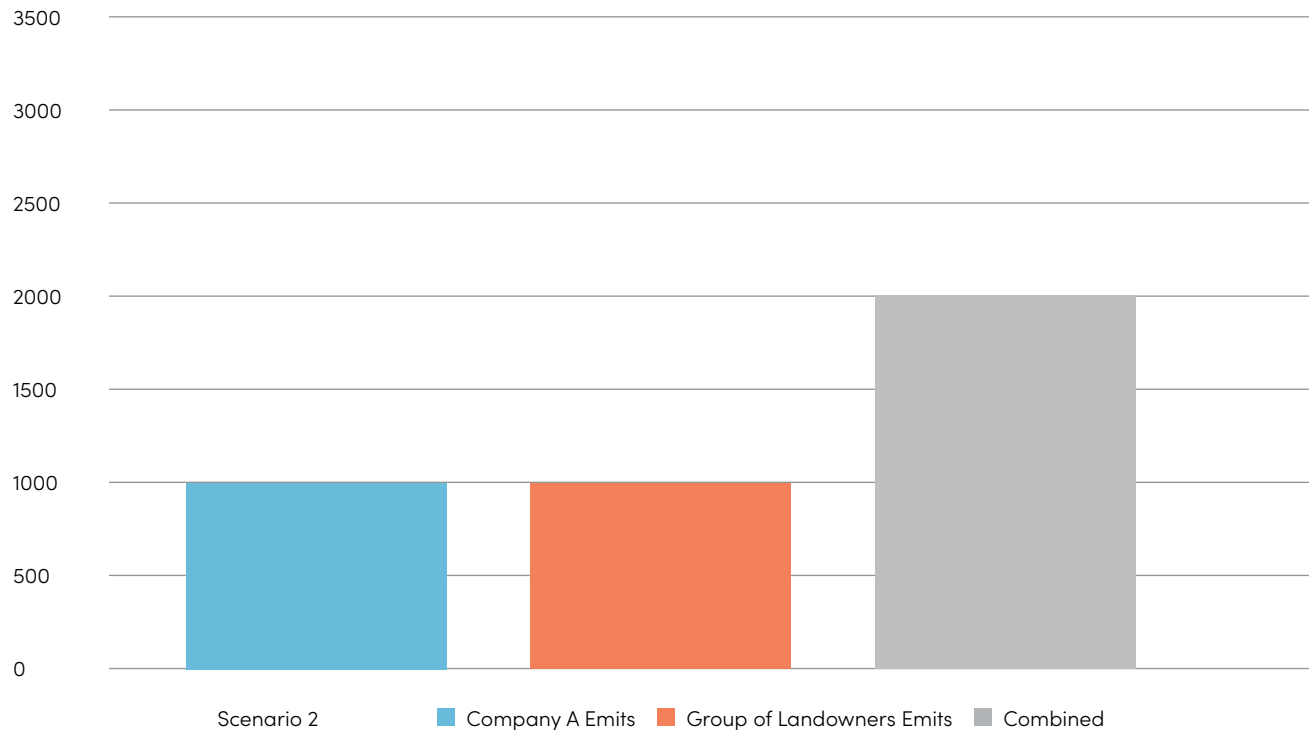
In Scenario 1, 3,000 metric tonnes of carbon are emitted to the atmosphere. In Scenario 2, only 2,000 tons of carbon are emitted—representing a 1,000-tonne reduction! In other words, the atmosphere experiences 1,000 fewer tonnes getting emitted. If Company A wants to reduce their climate impact by 1,000 tonnes, they're going to be very interested in causing a shift from Scenario 1 to Scenario 2.

SCENARIO 1



Company A emits 1000 tons of carbon into the atmosphere, and a large group of family landowners all do intensive harvests, releasing 2000 tons of carbon to the atmosphere from the limbs and crowns of trees that are not incorporated into harvested wood products and are left to decay.

SCENARIO 2



Company A emits 1000 tons of carbon into the atmosphere, and a large group of family landowners use an improved forest management strategy to only emit 1000 tons of carbon to the atmosphere, improving the health of their forest along the way.

In Scenario 1, 3000 metric tonnes of carbon are emitted to the atmosphere. In Scenario 2, only 2000 tons of carbon are emitted—representing a 1000 tonne reduction! In other words, the atmosphere experiences 1000 fewer tonnes getting emitted. If Company A wants to reduce their climate impact by 1000 tonnes, they're going to be very interested in causing a shift from Scenario 1 to Scenario 2.

