



**Wild Virginia Position Paper
Forests and Climate Position Paper
3-29-2016**

Intact, standing, maturing forests comprise our largest terrestrial carbon storage system. Forests act as climate reserves as they:

- Slow and mitigate climate change
- minimize carbon emissions
- protect soils and downstream areas from ravaging floods
- capture both nutrient-rich water and organic matter as they increase fertility and store larger amounts of carbon in forest soils
- provide shade and coolness that reduce stress in areas of natural disturbance, stimulate decomposer diversity and maintain cool water temperatures increasing stream diversity
- build more structural resilience through plant, animal and microbial diversity to buffer against catastrophic events
- slow the proliferation of opportunistic, invasive species
- create large areas of unfragmented habitat, the rarest in all ecosystems of Virginia.

Climate is perhaps the most important forest product of our time.

Active forest management, whether through logging, thinning, roadbuilding, burning or extraction of biomass, reduces the capacity of the forest to provide these essential benefits.

Unmanaged forests fight climate change and benefit all Virginians and the entire biotic community.