

# The Central Hardwoods Climate Change Response Framework

The Central Hardwoods region of Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri covers over 42 million acres and is one of the largest forest areas in the country. This region supports a diversity of forest ecosystems, most notably upland oak-hickory and oak-pine forests, oak and pine savannas, old-growth hardwood and pine forests, and bottomland hardwood forests. This landscape sustains local communities in many ways: culturally, economically, and environmentally. Reducing the impacts of climate change on the forests of the Central Hardwoods will be necessary to maintain their many benefits into the future.

***The Central Hardwoods Climate Change Response Framework will provide an integrated set of tools, partnerships, and actions to support “climate smart” conservation and management actions across the Central Hardwoods region of Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri.***

## ***Project Summary***

The variety of impacts brought about by climate change is one of the greatest threats to the future well-being of the landscape of the Central Hardwoods region. How should state, county, or federal agencies, conservation organizations, or private forest owners manage forests right now to adapt to projected future changes? How can land managers make decisions given the uncertainties about future changes? Which lands are most important to conserve for future needs? These questions have no easy answers, but enough information is already available to move forward and begin taking action to help the region's forests adjust to likely changes.

To meet this challenge, a team of people representing federal and state land management agencies, private forest owners, conservation organizations and others from Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri have come together to accomplish three objectives:

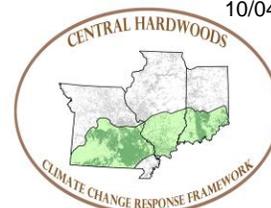
- Provide a forum to share the experiences and lessons learned of managers and scientists regarding forest management and climate change in the Central Hardwoods region of Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana.
- Develop new user-friendly tools that can help public and private land managers to include climate change considerations in decision-making, including a forest ecosystem vulnerability assessment and a forest adaptation resources document.
- Support efforts by public land managers, private landowners, and conservation organizations to put these new tools to work on the ground across the Central Hardwoods region.

## ***Partnerships***

Meeting this immense challenge will require collaboration among diverse partners dedicated to conservation and climate change response across the Central Hardwoods landscape. Committed partners in this project already include: USDA Forest Service; Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science, The Nature Conservancy; The American Bird Conservancy, the Central Hardwoods Joint Venture, state forestry and conservation agencies of Missouri and Illinois, and the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

For more information on this project, visit:  
<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/niacs/climate/centralhardwoods>

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# The Central Hardwoods Climate Change Response Framework: Details

| Project Component  | Description  | Important Milestones   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Ecosystem Vulnerability Assessment and Synthesis (EVAS)</b> | Document that assesses vulnerability of central hardwoods ecosystems to climate change and other stressors and implications for management and use.  | Expert panel meets spring 2012;<br>Draft completed summer 2012 |
| <b>Shared Landscapes Initiative</b>                            | Fosters dialogue between federal and non-federal land managers, regional landowners, and the public in order to address climate change, ecosystem response, ecosystem management, and cooperative activities across the landscape. | Workshop Summer /Fall 2012 (tentative)                         |
| <b>Science Team</b>  | A group of scientists engaged in research on climate change, ecosystem response, social science, and economic analysis relevant to the Central Hardwoods region.   | Workshop Summer /Fall 2012 (tentative)                         |
| <b>Forest Adaptation Resources (FAR)</b>                       | Document that includes a “menu” of climate adaptation strategies and approaches a process for managers to identify management actions to adapt forests to climate change.  | Draft completed Winter 2012-13                                 |
| <b>Demonstration Projects</b>                                  | On-the-ground management activities (from stand level to landscape-scale) that incorporate information from the EVAS and FAR.  | Initiate Spring 2013   |

## ***Opportunities for involvement:***

### EVAS:

- Contribute data and information; Serve as part of an expert panel for data interpretation and synthesis; Provide a technical review.

### Shared Landscapes Initiative:

- Invite Framework Project leads to present information about the project at your organization’s next meeting; Participate in demonstration projects .

### Science Team:

- Contribute to one or more aspects of the EVAS or FAR; Join a group to discuss new research opportunities in the region.

### FAR:

- Provide technical review for potential adaptation strategies.

### Demonstration projects:

- Volunteer your project to serve as a demonstration project; Work as part of the Shared Landscapes Initiative to identify demonstration projects in your area.

**Contact Leslie Brandt ([lbrandt@fs.fed.us](mailto:lbrandt@fs.fed.us), 651-649-5016) to discuss opportunities or sign up for periodic project updates.**



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