This is where “what would have happened without a carbon program”—the **counterfactual** scenario—comes in. If the landowners were going to use improved forest management whether or not there is a carbon program, it would make no sense for Company A to pay a carbon credit producer to get those landowners to use improved forest management practices—they’d be paying for Scenario 2, when Scenario 2 was going to happen anyway. Company A is interested in paying for Scenario 1 to turn into Scenario 2 as a result of their payment. If it would have happened anyway then the carbon emission reduction is not **additional**—it is coincidental. If, on the other hand, the impact would not have happened but for the carbon program, then the impact can be called additional.

Because determining additionality involves looking into the world of hypotheticals (“what would have happened if...?”), demonstrating additionality is complex. Or, as the Oxford Principles for Net-Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting state:

“Additionality can be difficult to determine and verify, and ultimately involves some degree of subjectivity since the counterfactual world in which the offsetting was not performed cannot be observed directly.”

When you think about this concept, therefore, you should think of it not like a test that a carbon project either passes or fails, but more like a court case, in which we are asked to determine, “based on a preponderance of the evidence,” as to whether a carbon benefit is additional or not. In this frame, there is not necessarily a “correct” answer—there are rather more or less compelling pieces of evidence that we introduce to “make the case.”

HOW AFF APPROACHES ADDITIONALITY

The American Forest Foundation (AFF), with our partner The Nature Conservancy (TNC) created the Family Forest Carbon Program, which is providing a highly credible and transparent climate benefit that could be utilized by companies to meet their net-zero goals.

Furthermore, we believe we must work as a community of project developers, standards, verifiers, buyers and stakeholders to continually ‘raise the bar’ for what constitutes a credible carbon credit. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, the world cannot afford to watch as companies shift money and carbon credits around on paper, without effectively changing the amount of carbon dioxide being emitted to the atmosphere. For this reason, AFF prioritizes continually improving our approach to ensure additionality, so we can be confident that the credits we produce are changing the course of the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

So what evidence do we have that AFF’s carbon work is truly additional? AFF considers additionality along several axes:

Financial – Does the practice a landowner implements require upfront financial resources or the consideration of opportunity cost? Would the landowner have access to all or some of those financial resources and a means to forgo opportunity cost if not for the carbon program in question?

Legal/Regulatory – To what extent is the activity or forest practice conducted by the landowner required or encouraged by law or regulation? If the practice is fully required by law, it cannot be claimed as additional, since it would have happened anyway.

Behavioral – Setting aside the question of the law, is the practice widespread or considered ‘business-as-usual’? Are there barriers—social, environmental, economic—that make it difficult to implement? For

“Additionality can be difficult to determine and verify, and ultimately involves some degree of subjectivity since the counterfactual world in which the offsetting was not performed cannot be observed directly.”

–The Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting, University of Oxford, September 2020

example, in forestry, there are many management practices that make long-term financial sense (such as growing trees longer), but which aren't broadly implemented because short-term financial needs take priority (which result in harvesting or cutting trees).

While additionality from a legal standpoint, for example, is easy to ensure—for example, we will not enroll landowners in FFCP who already have a conservation easement in place restricting forest management—the behavioral aspects of additionality are more challenging, and represent an area where AFF has innovated.

Some traditional carbon projects use methodologies that enable them to develop their own counterfactual scenario—they model what they believe the “business-as-usual” behavior would be for a particular landowner, and credit the difference between that “business-as-usual” scenario and what happens with the carbon project as additional. However, these “business-as-usual” scenarios aren't necessarily the best reflection of “what would have happened without the project.” AFF attempts to improve the counterfactual by relying on real evidence from land management on the landscape. This means we can't say “without our program, these landowners would have all clearcut their land”—we know that isn't likely, even though we could claim that we generated a lot of carbon credits if we had selected that counterfactual scenario!

Instead, we rely on forest inventory data from the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program, a US Forest Service program that has been collecting data on forest conditions across the United States since 1930. FIA currently maintains a network of inventory plots, one for every 6,000 forested acres, each of which gets re-measured approximately every five years. These data help us understand what typical behavior of private landowners really is, and how that behavior is changing over time. Our landowners' forests are compared to real forests that aren't enrolled in a carbon program, and we only sell the difference between the carbon on FFCP lands and un-enrolled FIA plots as carbon credits.

