

## Responsible Forestry Protocols

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**Working forests can be an ally in the fight against global warming, but only if we care for them properly.**

### Development of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI)

**In February of 2007**, the founding Partners of WCI, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico and California, came together to implement a joint strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The WCI is developing an outline for a regional cap-and-trade system<sup>1</sup> due to be released in the fall of 2008 ([www.westernclimateinitiative.org](http://www.westernclimateinitiative.org)).

### Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through a cap-and-trade system.

**A properly structured** cap-and-trade system which includes forest offsets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions could:

- ▶ Encourage business to reduce emissions beyond what is required
- ▶ Reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health
- ▶ Provide recyclable wood products
- ▶ Encourage production of bioenergy that replaces fossil fuels
- ▶ Provide for “green” jobs

### Maintaining Working Forests

**Working forests are part of the solution to global climate change.**

Policies beyond cap-and-trade that provide incentives for landowners to maintain their lands in working forests can help stimulate our economy while maintaining or enhancing carbon sequestration. Policies could include:

- ▶ **Financial incentives** for landowners who commit to sustainable forestry.
- ▶ **Supporting the use of wood products** in building projects to offset non-renewable building materials.
- ▶ **Investment in technologies that use wood** as a raw material (biofuel electric generation, cellulosic ethanol).

<sup>1</sup> A cap-and-trade is an environmental regulation system that sets limits on the overall emissions of a certain pollutant through a market-based system; it allows companies that reduce emissions below the targets, or activities that remove pollutants, to sell their surplus as credits to companies for which emission reductions would be difficult.

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## The Market-Based Approach Works

**Cap-and-trade systems** have a proven track record for reducing emissions. Under such a system, the state would establish a limit on emissions<sup>2</sup> and then designate allowances for each facility that emits a certain tonnage of greenhouse gases. If properly designed, this market would impose costs on industries that emit greenhouse gases. These costs would encourage them to either reduce emissions or buy allowances (credits) from industries that can reduce them at less expense.

**The federal government's** cap-and-trade Acid Rain Trading Program has successfully cut sulfur dioxide emissions in half, saving approximately \$1 billion per year.

**Market mechanisms can be designed to encourage carbon storage and the reduction of carbon emissions by working forests.**

**Within a cap-and-trade program,** reductions in greenhouse gases that occur outside of the capped sector (offsets) can provide additional opportunities. Offsets are a critical element to controlling costs while providing equivalent emissions reductions from sources outside the capped sector.

Forest offsets have been identified as one of the most promising opportunities, due to a tree's unique ability to absorb carbon dioxide, one of the most prevalent greenhouse gases.

*North America's millions of acres of "... forestland stands ready to remove carbon from the atmosphere as part of the natural tree-growing process. While most industries focus on reducing emissions, forestry companies can offer ways to capture and store gases."*

**Steve Mader,**  
Senior Habitat  
Management and  
Planning Scientist  
*CH2M Hill, Inc.*

