



Frequently asked questions about forest carbon projects

1. Is active forest management allowed under a forest carbon project?

Under the 'Improved Forest Management' type of forest carbon projects, parcels can be actively or passively managed. Landowners will need a professional management plan describing the silvicultural strategies and prescription schedule. Forest management can have additional carbon benefits if harvested wood products are used as a substitute for fossil fuels, concrete, or steel, and long-lived, durable wood products can result in carbon storage for the life of the product.

2. What happens if there is a natural disturbance on the property?

Most carbon projects require that a certain number of carbon offsets be set aside in case there is a loss of forest carbon due to a natural disturbance, like insect defoliation, fire, wind event, or ice storm. The methodology to compute the risk of natural disturbance and the number of offsets to add to this buffer pool varies by the registry. A carbon developer can provide more information.

3. Does it matter what kind of wood products are produced from the harvest?

The expected lifecycle of the harvested wood products can add additional carbon storage, but this does require accounting. Many protocols simplify this accounting and assume a set life span for harvested wood.

4. Can a carbon offset contract be terminated early?

There can be a large penalty for leaving a carbon project and the landowner may be responsible for repaying the offsets generated. These details are described in a carbon project contract. Entering a carbon project does require a time commitment. Although there are new options that require shorter commitments, these programs are in development or are not yet widely vetted.

5. How much revenue can you earn from a forest carbon project?

The amount of revenue a landowner can make with a carbon offset project varies greatly. It depends on the market, tree stocking and condition, site factors, size of the parcel, and future timber harvests. Costs of project development, inventory, and verification can vary by project and the standard used. The new programs for smaller parcels (e.g., Family Forest Carbon Program) are designed to reduce development costs through a 'pay-for-practice' framework; however, these programs are in the testing phase. In the voluntary market, carbon offsets generated from an improved forest management project can sell for more than other projects because of the co-benefits included with keeping forests as forests (e.g., wildlife habitat, flood resilience). For projects that have occurred in New England, landowner revenue can range from \$5-\$25 per acre per year.

6. How long does it take to develop a forest carbon offset project?

From contract signing to selling of credits takes about 12 to 24 months with most current standards, but this depends on many factors like project type, location, forest heterogeneity, and time of year. New programs for family forests may have different timelines because project development methods differ.

7. What is the minimum land requirement?

The amount of forestland needed for a forest carbon offset project varies by the standard used. As recently as 2019 most forest carbon projects require acreages of at least 2000 acres but now new programs require far less. . Refer to the table 'List of Forest Carbon Offset Project Developers' above. There are now programs for forest parcels as small as 10 acres, but some of these programs are in the development stages.

8. Is forestland enrolled in current use eligible for a carbon offset project?

Land enrolled under current use programs are eligible for a carbon offset project, provided that the land meets the criteria outlined by the specific carbon registry.