When a landowner signs a contract with the Family Forest Carbon Program, it provides them with a steady source of cash that is not dependent on timber harvesting, reducing the need for them to make potentially rash harvest decisions. Second, it legally obligates them to follow specific management guidelines for a determined period of time, with penalties for

**“AFF attempts to improve
the counterfactual by
relying on real evidence
from land management
on the landscape.”**

non-compliance. As a result, if we see non-enrolled landowners start harvesting aggressively on the landscape in response to market conditions, we still know that our FFCP landowners will continue to follow improved forest management practices—and our program will have contributed to the difference between the carbon stored on their land and the carbon stored on nearby FIA plots.

This is not to say timber harvesting is bad for the climate! Long-lived wood products store carbon and can replace materials that are produced using fossil fuels. They are a remarkable and renewable resource. That's why FFCP allows landowners to harvest if it meets their objectives—so long as such harvesting follows silvicultural best practices meant to sustain and forest health and productivity over time.

By diversifying revenue for small landowners, however, and by providing those same landowners with expert silvicultural guidance, we reduce the chances that they engage in harvesting that degrades their forest or harms its long-term health. Over decades, this results in the ultimate win-win-win scenario:

- A win for the landowner, who has a healthier forest and more timber resources to manage.
- A win for the community, in that there is a more productive, more valuable timber resource to serve as a source of jobs and economic activity.
- A win for the atmosphere, because more carbon is stored in the forest, more carbon is stored in long-lived wood products, and less fossil fuels are burnt creating alternative materials. ▲

The Pokémon Company

INTERNATIONAL

BY AFF CLIMATE FUNDING TEAM

The Pokémon Company International (TPCi), a subsidiary of The Pokémon Company in Japan, manages the property outside of Asia and is responsible for brand management, licensing, marketing, the Pokémon Trading Card Game, the animated TV series, home entertainment, and the official Pokémon website. Pokémon was launched in Japan in 1996 and today is one of the most popular children's entertainment properties in the world.

TPCi made their first contribution to the Family Forest Carbon Program in early 2022, just a few months after the program began enrolling landowners in the Central Appalachians. Since that time, TPCi has continued to support the program through our expansion into the Northeast and Midwest, learning alongside us how best to increase accessibility across family forest owners to engage this important group in mitigating climate change. Their unrestricted contributions have helped FFCP expand to new regions, increase accessibility for family forest owners, and improve the management of family forests in service of our shared climate and conservation goals.

AFF: Why did The Pokémon Company International choose to collaborate with the American Forest Foundation and specifically the Family Forest Carbon Program?

TPCi: At TPCi, we believe we can help make the world a better place through our Corporate Social Responsibility efforts, while also bringing the joy of Pokémon to people around the world through the brand. We are committed to being mindful of the environmental impacts of our products and business operations and minimize these impacts as much as possible. It is imperative that we do this work at a meaningful pace and scale. It's equally important that we advance our sustainability efforts in the most

principled and responsible manner possible so that we ensure that our efforts are truly leading to positive changes for people and the planet.

We choose to partner with the American Forest Foundation (AFF) because, like us, they are committed to mitigating climate change swiftly, effectively, and responsibly. Additionally, we appreciate how AFF's work with family forest landowners addresses multiple social and environmental issues at once, like carbon storage and sequestration, biodiversity conservation, wildfire reduction, clean water, clean air, and supporting rural communities. Finally, partnering with AFF is a particularly good fit for us, because it allows us to fund projects in the Northeast, where many of our mill partners are located. In fact, several of the paper mills that we partner with to create Pokémon trading cards and packaging materials harvest trees from private landowners in the Northeast. As such, supporting AFF projects allows us to increase circularity and support the local economies from which TPCi benefits.

AFF's Family Forest Carbon Program is particularly exciting, as it enables family forest owners—who own close to half of the forested area in the United States—to access climate finance from carbon markets and address climate change, while simultaneously earning income from their land. Prior to AFF's Family Forest Carbon Program and other similar programs, family forest landowners were generally unable to access the resources needed to properly manage their forests and maximize carbon sequestration, which greatly undermined the potential for nature-based climate solutions to address climate change in the United States.



