

North America Climate Mitigation

2024 Annual Report





Table of Contents

Letter from the Directors	3
Creating, Implementing and Defending Climate and Clean Energy Policies	4-9
Putting Communities at the Center of our Climate Work	10-11
Ground-Breaking Science and Research	12-14
Working On-the-Ground	15-16
Convening Partners to Advance Climate Action	17

In just the last month, catastrophic wildfires destroyed neighborhoods in the Los Angeles area and a new U.S. Presidential Administration took multiple actions to roll back climate action. At times like this, we are reminded why The Nature Conservancy works to tackle climate change and its devastating impacts.

Climate change—including the severe weather events it triggers—touches all parts of our lives and the planet. TNC is able to work globally to locally, as well as across the political spectrum, to tackle this crisis. Even when the headlines are scary and the news about climate change feels daunting, we are committed to continuing the fight.

That is why we are excited about the climate action we saw across North America in 2024. We helped get new climate policies created at the state and federal levels, influenced the investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in climate action (from policies such as the Inflation Reduction Act) and partnered with communities including Indigenous Peoples to advance local climate solutions. We also released new reports that provide recommendations and scientific findings to expand natural climate solutions and deploy more clean energy. Across all this work, we centered people and nature.

Over the past year, we expanded our understanding of how to advance climate solutions that benefit local communities and Tribal Nations and improved collaboration among those at TNC who are advancing this work. This is a priority for us because we know we need to keep people—not just nature—top of mind in

2025 and beyond.

As we look forward, a major focus is defending state and federal policies and funding that support our two biggest priorities—natural climate solutions and the clean energy transition—and that contributed to many of the accomplishments outlined in this report. We know that the IRA, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and other key policies and funding are at risk. We will, therefore, be drawing on our broad network and deep relationships across the political spectrum and sophisticated advocacy tools to help preserve tax credits and climate funding that are driving a transition to clean energy and supporting on-the-ground climate projects. Simultaneously, we will advance our climate priorities at the state and local level while seeking opportunities to find common ground with the new U.S. administration and Congress.

We know that 2025 will challenge us and that we won't win every fight. However, together, we will find ways to build upon the successes of 2024 so that we can continue to tackle climate change and make progress towards our climate goals. We are inspired by all that we've achieved in 2024 and are ready to dig back in this year. Thank you for your support along the way. None of this would be possible without you.

Sincerely,

Jason Albritton, North America climate mitigation program director

Beth Wheatley, North America climate mitigation deputy director

Creating, Implementing and Defending Climate and Clean Energy Policies

Create

Policy makes climate action possible. It provides funding, guardrails and initiatives for clean energy and natural climate solutions. Throughout the year, we worked to support the creation, implementation and defense of good climate policies across the U.S. 2024 was focused on implementing the IRA and IIJA, and preparing to advocate for both pieces of legislation in 2025. These landmark policies, which we worked to pass in previous years, include a combined \$570 billion for climate, clean energy and conservation initiatives. 2024 also brought significant state policy progress, including protecting Washington state's landmark climate policy from rollbacks.

Recommendations for Permitting Reform

Reforming how we permit and approve clean energy projects is essential to achieve the pace and scale of clean energy deployment we need to address climate change. We published a [white paper](#) on permitting reform, currently one of the hottest climate-related topics in Congress, to inform lawmakers as they discuss potential new permitting legislation. The paper provides recommendations for administrative and legislative actions across the federal government to make the permitting process significantly faster while simultaneously protecting nature and engaging communities.

State Renewable Energy Siting Policy

When it comes to siting and permitting renewable energy projects, states and local governments have a great deal of authority. TNC in Massachusetts and Colorado worked to pass state policies that will help deploy renewable energy that is good for people and nature. To help more states speed up siting of renewable energy, TNC, the Clean Air Task Force and Natural Resources Defense Council commissioned [a report to identify state siting policies that accelerate the deployment of renewable energy projects](#). The report, which examines policies from eight states (California, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, New York, Ohio, Virginia and Washington) offers policy recommendations and best practices that all U.S. states can learn from.

Advancing Next Generation Nuclear

Congress approved a bill, the ADVANCE Act, that is intended to accelerate the deployment of innovative, safe nuclear technologies; facilitate international cooperation on nuclear energy development; position the U.S. as a next-generation energy leader on the international stage; support development of advanced nuclear facilities on brownfield sites; and strengthen the American nuclear supply chain and workforce. We engaged directly with legislators and worked as part of a diverse coalition of environmental organizations and companies to urge Congress to pass the bill.



