



How does a landowner enroll forestland in a carbon offset project?

A forester may be able to help a landowner navigate forest carbon offsets, but as this is a new and rapidly changing economic sector, talking to a carbon developer will be the best way to determine if the land is eligible to be enrolled in a carbon offset market. Because there are not many forest carbon projects in the northeast, many foresters and managers do not yet have experience in project facilitation. It is important to note that enrolling in one forest carbon program, even for one year, may lock the landowner into that program or prevent entering another forest carbon program. Diligent research on forest carbon program options and ramifications is highly encouraged.

Landowners can use the table (Figure 18) below to find a project developer that matches the amount of forestland and other criteria. Carbon project developers can help determine if your property is a good fit for a carbon program. Keep in mind that many of the programs for smaller forest owners are in development; you may need to wait until they are open for enrollment.

Things to consider when thinking about selling forest carbon

Carbon offset projects can be costly. Some of the up-front costs may include creating a management plan, certifying the forest, conducting a forest inventory, and calculating the amount of carbon that would be removed and stored in the area without the project. Additional costs may include removal of weeds, purchasing and planting trees, thinning the forest, delaying harvest, maintaining a forest management plan, conducting additional inventories, and reporting. If you are working with a forester or forest carbon program, know what project costs will be covered and for what duration. In addition, note any fees and the percent of carbon profits that will be deducted for their work. For forest carbon programs, ask if they have stable prices and buyers. Some further things to consider:

- Forest carbon offset projects usually require long-term time commitments which typically range from 20–125 years.
- In most forest carbon markets, the person who signs the contract is held accountable for the carbon stored in the forest, the execution of the project, and any penalties for the entire timeline of the project—even if the land is sold. In other cases, participation in the forest carbon market is tied to the deed. Whether accountability is tied to a contract or a deed, future sale of the land will be impacted, and future landowners may be restricted in how they can manage the forest.

- Restrictions to tree harvesting and other limitations may reduce future forest income opportunities from timber harvesting and other activities.
- Other restrictions and requirements on your land, such as a conservation easement, participation in the state's current use property taxation program, and timber harvest agreements, may not be compatible with participation in a forest carbon market or program.
- Potential trade-offs or alignment with other forest ownership objectives (wildlife habitat, revenues from timber, aesthetics, recreation).
- Giving up some private property rights (no development).

- Forest pests and diseases can impact your project by reducing the amount of carbon stored long-term, which could result in a loss of profits and/or termination from the forest carbon market. Currently, ash, hemlock, beech, and elm are some of the species in the northeast region that are heavily impacted by pests and diseases.

Forest Carbon Developers and Programs Operating in the U.S.

Developer/Program	Website	Registry standard(s) ¹	Landowner Commitment	Min. Parcel Size
American Forest Foundation & The Nature Conservancy – Family Forest Carbon Program	https://www.familyforestcarbon.org Limited states: PA, WV, MD with some northeast states to be added in 2022	VCS	10-20-year minimum	30-2,400 acres
Blue Source	http://www.bluesource.com	ACR,VCS,CAR,ARB	40 or 100 years	3,000+ acres
EP Carbon	http://www.epcarbon.com	ACR,VCS,CAR,ARB	40 or 100 years	5,000+ acres
Finite Carbon	https://finitecarbon.com	ACR,ARB	40 or 100 years	2,000+ acres
Finite Carbon – Core Carbon Program	https://corecarbon.com	ACR	40 years	40-5,000 acres
Forest Carbon Works	https://forestcarbonworks.org	ARB	100+ years	40+acres
Forest Carbon Partners	https://newforests.com.au/forests-carbon-partners/	ARB	100 years	2,000+ acres
Green Assets	http://www.green-assets.com	ARB	100 years	10,000+ acres
NCX – Natural Capital Exchange	https://www.ncx.com	RISE	1 year	None
Ostrom Cliimate	http://www.ostromclimate.com	BCCR,ACR	40 years	2,000+ acres
SIG Carbon	https://www.sigcarbon.com/	ACR ARB,CAR,VCS	40 or 100 years	100+/- (aggregator)
The Climate Trust	http://climatetrust.org	ACR, ARB	40 or 100 years	2,000+ acres
The Nature Conservancy & Blue Source – Working Woodlands	https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/working-woodlands Limited states: NY, OH, PA, TN, WV	VCS	40 years	2000+acres

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¹ Abbreviations: ACR, American Carbon Registry; ARB, California Air Resources Board (compliance market); BCCR, BC Carbon Registry, CAR, Climate Action Reserve; RISE, Real, Immediate, Scalable, and Efficient; VCS, Vera's Verified Carbon Standard

Figure 1