Pokémon was one of the companies who took part in AFF's inaugural corporate Family Forest Carbon Program retreat in the fall of 2022 and had the opportunity to interact with other donors and buyers engaged in the program, as well as family forest landowners enrolled. If you are interested in learning more about the 2023 retreat and how your company might take part, please contact Nate Meehan at nmeehan@forestfoundation.org.

AFF: Why is philanthropically supporting conservation and climate initiatives important to The Pokémon Company International?

TPCi: A big part of TPCi's philanthropic endeavors focus on improving the lives of children and families while also supporting social equity. We can't support children and families or deliver fun Pokémon brand experiences if the world in which our fans live isn't live-able. Plus, addressing sustainability is simply part of being a good corporate citizen. Often, the best way to address the climate crisis is to decrease value chain emissions directly. However, decreasing emissions is a process, it does not happen overnight. The same is true for the other ways in which businesses impact the environment: it's best to avoid the negative impact altogether, but implementing solutions that decrease adverse impacts to the environment takes time. Supporting responsible, well-vetted climate and conservation initiatives through unrestricted donations or other means complements our efforts to address the root causes of those impacts.

AFF: How would you describe the value of The Pokémon Company International's partnership with the American Forest Foundation?

TPCi: TPCi greatly values our partnership with AFF. We believe that every company ought to be careful and judicious as they select organizations that they would like to support financially, ensuring that the goals of those organizations align with the values of the corporation. Particularly, when corporations are selecting carbon offset programs, they ought to ensure that the programs and

projects offer quality, verifiable offsets that truly deliver on the claimed offsets. Purchasing carbon offsets is an enormous responsibility and every company that buys offsets must diligently research the many options available to them. AFF's Family Forest Carbon Program is an excellent option to consider throughout the decision-making process. We also want to reinforce the importance of providing flexible, and unrestricted funds to organizations—separate from carbon offsets programs. TPCi provides unrestricted funding so that AFF has the resources to address emerging challenges while ensuring capacity building which sustains the longevity of their work.

Referencing our earlier point about our main mission, TPCi's goal is to make a positive impact within our communities by establishing long-term and intentional partnerships with organizations dedicated to improving the lives of children and supporting social equity. When we first met with AFF, they were transparent about how they could improve their processes to further reach historically excluded communities and landowners to align with TPCi's commitment to supporting social equity. We've seen a significant investment on AFF's part over the past several years to expand their reach with more landowners using equity-driven practices to bolster their efforts. By investing in these initiatives, AFF is not only mitigating climate impacts, they are also improving the lives of future generations through their mission, vision, and scope.

Mission-aligned partners like TPCi enable us to greatly increase the impact of our work and achieve our ambitious goal of creating meaningful conservation impact through the empowerment of family forest owners. We look forward to continued work alongside TPCi and partners in service of climate, conservation, and communities. 🌲



A Walk in the Woods

Family Forest Owner Perspectives

BY TOM GRESHAM

Bruce Amshel

For Bruce Amshel, the 92-acre parcel of land in Mill Run, Pennsylvania that has been in his family for nearly 90 years never stays the same. Every day that he explores the woods or ventures to one of the property's overgrown fields, he finds something is different. It keeps things interesting.

"It's a wonderful place just to stomp around and see how things are changing," Amshel said. "The streams move from year to year with flash flooding, and new trees come in and others fall. There's always something happening. I love to keep up with it and see it all going on."

Amshel is one of three remaining family owners of the land, which his grandfather, Sidney Bachman, purchased in 1935. A portion of the land served as a farm during its first three decades with the family, hosting dairy cows, chickens and pigs at various times and also being planted with corn and other grains. In the late 1960s, the property's barn was struck by lightning and a local farmer who lived on the property passed away. Farming never resumed on the property in earnest.

Today, it serves as a secondary property for Amshel and his family. Amshel frequently spends weekends there in a cabin that dates to the 1930s. Amshel jokes that his strategy to the land largely is "laissez-faire," but he also uses a 1966 farm tractor to haul wood from downed trees and takes out the chainsaw himself to clean up and "daylight the good stuff out there."

Built on piers and designed by Amshel's grandfather, it features some distinctive features, such as stained-glass windows and stones quarried from the same quarry that sourced nearby Fallingwater, the famous Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house.

"It's been a challenge to keep it together over the years," Amshel said with a laugh.

Amshel said most of the property's woods have not been timbered since at least the 1940s or 1950s. As a result, the portions of the property that are forested are full of mature oak, poplar and maple trees—some as high as 80 to 90 feet, Amshel said.