© Adam Auel

© Bridget Bennett

Grid Modernization

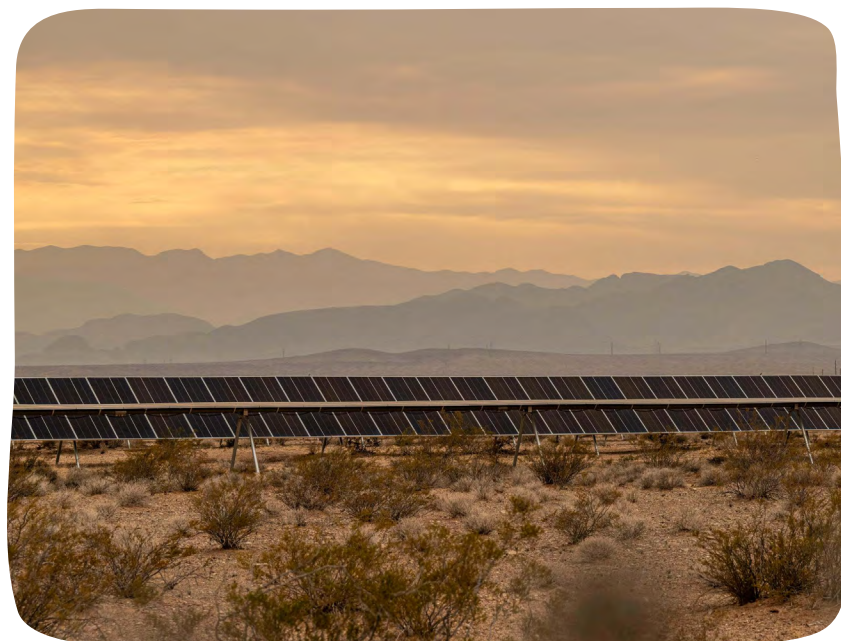
TNC's engagement with the Department of Energy and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission helped advance smart planning approaches for upgrading the transmission network across the country. The DOE proposed a list of potential National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors, which will encourage building transmission in the places that need it the most. TNC submitted a letter encouraging the DOE's progress. In addition, TNC's work engaging with FERC [paid off](#) in May when new rules on planning transmission infrastructure were announced. The ruling considered TNC's [comments](#) and requires transmission providers to regularly update long-term planning, as well as consider whether regional proposals will cost-effectively address transmission needs.

Western Solar Plan

There is significant opportunity for solar energy to be built on public lands. In 2024, the Bureau of Land Management relied on TNC's guidance when it updated its Western Solar Plan, which identifies which federal lands are best suited for solar. TNC's Western Division and chapters [played a leading role](#) in submitting comments to the BLM, many of which were incorporated into the plan. The final plan makes 31.7 million acres available for solar energy development while protecting important conservation areas. TNC plans to work with the BLM to evaluate how projects within identified solar development areas could be expedited.

"The Western Solar Plan represents a much needed broad-scale approach to renewable energy planning. It is important because, when land managers account for conservation and community considerations early, solar energy can get built faster, cheaper and with fewer conflicts."

– **Peter Gower**, TNC's Climate and Renewable Energy Program Director for the Western U.S. and Canada Division



State Comprehensive Climate Action Plans

To receive funding from the IRA's nearly \$5 billion Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program, states were required to create a roadmap for how the state will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. TNC helped more than a dozen states develop these plans and continues to engage with state governments on plan implementation, which are focused on reducing emissions. TNC in Virginia is also participating in the state's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group. We are one of only two environmental groups invited to participate. TNC and other stakeholders will provide input and suggestions on greenhouse gas reduction strategies and scenarios.

Shaping IRA Implementation

One of the key parts of the IRA is a set of tax credits that make developing and scaling clean energy technologies more affordable. We provided input to help shape the rules implementing these tax credits. We shared our perspective with the U.S. Treasury Department by sending letters, submitting formal comments and participating in meetings with the agency. Our input focused on finetuning IRA guidance so that the tax credits would provide the maximum amount of benefits for climate while also helping local communities and nature thrive.

