# GREEN JOBS RESTORING THE LAND—

## ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION THAT FIGHTS GLOBAL WARMING

As the Congress considers proposals to revive the economy by putting people to work rebuilding America's crumbling infrastructure, the time has come to **use existing authorities to create jobs that protect America's green infrastructure from crumbling in the face of global warming.** Green Jobs Restoring the Land will stimulate the economy and return significant economic benefits, especially in rural communities. Many public lands programs are authorized and ready to ramp up ongoing but underfunded work restoring native forest and grassland structure, ecosystem resilience, habitat protection for threatened and endangered fish and wildlife, invasive species removal, native tree species replanting in both urban and rural settings; all of which helps these natural systems capture and store vast amounts of global warming pollution while protecting communities from degradation and deforestation.

These include:

The Public Lands Corps
Youth Conservation Corps
The Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program
Coastal Wetlands Restoration (CWPPRA)
Existing contracting authority at NPS, FWS, USFS, BLM and others

In order to revitalize the economy, Congress should **invest $1.5 billion in existing programs to create jobs focused on restoring the capacity of healthy landscapes to fight global warming and better withstand impacts that are already underway.** The existing Public Lands Corps program, for example, is a successful mechanism for improving our public lands while simultaneously providing needed work and training in forest and habitat restoration.

Here are some examples of the work that Green Jobs Restoring the Land would undertake as its highest priority:

- **Restoring native landscapes to increase ecosystem resiliency in a warming world and to maximize carbon sequestration and storage potential.** Forests and grasslands are natural "carbon sinks," representing an efficient and cost-effective method of reducing the

amount of CO2 in the atmosphere. There is a significant backlog of projects that can create jobs restoring native forest and prairie structure, safeguarding soil integrity, enhancing ecosystem and species resilience, furthering recovery of threatened and endangered plants, fish and wildlife, and replanting native plant species where appropriate.

- **Restoring wetlands as natural habitat and as a buffer against climate-charged storm surges.** Louisiana, for example, has lost coastal wetlands the size of the Rhode Island since 1930, exposing New Orleans and other communities to the devastation of hurricanes.
- **Eradicating and preventing the colonization of invasive species** in order to enhance ecosystem resilience to changing climates.
- **Repairing damaged watersheds** through activities such as controlling erosion, removing old logging roads and replacing damaged fish passage culverts.

Taken together, this work would form the core of a 21st century CCC – a "Climate Conservation Corps" – echoing the successful conservation jobs programs of President Franklin Roosevelt but updated to reflect the urgent need to restore land in the face of climate change. **Human health depends on the health of our forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and other public lands and open spaces.** Since the founding of our nation, our natural wealth has provided services and raw materials that fuel the engine of our economy. In the spirit of FDR's "Tree Planting Army," we need a 21st century "army" dedicated to fighting the effects of global warming, to helping natural systems adapt to climate change, and to providing human communities with resilient native habitats for fish and wildlife, clean watersheds and clean air. Taking on these challenges will create millions of American jobs that cannot be shipped overseas, providing new skills and income to workers and their families across the nation.

Global warming presents social challenges and economic opportunities today. We know that regardless of strategies to stop and reverse future global warming by the year 2050, we are already saddled with several degrees of warming temperatures that are simply unavoidable in this century. Our natural systems are already stressed by climate-related impacts such as extreme weather events, prolonged fire and pest seasons, drought and erosion. The resilience of natural landscapes is further compromised by such events as urban pollution, deforestation, habitat fragmentation, the spread of invasive species and the warming of streams. **By investing in a skilled workforce dedicated to safeguarding and restoring our native ecosystems, we can help protect our communities' most valuable green infrastructure for generations -- while creating jobs today.**

Green Jobs Restoring the Land would also have positive effects on small businesses. Self-employed workers and small businesses are important parts of the work force, especially in rural communities. Increasing revenue for this sector can have a a powerful “multiplier effect” as additional jobs are created and local economies benefit  from increased spending.

Green Jobs Restoring the Land would complement existing proposals such as the Green New Deal, the Clean Energy Corps, the Energy Conservation Corps, and the American Conservation Corps, but with an important new mission to focus on climate change and restoring natural systems. While certain proposals focus on putting youth to work adding energy conservation measures in existing homes or installing other energy-related infrastructure, Green Jobs Restoring the Land would build upon those efforts by focusing on revitalizing and enhancing the capacity of natural systems - rural, urban and suburban - to adapt to and mitigate the ravages of global warming. Work would be done to meet needs on both federal public lands and, based on willing participation of states and private landowners, non-federal lands as well. Jobs would be provided for both out-of-work young people through the various corps, and for jobless adults through the agencies’ contracting authorities and abilities to employ local people on work teams.

Providing jobs focused on carrying out these labor-intensive activities is timely as a matter of economic and environmental health. Investing in such jobs is wise considering the astronomical costs of not addressing global warming and replacing lost ecosystem services like purifying our air and water.

**Let’s put America back to work and fight global warming by restoring the ecosystems on which we all rely.**

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