A view of the Amshel Tree Farm in Mill Run, Pennsylvania.



Another view of the Amshel Tree Farm.

Amshel enlisted the property in the Family Forest Carbon Program last year. The program, which was developed by the American Forest Foundation and The Nature Conservancy, helps family forest owners access climate finance from carbon markets, empowering them to help address climate change while earning income from their land. He said it was a perfect fit with his family's objectives.

"I'm really happy to be in the program," Amshel said. "I'm happy to be doing the right thing for the region by keeping the trees and keeping something around that will capture some carbon. Getting a little bit of money out of it is a nice bonus to pay for repairs."

An avid fisherman, Amshel particularly enjoys fishing in trout streams in the area. In addition, Amshel's room in the cabin is situated near a stream so that he can listen to flowing water throughout the night.

"It's a very peaceful place," he said.

Mike Harrison

Legacy is at the heart of land ownership for Mike Harrison and his family. Over the last 40 years, Harrison and his wife, Jean, have acquired several tracts of land in Schley and Marion County, Georgia. Some of the property can be traced to Mike's great-grandfather and Jean's father. Today, most of the land falls under the ownership of an LLC that counts not only the Harrisons but their daughters as owners.

"We've tried to instill a love of the land and an appreciation of its legacy in our children and in their children," Harrison said.

Harrison's children and grandchildren visit the farm throughout the year, including at Thanksgiving and Christmas. The eight grandchildren range in age from 2 to 12. Their primary enjoyment is hiking in the woods near the cabin and on other tracts of land, but they also—depending on their ages and

inclinations—wade in streams, fish, shoot at a gun range and hunt. They also learn to identify trees, insects, and wildlife and to understand how they all coexist.

In addition, the grandchildren are tasked with chores to strengthen their connection with the land, including planting trees that they can monitor with pride.

"They're out in the woods when they visit, and they're seeing things that are not part of their lives growing up in an urban setting," Harrison said. "We want them to understand the importance of incorporating nature into their lives."

Harrison said he makes sure the grandchildren also understand the benefits the trees that surround them will have on their futures. He occasionally will point to a stand of trees and tell a grandchild, "That is going to pay for your college education."

Harrison, a retired engineer, has worked with a forestry consultant for approximately 25 years on managing the land. Harrison said most of the property has a combination of features that include water resources (ponds, creeks, streams); contoured rolling hills; hardwood, multi-species forest; and strategic openings for wildlife development.



Mike and Jean Harrison and their family.



Rainbow over the Harrison's property in Schley County, Georgia.

Portions of the land are designed to remain untouched for timber harvest, while others are part of a carefully planned timber rotation.

"It costs a lot just to carry the land in terms of taxes and upkeep and maintenance and construction projects, so we've intentionally staggered our age classes in this timber so that we have a regular income stream," Harrison said.

Aesthetic value is one of Harrison's core considerations for managing the land.

"I want the public to recognize that this property is being taken care of," he said. "It's privately owned but it's also a public resource that plays an important role in terms of carbon storage, air and water quality, wildlife habitat, and an attractive landscape."

The Harrisons maintain a website (www.harrisonwoodlands.com) that outlines their mission and guiding principles and provides invaluable record-keeping, including journal entries about the family's activities on the land. A password-protected section includes details on the various tracts of land, such as boundaries, history, purchase price, strategic purpose for the purchase, and silvicultural practices—all part



The Harrison's grandchildren on their property.

of helping to ensure the legacy of the land is understood and appreciated, Harrison said.

"As these children get older, they can get a better appreciation for what it is we're passing along," Harrison said. "I want them to know exactly what we have and what the purpose of it is, and I want them to recognize it as the unique asset that it is."

Rita and Jay Hegeman

Rita and Jay Hegeman bought 68 acres in Garrett County, Maryland, in 1996, built a house and moved into it a few years later. Still, only recently have they felt as though they are truly getting to know their land in a meaningful way. In those earlier days, their lives were hectic—between their careers as educators and their three daughters' madcap soccer schedules (all would eventually play in college), which often required extensive weekend travel, they rarely had time to explore.

The Hegemans' daughters are grown now, though, and Jay and Rita are finding themselves learning more and more about their land—and loving what they are discovering.

"I feel like it's more our place now," Jay said. "Before, it was kind of the place where we lived and then we'd pack up and leave. We liked the view and privacy, but it's only now that it's starting to feel like our place."