Federal Funding for Local Siting Support

In September, the U.S. Department of Energy announced the second round of grants under its new [Renewable Energy Siting through Technical Engagement and Planning Program](#). R-STEP, which was funded through the IRA, supports creating and expanding state-based collaboratives that will develop tools and resources to improve large-scale renewable energy planning and siting processes for local communities. TNC is a named partner on four grants awarded in the first and second rounds of R-STEP funding in Colorado, Indiana, Oklahoma and Washington. Of particular note is the Washington project, which is led by the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians.





© Mike Wilkinson

Defending the IRA and IIJA

We published op-eds and social media content to demonstrate how specific people and natural areas have benefited from IRA and IIJA policies, including the climate and clean energies provisions within them. We focused on Alaska, Arizona, Utah and Maine because there were (and still are) key Congressional leaders in those states. Our aim was—and continues to be—to build political will among key lawmakers to ensure they help protect these policies when Congress begins considering rollbacks. This work provided us with learnings, experience and champions that we can draw upon and build from in 2025 as our efforts to defend the IRA and IIJA ramp up.

“Worried as I am about our overdrawn rivers and lakes, I know we can’t shut the door to growth and development. We need to come up with creative solutions that let us do more with less water, and in ways that support a sustainable economy for the long term. The projects made possible by new climate and infrastructure investments show us the way forward,”

said **Chris Robinson**, CEO of the Ensign Group and chair of TNC in Utah.

[Read the Utah Op-Ed](#)
[Read the Arizona Op-Ed](#)

Helping a Former Coal Miner Install Solar Power

The Appalachians have long been known for coal and the proud heritage of the people who mined it. [But after flooding devastated eastern Kentucky in 2022, Bobby Stallard, a former coal miner, is embracing a different form of energy: solar power.](#) Discover how solar energy and federal policies like the IRA, which provides tax incentives to people who install solar on their homes, are helping shape a more sustainable future, creating job opportunities and empowering people in the region.

© Mike Wilkinson



U.S. State Policy Wins

State Policy Wins

We work on climate policy at the state level in addition to the federal level. TNC's state chapters work with their local governments to create, implement and defend good climate policies that are appropriate for their state's needs and capabilities. In 2024, our state chapters, in partnership with other teams across North America, earned many significant climate wins. Here are a few of the highlights.



Massachusetts

The state passed a bill that will expedite land-based renewable energy siting and permitting, improve environmental standards and enhance community engagement.

"It's not your father's electric grid anymore. Today, Massachusetts enacted a landmark climate and clean energy law, modeling to other states that there are more efficient and equitable ways to transition to the energy future we need,"

said [Steve Long](#), TNC in Massachusetts' director of policy and partnerships.



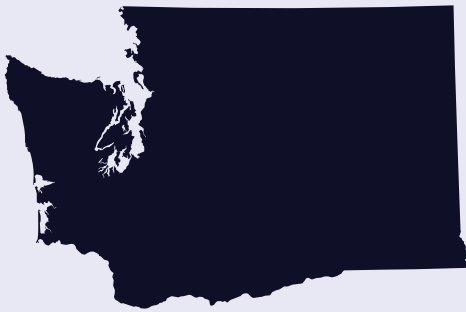
California

Voters passed a \$10 billion climate resilience bond. It includes money for safe drinking water, wildfire prevention and protection of communities and land from the harmful effects climate change.



Alaska

The state legislature passed a bill that establishes a statewide green bank. The bank will help finance sustainable energy projects for individuals, small businesses and communities.



Washington

Voters preserved a cap and invest climate law that has generated more than \$2 billion from polluters to fund the state's fight against climate change.

"The Climate Commitment Act is a nationally significant piece of legislation for its commitment to investing in climate resilience for frontline communities and addressing the disproportionate impact of pollution on communities of color and Tribal Nations,"

said [David Mendoza](#), TNC in Washington's director of policy and government relations.



Rhode Island

By a three to one margin, voters approved a bond that includes money for farmland preservation, coastal resiliency and port infrastructure improvements for offshore wind.



Colorado

The state passed a bill that provides resources to local governments to assess, site and permit utility-scale renewable energy projects while considering community values and impacts to land and wildlife.

Putting Communities at the Center of our Climate Work

Communities

A growing number of TNC initiatives are building relationships with communities, including Indigenous Nations, and advancing on-the-ground projects and durable and equitable policy outcomes that benefit people and nature.



