

Audubon and other NGO actions on Climate Change



NGOs take climate change very seriously

- Highlights of initiatives and actions that the conservation NGOs are taking
- Audubon New York and National Audubon Society and colleagues in some of our sister NGOs.
- All the environmental and conservation-related NGOs take climate change as a very serious issue and have done so for many years.
- Together they have stepped up their actions, lobbying, science, education programs – and their fund raising!

As always, strength in numbers

- National Audubon Society is part of a broad NGO coalition operating in Washington DC and operating state by state through its 30 state offices, 500 chapters, 500,000 members
- Other leaders in the NGO coalition include Sierra Club, TWS, TNC, Environmental Defense (ED) and the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC)

Federal Legislation

- NGOs support the Lieberman/Warner bill, America's Climate Security Act, projected to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by up to 19% below 2005 level in 2020, and up to 63 % below 2005 level in 2050.
- Introduces a cap and trade system with emission credits, funds advanced technologies, protects low and middle income families from higher energy costs and mitigate impacts on low and middle income people as well as wildlife.
- **Audubon and others support this but want a much lower emissions cap.**

Cap and trade or carbon tax?

- This cap and trade system has been roundly criticized by the Congressional Budget Office, which says a carbon tax would be much more effective.
- “A [new report](#) from the Congressional Budget Office confirms one of the most depressing facts about climate change: The best policy is the one that’s going nowhere in Washington.” John Tierney, Science Blog, NYTimes, 2/15/08

‘Good Climate Policy, Bad Politics’, John Tierney, NY Times, Feb. 15, 2008

- The CBO report concludes that a tax on carbon emissions “would be the most efficient incentive-based option for reducing emissions and could be relatively easy to implement. If it was coordinated among major emitting countries, it would help minimize the cost of achieving a global target for emissions by providing consistent incentives for reducing emissions around the world.” But the major presidential candidates aren’t supporting such a tax, and the few proposals on Capitol Hill to impose a tax are not expected to go anywhere anytime soon.
- Instead, the candidates and most legislators prefer to talk about cap-and-trade schemes like the Kyoto protocol. These schemes have the great political advantage of hiding the costs from consumers and voters, but they cost more and accomplish less. The CBO calculates that the net benefits of a tax would be five times higher than for a cap-and-trade with inflexible targets.”

Audubon advocacy in DC and in the states

- Audubon's focus is also on Interior and Environment funding, pushing for passage of appropriations bills to fund programs that will benefit climate change actions.
- Also support many individual state efforts and interstate compacts like Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in the Northeast

Wind power

- Audubon is becoming the leading national conservation organization engaged in wind power issues
- The Audubon Board adopted a policy on wind power supporting “properly-sited wind power as a clean alternative energy source that reduces the threat of global warming.”
- “Wind power facilities should be planned, sited and operated to minimize the negative impacts on bird and wildlife populations.”
- The policy encourages federal siting guidelines for wind projects.

Combining science, education, advocacy

- National Audubon also works through 30 state offices. The actions can be grouped as:
 - Action web sites and e-mail messages
 - Education of chapter members
 - Write-your-legislator campaigns
 - Be part of the solution – in your home, workplace, in transportation, energy uses

Audubon Science

- Focused on impacts on birds and other wildlife, using more than 100 years of bird census data, combined with other data from BirdLife International
- Shows changes in migration patterns, species numbers and distributions, changes in geographic ranges, extinction threats, impact of pest outbreaks, and loss of key habitats, for example, in coastal wetlands and in global biodiversity hotspots.

Sierra Club actions

- Promote solutions to global warming using current and cutting-edge technology that will reduce our use of fossil fuels and curtail our reliance on oil
- Cool cities program
- *Focus on 'what you can do' agenda*
- **Drive Smart!**
 - Buy Local and Organic**
 - Support clean, renewable energy**
 - Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs**
 - Saving energy at home is good for the environment and for your wallet**
 - Become a smart water consumer**
 - Buy energy-efficient electronics and appliances.**
 - Plant a Tree, protect a forest.**
 - Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!**
 - Mount a local campaign against global warming.**

The Nature Conservancy

- Criticism on bio-fuels from The Nature Conservancy
- *A study that warns that most bio-fuels, seen by many as a low carbon energy source, will actually emit more greenhouse gases than fossil fuels they aim to replace.*
- *“Converting rainforests, peatlands, savannas or grasslands to produce bio-fuels in Brazil, Southeast Asia and the United States creates a bio-fuel carbon debt by releasing 17 to 420 times more carbon dioxide than the fossil fuels they replace.”*
- Climate change impacts: climate change and biodiversity: An Interactive Map.
- Formed a Forest Carbon Partnership
- **Why reducing deforestation is crucial – deforestation causes 25 percent of all carbon emissions.**

The Wilderness Society

- “There is much we can do and are doing to sustain species, ecosystems, and wild places in the face of climate change.”
- Support legislation that will reduce carbon emissions and lower the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere
- Ensure funding for programs that protect, acquire and fund adaptive restorations of critical public lands
- Ensure that wild places, their species, and interdependent ecological and cultural systems survive into the future
- Research about the ecological and economic impacts of global warming on our public lands
- A report, [*U.S. Forest Carbon and Climate Change*](#), explores various policy options to promote the role of forests in carbon sequestration.
- [*Environmental Benefits and Consequences of Bio-fuel Development in the United States*](#) examines the benefits and concerns with bio-fuels
- [*The Interplay of Fire, Carbon Storage, Charcoal, and Global Warming*](#), educates about the interaction between fires and climate change
- TWS has undertaken an extensive, thorough audit of our own carbon footprint

Focus on local efforts in upstate New York

- **The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks:**
- The Adirondack Smart Park Initiative focuses on energy conservation, encourages local energy alternatives, cutting transportation emissions, sustainable forest management
- **Adirondack Research Consortium:**
- Prepare a practical research agenda and provide information to local and state government officials on how to mitigate, prepare for the best or worst scenario
- **Based on the old idea: think globally, act locally**