The Hegemans' first moved to the property, which is surrounded by state forest, because they were looking for a secluded spot to raise their family. The Hegemans worked with a forester friend to develop a forest management plan that focused on managing both wildlife and the trees and implemented a crop-release program on a portion of the property.



The cabin on the Harrison's property.



Harrison grandchild splitting wood.

Over the years, the Hegemans have enlisted in a variety of programs and projects to meet their goals. One of those is developing a habitat for the golden-winged warbler, dedicating 10 acres on their property through a federal contract to try to attract the bird by thinning mid-story trees. Another is the Family Forest Carbon Program, which helps family forest owners access climate finance from carbon markets.

Of the property's 68 acres, 65 are forested—largely hardwood with some evergreens—but the remaining 3 acres are part of the forest management plan with mowing schedules designed to promote wildlife habitats there.

The Hegemans' efforts have paid off. In addition to healthy woodlands, their property includes a mix of wildlife that includes deer, turkey, coyotes, bobcats and bears. The Hegemans have had bears enter their house on three separate occasions—each time fortunately while the family was away. One time, the bears left claw marks on the walls throughout the house. The family left the marks as a humorous reminder of the surprise, particularly enjoyed by guests.

Although their daughters have since moved away, the impact of growing up where they did remains with them. All three are avid participants in outdoor activities, such as hiking, skiing, kayaking and rafting. Another sign of their lasting presence is the property's name—Quinas Creek—which originates from a small creek that runs through the property—which received its name by combining the names of the Hegemans' three daughters, Quincy, Lucas, and Niven.

Jay, who grew up on a farm, has become increasingly hands-on in forest management. Most recently, he has spent many days traversing the property spraying invasive Japanese Spirea—a process, he said, that has helped him get to know his land in more intimate detail.



The Quinas Creek name sakes—Quincy, Lucas, and Niven.



Quincy and Jay working on the Golden Winged Warbler project.



Quincy and Jay working on the Golden Winged Warbler project.



Lucas learning to drive the new tractor.

Rita, meanwhile, shifted careers and now works at home as a software engineer. She frequently takes long, lunch-time walks with the family cats, particularly favoring a loop that goes along the edge of the property and includes a striking view of the Savage River Valley.

"It's such a lovely spot here," said Rita, who also enjoys crafts made with materials she finds on the property. "It's so nice, quiet and peaceful. We're really enjoying getting to know it better." ▲

Meet the Staff at the American Forest Foundation!

BY KRISTEN VOORHEES, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR,
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

This edition of *Woodland*, we are thrilled to highlight members of AFF's staff – those that work tirelessly to improve our forests, support American landowners, and benefit our communities. They hail from different backgrounds and have unique stories to tell – but they all share the goal of leaving our planet better and healthier than we found it.

Tatiana Height

Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
for the Family Forest Carbon Program

AFF sat down with Tatiana Height, AFF's director of diversity, equity, and inclusion for the Family Forest Carbon Program. Tatiana emphasizes the need to provide support for women working in conservation to be a part of the climate action solution.

How/why did you choose to work in forest conservation?

I first became aware of AFF as a result of their administration of the SFLR program. I considered myself an environment generalist, having worked in watermanagement, parks, environmental education, and environmental justice, and I saw venturing into forest carbon as an opportunity for personal and professional growth in the conservation space.

What's your favorite part of your career/job?

I like being a part of the solution, rather than a part of the problem.

Why is it important for women to be involved in forest conservation?

The over-exploitation of the earth's resources is directly linked to our patriarchal society. In order to get in right relationship with the earth, we must also be in right relationship with women. Further, women are the natural keepers of the earth. It ain't called "mother nature" for nothing!



Tatiana Height

"I like being a part
of the solution,
rather than a part
of the problem."

In your opinion what needs to change, or what needs to be done, to increase women's involvement in forest conservation work?

Talk to girls about it in grade school and provide scholarships for girls to enter forest conservation in high school. Plus, make sure employers offer substantial maternity leave opportunities and flexible schedules for working moms.

Do you have a woman role model in the forest, conservation, or environmental space? Who is it and why?

Jacqueline Patterson. She held a job that I aspired to one day have as the Senior Director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program before going on to found the Chisholm Legacy Project which is a resource hub for Black frontline climate justice leadership.

