

Climate-smart forestry is a dynamic and adaptable approach within sustainable forest management that prioritizes climate adaptation and mitigation outcomes. It recognizes regional diversity and the vital role of different forest types, including private working forests, in achieving climate solutions. This framework for defining and assessing climate-smart forestry is rooted in three key principles:



Grounded in Science and Research



Prioritizes Outcomes Over Prescriptive Approaches



Can be Adapted for Different Regions and Changing Conditions

Climate-smart forestry should not be defined by prescribed practices but by a framework of desired outcomes, including:



Stable or Increasing Carbon Stocks at a Landscape Scale

- Sustainable forest management has increased carbon sequestration and storage.
- The data show that private working forests deliver the greatest carbon sequestration benefit and account for about half of the carbon stored in all forests.



Mitigation of Severe Wildfire Risks

- Sustainable forest management practices, such as reducing fuel loads, building fuel breaks, and maintaining roads help mitigate the risk of severe wildfires.



Keeping Forests on the Landscape

- Sustainable forest management ensures forests remain intact through continuous cycles of growth, harvest, and regrowth.
- Since the 1950s, the widespread adoption of sustainable management practices and the demand from healthy forest products markets have sustained a stable working forest land base.



Production of Sustainable, Renewable, Carbon-Beneficial Products

- Forest products provide significant carbon benefits by displacing carbon-intensive materials and storing carbon throughout their life cycle.
- Building with wood, particularly engineered wood products like mass timber, reduces carbon emissions and increases carbon storage in the built environment.



Healthy and Resilient Forests

- Sustainable forest management improves forest health and resilience, mitigating carbon releases caused by diseases and disturbances.
- Proactive strategies promote healthy tree growth, reduce disturbance risk, and enhance overall resilience.



Aligning Climate Benefits with the Needs of Rural Communities

- Climate-smart forestry recognizes the need to balance carbon benefits with other environmental and economic benefits, including rural prosperity, and maintaining a sustainable supply of forest products.



Forest Adaptation to a Changing Climate

- Sustainable forest management to adapt to changing climate and weather conditions.
- Investment in resilient seedlings and research-based management practices enhances forest productivity and resistance to climate change impacts.

Overall, climate-smart forestry embraces a dynamic and adaptable approach to sustainable forest management, guided by science and prioritizing desired outcomes. It recognizes the diverse regional contexts and changing conditions while optimizing carbon sequestration, storage, resilience, and the various other benefits that forests can provide. By focusing on outcomes rather than prescriptive practices, climate-smart forestry can be a powerful climate solutions tool while ensuring the long-term sustainability and health of our forests.

