

# Conserving an Intact & Enduring Appalachian Landscape

## Designing a Corridor in Response to Climate Change

In 2021, a Climate Advisory Group (CAG) of experts was convened to evaluate the impacts of climate on the Appalachian Landscape and the importance of this unique region in building resilience to climate change at the national scale. The CAG focused on elevating the collective action already underway and identified the readiness and willingness to work together to combat these threats. The CAG created a vision to bring partners together across disciplines to help safeguard and promote climate, environmental, and community resilience across this Landscape.

### A GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE

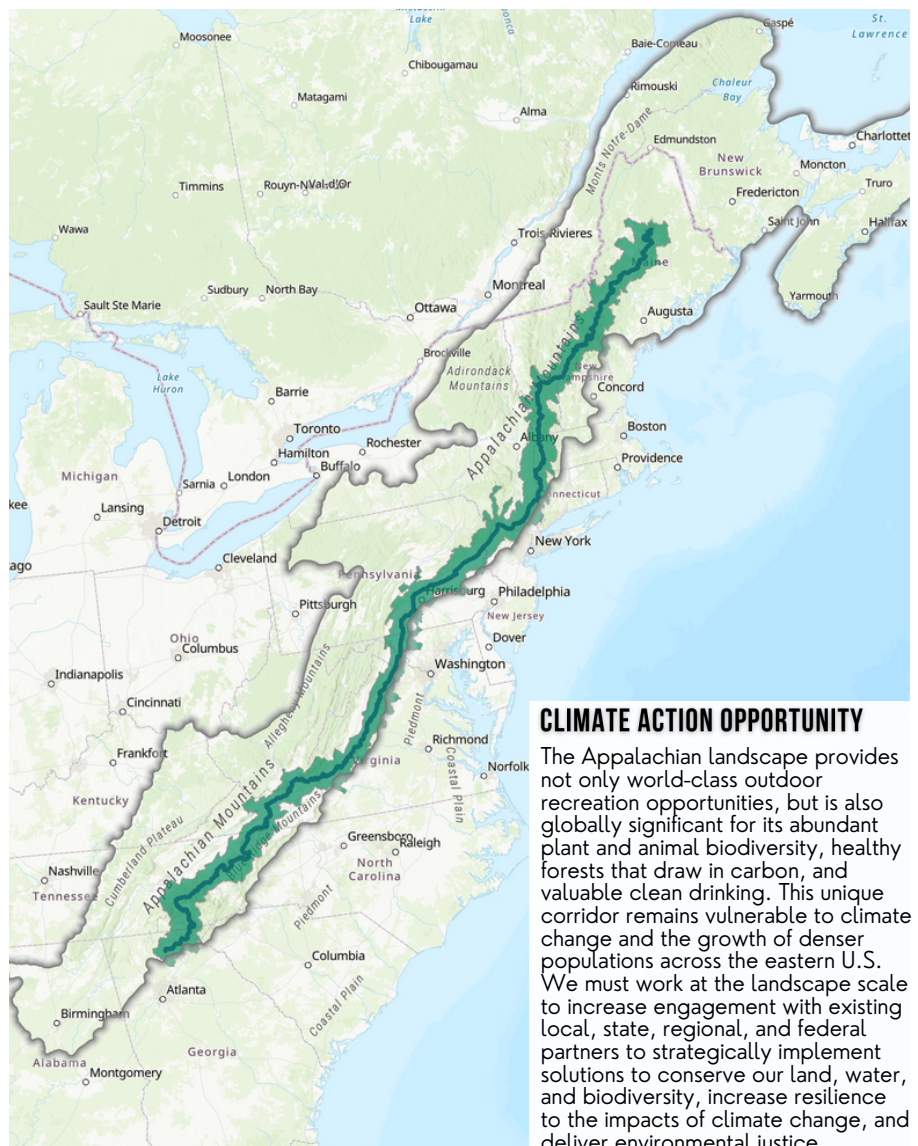
The Appalachian Landscape contains the largest, most resilient and healthy forest stock in the continental U.S., without which we will not be able to remove millions of metric tons of carbon pollution from our atmosphere.

Acknowledged as a critical migration corridor for birds, bobcats, moose and elk with more than 80,000 occurrences of rare species, this Landscape is the most important region of biodiversity in eastern North America.

This natural network of land and water provides more than 119 million people with critical resources like clean water, air, and food.

The regional economy is in transition as energy and extractive resource sectors shift. This transition provides an opportunity to build from existing efforts to advance a shared vision for a just, resilient, diversified, and inclusive economic transition.

Roan Highlands on the Appalachian Trail | Photo by @wncphototours



### CLIMATE ACTION OPPORTUNITY

The Appalachian landscape provides not only world-class outdoor recreation opportunities, but is also globally significant for its abundant plant and animal biodiversity, healthy forests that draw in carbon, and valuable clean drinking. This unique corridor remains vulnerable to climate change and the growth of denser populations across the eastern U.S. We must work at the landscape scale to increase engagement with existing local, state, regional, and federal partners to strategically implement solutions to conserve our land, water, and biodiversity, increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, and deliver environmental justice.

# Vision: Appalachian Climate Corridor

A connected and conserved landscape that protects the Appalachian Mountains so people and nature can thrive in an era of climate change.

## GOAL 1: ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

Ecological integrity encompasses the health of a landscape in terms of its connectivity, biodiversity, and function. Our goal is to ensure an intact and enduring landscape to secure the source of life.

### ACTIONS:

1

#### Maintain Landscape Connectivity

This landscape will be more resilient to stressors if we sustain and improve terrestrial and aquatic connectivity and protect the network of climate refugia.

2

#### Maintain Biodiversity

Native species will thrive if we proactively conserve for vulnerable plants and wildlife, maintain essential habitat, and encourage climate-smart invasive species management.

3

#### Enhance Natural Climate Solutions & Ecosystem-Based Approaches

To maximize the co-benefits we receive from this landscape like food security, clean air, and water, we can protect watersheds for drinking water and sustainably manage, and restore forests to enhance carbon sequestration and storage.

## GOAL 2: HUMAN CONNECTION TO NATURE

Community engagement and resilience must be prioritized to achieve durable climate action to conserve Appalachia's culture, biodiversity, wildlife, and connection to nature. Our goal is to inspire broad community action to sustain life.

### ACTIONS:

4

#### Coalition Building

To develop durable relationships and build broader community involvement, action, and inclusion we must dedicate resources and time to listen to and learn from communities, provide opportunities to build relationships, and co-create priorities that center on community resilience.

5

#### Support Thriving Communities

To co-create sustainable pathways to achieve climate action we must provide access to relevant climate-related information and resources and secure resources to support economic and capacity-building opportunities.

## JOIN US!

We welcome you to join the conversation and support our efforts to connect and protect the land, water, and wildlife that provide vital environmental benefits for communities throughout the region.

Please visit [Connect & Protect: Building an Enduring Appalachian Climate Corridor](#) to learn more about how you can support this vision.