© ULLMANPHOTO.com 2024

Building Internal Resources

- We developed a living inventory and map of climate projects in the U.S. that focus on engaging and providing benefits to local communities. In 2024, we documented 129 projects from 29 states and regions. This includes collaborating with Tribal Nations, supporting access to public funding, and developing and sharing best practices for clean energy development that addresses community needs. Through in-person convenings and establishment of a forum for ongoing collaboration, we are enabling TNC staff to share portfolios of work and improve coordination on efforts to center the needs of communities and Tribal Nations in our climate work.
- The renewable energy team released a primer on Community Benefits Agreements. Applicable to North American as well as global uses, the primer lays out what makes a CBA effective. CBAs are any type of agreement between a developer, in this case a renewable energy developer, and the community or groups of within a community that could be positively or negatively affected by any sort of development. There isn't a single "right" way to create a CBA, and this primer explains the benefits and drawbacks associated with different definitions and types of CBAs.

Helping Families Revive Their Forests

The [IRA has helped Jack Lampman realize his dream of being a professional forester](#). An IRA grant covers Lampman's salary as an outreach forester for the Family Forest Carbon Program, a joint effort of TNC and the American Forest Foundation. Lampman helps families and individuals learn how to better manage their forests. His guidance increases forest health for the long run, resulting in more carbon being captured and stored.



© Giacomo Marchione/TNC Photo Contest 2023

Supporting Communities Across the U.S.

TNC is engaged in many projects benefiting local communities across the U.S. These are just two of the highlights from 2024.

- ➔ TNC Florida and partners secured a \$156.1 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to expand solar access to low-income households across Florida. This funding will reduce household energy burdens and greenhouse gas emissions while promoting energy access and workforce development. The grant is the largest-ever investment in residential solar in Florida.
- ➔ In Idaho, TNC built a partnership with the Nez Perce Tribe, primarily to provide the Tribe with technical assistance when writing a grant proposal. This work was a success. In July, the EPA announced the Tribe will receive a \$37 million award from the IRA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and electric vehicle infrastructure investments.

Indigenous Right Relations

In Canada, the Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations announced that they worked with the government of British Columbia to protect about 76,000 hectares (188,000 acres) in Clayoquot Sound. Previously licensed for commercial forestry, these new conservancies will safeguard some of the last remaining old-growth forests on Vancouver Island. They directly reflect the Nations' land-use visions while advancing Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht rights and sustainable livelihoods. Nature United (the name for TNC in Canada) committed more than \$40 million to support the Nations' vision for the Sound.

Northern Attitude: Small New England Town Embraces Solar on a Former Copper Mine

The small town of Strafford, VT was dealing with acid leaching from an old copper mine. If the mine's dam failed, it would have made a local river as acidic as stomach acid. But fortunately, the EPA was able to stop that from happening. [While the town's elected officials worked on cleanup, the agency listened to the people in the town voice their desire to turn the former mine into a renewable energy project.](#) The federal and local government worked together to make the project a reality and provide enough clean energy to reliably power every home in Strafford.

© StoryWorkz



Supporting Climate Action with Ground-Breaking Science and Research

Science and Research

We base our climate mitigation work on the latest science and knowledge. While we rely on the expertise of others, throughout 2024 our internal experts published new scientific studies, carried out public opinion polls and released new data and studies for decision makers to accelerate the transition to clean energy or advance natural climate solutions.