What advice would you give to women looking to pursue a career in forest conservation?

In the words of Sophia Nelson, Esq. "Lift other women as you climb."

What's your favorite tree?

Corylus avellana—Common Hazel: I love to eat hazel nuts.

Brittany Vanderwall

Senior Forestry Manager in the Midwest for the Family Forest Carbon Program

AFF sat down with Brittany VanderWall, AFF's senior forestry manager in the Midwest for the Family Forest Carbon Program. In her own words, Brittany details her love of forest conservation, her dedication to teaching others, and the importance of women representation in her field.

How/why did you choose to work in forest conservation?

I fell into forestry on a whim—I'd never even heard of the profession until I made a sudden decision to choose it. I had wanted to attend Michigan Tech since 7th grade to be an engineer, but when I got there, I had a change of heart before classes had even started. It was fascinating to learn about something I had no experience with and decide to build an entire career from that. I remember my first field techniques class very vividly—I had never even touched a compass before, and I was tasked with using it to navigate to a specific point in the woods.



Brittany Vanderwall

"The best day in the woods is one where you share a new idea with someone who enjoys being in the forest."

What's your favorite part of your career/job?

It is fun and fulfilling to teach others about the natural world. The best day in the woods is one where you share a new idea with someone who enjoys being in the forest. I always get a rush after spending an afternoon with a landowner and they are excited about how much more they know about their forest. Teaching others brings a greater self-awareness and understanding of the material as well.

“Matters concerning the natural world are not gender specific. When a whole population of decision makers are not represented, or less represented—perspective and progress is lost.”

Why is it important for women to be involved in forest conservation?

Matters concerning the natural world are not gender specific. When a whole population of decision makers are not represented, or less represented—perspective and progress is lost. Forest science plays an important role in climate change mitigation—which is the most pressing issue of our generation. Every human group has a stake here—those that have been left out of the conversation must be engaged and uplifted for a holistic solution to emerge.

In your opinion what needs to change, or what needs to be done, to increase women’s involvement in forest conservation work?

When people see themselves reflected in a space—they feel more like they belong or have a peer group there. Forestry has traditionally been a male dominated field, but I have observed that balance shifting little by little over my 9-year career. As an example—my alma mater has made a specific effort to market forestry degree programs to women. There has also been a rise in women focused forestry programming across the United States. I think even little things such as women representation at career fairs and such makes a difference in the long run.

Do you have a woman role model in the forest, conservation, or environmental space? Who is it and why?

I worked for one of my forestry professors at Tech, Molly Cavaleri, to complete a research thesis as an undergrad. I remember asking after class one afternoon if I could work for her and it was an immediate yes. I won an award for my part in the

research and that thesis did get published a few years after completion. She was a fantastic mentor and gave me lots of pragmatic advice throughout my time developing the project. She was one of my absolute favorite professors at Tech due to her ability to communicate complex tree knowledge, her enthusiasm for the subject as well as her kindness and support.

What advice would you give to women looking to pursue a career in forest conservation?

I’ve found success in my career by “making myself a seat at the table” and “saying yes to things.” On the latter, it is important not to stretch oneself too thin, or say yes too much—but taking opportunities and showing up is a great way to make a name for yourself and be consulted as a decision maker. This advice applies to any profession—but I feel it is particularly relevant as a woman in forestry, since there are less of us in high visibility decision making roles. I’ve also observed that women tend to sell themselves short, or second guess their abilities in contrast with men in a comparable peer group. It is important to recognize one’s strengths and not let “perfect” be the enemy of “good enough”. It can be scary to take on a responsibility that you don’t feel fully knowledgeable about—but that is how we learn and pave the way for others who don’t see themselves reflected in those spaces.

What’s your favorite tree?

Celtis occidentalis—Common Hackberry: It is a phenomenal urban tree, since it is highly resilient to many stressors. The fruits are also edible and nutritious. Where I live, in Northern Michigan—it is a climate change adaptation species as well. 🌲



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Janis Buffham, a founding member of The Giving Tree, is a conservation and climate enthusiast who found the AFF through a Google search. "The American Forest Foundation came up as one of the organizations that is really proactive about protecting, maintaining and improving the quality of American forests."

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If you have any questions, please contact Bethany Mueller, Senior Manager, Climate Donor Relations, at (202) 852-7520.

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—Landowners Salem & Dianne Saloom,
Seedling Society Founding Members,
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