© Sun Tribe

Clean Energy

Mining the Sun

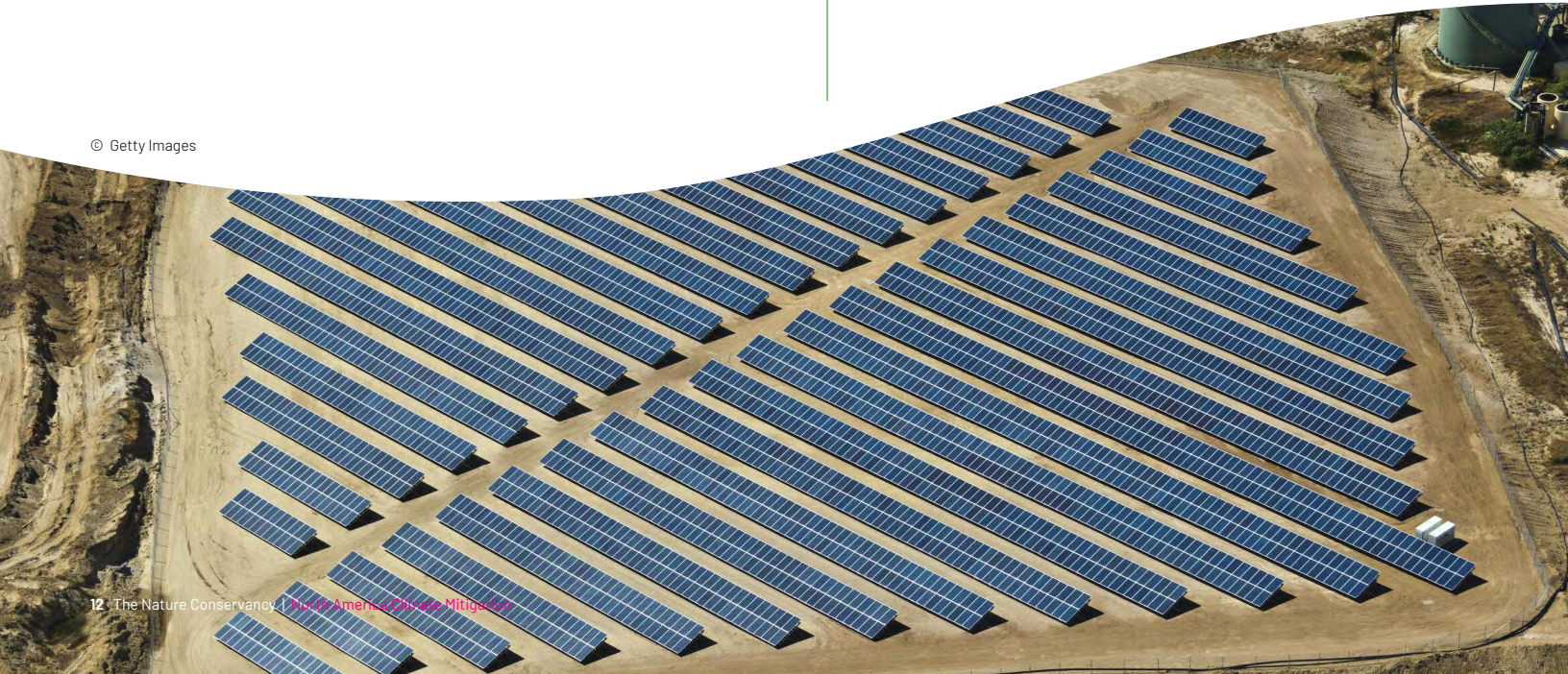
Mines, landfills and other industrialized lands are a great source of untapped potential for clean energy development. TNC launched a new [Mining the Sun report](#) that examines the challenges and benefits of building renewable energy on these types of sites and offers recommendations for how to do so. This report is the culmination of multiple years of work to expand opportunities for clean energy on former mine lands.

TNC is demonstrating Mining the Sun projects on our own lands. In the [Central Appalachians in the Cumberland Forest](#), TNC already has over 1,000 acres of former coal mining lands dedicated to enabling enough solar to power nearly 30,000 homes.

“Renewable energy development on mine lands and brownfields is a promising avenue to produce clean energy in a way that respects communities and helps avoid using our remaining healthy lands. By repurposing our past, we can power our future sustainably and equitably,”

said [Tonyisha Harris](#), TNC in Illinois’ climate and energy program manager.

© Getty Images



© Adobe Stock

Clean Energy

Site Renewables Right

The North America Climate Mitigation Program received a multi-year award from TNC's Accelerating Impact Fund to expand Site Renewables Right from 19 U.S. states to the entire lower 48. SRR is a publicly available tool that helps energy planners and developers reduce risks associated with renewable energy projects by avoiding high conservation-value lands.

Connected West Transmission Study

TNC helped create the Connected West regional plan, which shows where transmission expansion is most needed during the next 20 years. The study is based on the data layers generated for TNC's Power of Place West report. The Connected West results are highly encouraging, indicating only 15,000 miles of expanded capacity transmission lines (just 15% more than the existing transmission line miles) are needed if transmission is planned in a coordinated way across the region. Even better, most of the new capacity can be added by updating and co-locating with existing utility corridors. Only 1,000 to 2,500 miles of new "greenfield" lines will be needed.

Connected West: By the Numbers

\$30 Billion

The cost of already-planned investments in the Western grid. But electric load is growing, and this is not enough to keep the grid reliable in the coming 20 years.

\$75 Billion

The capital cost of adding the 15,600 miles of upgraded or new transmission infrastructure in the West over the next 20 years. This would keep electricity running and help achieve clean energy goals.

\$275 Billion

The total financial benefit from updating the Western grid according to the Connected West plan. These benefits are largely from grid efficiencies and avoided losses due to extreme weather.



© Kevin Arnold

Natural Climate Solutions



© Tyler Holloway

The Principles of Natural Climate Solutions

We released a scientific paper outlining five key principles for implementing natural climate solutions. Published in the journal *Nature Communications*, it provides essential guidance for sustainable, high-integrity natural climate solutions. The key principles outlined in the paper are that natural climate solutions must be nature-based, sustainable, climate-additional, measurable and fair. This framework ensures that investments in natural climate solutions can be made confidently, yielding real-world, cost-effective and measurable impact.



© Chris Crisman

Broad Public Support for Natural Climate Solutions

The TNC-led US Nature4Climate Coalition and Nature United released several polls to evaluate voter support for natural climate solutions. Our polling and research found that 94% of voters in the U.S., up 2% year-over-year, support natural climate solutions. The poll showed that the vast majority of voters would have a more favorable impression of their elected representative if they voted to invest in natural climate solutions. We also found that four in five voters support development of local strategies to preserve mature and old-growth forests. Our polling also found that Canadians strongly support natural climate solutions, with 84% saying they support expanding strategies to protect, better manage and restore forests, grasslands and wetlands to store more carbon.



© TNC/Roberto Rosales

Advancing Understanding of Wildfire Reforestation

TNC experts co-authored a new publication in *Frontiers in Forestry*: [“Mind the Gap—reforestation needs vs. reforestation capacity in the western United States.”](#) The journal article covers how wildfire on private lands in the West is predicted to grow significantly, increasing the need for post-fire reforestation on private lands. It concludes by finding that the supply chain for post-fire planting does not meet current needs and additional policy actions are needed to address the gaps.

Working On-the-Ground

Work On-the-Ground

Our climate work touches down in communities and natural places around the country. The research, policies and partnerships we build and advance all support our work on the ground. These highlights focus on specific and deliverable achievements from 2024.



© Andrew Kornylak

States Come Together to Advance Natural Climate Solutions

As part of a \$421 million IRA grant, TNC received \$200 million to fund natural climate solutions projects in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and South Carolina. This funding package stands as the largest-ever on record for natural climate solutions. The TNC chapters in those states joined together with their respective state governments to form the Atlantic Conservation Coalition and apply for the funding. The state chapters will use this funding to improve forest management, restore peatlands and enhance tidal wetlands. Together, these projects are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of an estimated 28 million metrics tons of carbon dioxide by 2050.

“This is a game changer in our work to reduce carbon emissions. Restored peatlands also have other benefits including absorbing floodwaters, improving wildlife habitat, and reducing wildfire risk,”

said **Katherine Skinner**, executive director of TNC in North Carolina.

© Matt Kane/TNC





Work On-the-Ground

© David Ike

Growing the Family Forest Carbon Program

The Family Forest Carbon Program pays forest owners to implement climate-smart forestry practices on their properties. In 2024, we expanded the program. We are now operating the program in 19 states. As of January 2025, nearly 900 landowners with more than 123,000 acres are enrolled in the program. When you add in those who have prequalified for the program, that brings the numbers to 12,786 landowners with more than 1.8 million acres of forested land.

Educating on Offshore Wind

TNC launched an [offshore wind webinar series](#) to educate local communities and build support for offshore wind. The series covered topics including the effect of offshore wind on electricity costs, whales, birds, fish and benthic habitat, TNC's offshore wind marine mapping tool and community benefit agreements.





© Adobe Stock

Convening Partners to Advance Climate Action

TNC is a leading convener and partnership builder across all of our issue areas and climate is no different. We work with organizations, communities, industry and lawmakers across the political and geographic spectrums to advance climate action in the U.S.

Solar Uncommon Dialogue

The [Solar Uncommon Dialogue](#), which is co-led by TNC, brings together a variety of partners to accelerate solar energy in a way that advances conservation, climate action and community benefits. The Dialogue received funding from the U.S. Department of Energy to support working groups focused on developing best practices and principles for community engagement, fair benefit sharing and renewable energy siting that considers the climate, conservation and communities.

“We’re committed to accelerating the renewable energy buildout and have to go smart to go fast,”

said TNC Chief Executive Officer **Jen Morris**.