

## Dozens Of Countries Could Reverse Carbon Emissions Just By Caring For Nature

Jeff McMahon Contributor Jan 26, 2020



*Men on tractors work on a new section of the Trans-Amazonian highway (BR230), near Itaituba, Para state, Brazil, in the Amazon rainforest, on September 14, 2019. - The BR230 and BR163 are major transport routes in Brazil that have played a key role in the development and destruction of the world's largest rainforest. (Photo by NELSON ALMEIDA / AFP) (Photo by NELSON ALMEIDA/AFP via Getty Images)*

Most of the greenhouse-gas emissions in the world's tropical countries derive from environmental destruction, and according to a new report, those emissions could be reversed relatively easily and cheaply through improved stewardship.

But [natural climate solutions](#) are underemphasized in [Paris Agreement](#) pledges and funding mechanisms, according to the authors of "National Mitigation Potential from Natural Climate Solutions in the Tropics," which appears today in the journal [Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society](#).

"Collectively, tropical regions release the highest level of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of environmental degradation and destruction, yet these same areas have the greatest carbon storage potential," according

to a press release accompanying the publication.

Countries like Brazil, Vietnam and Malaysia can best reverse emissions by protecting forests; India, Zimbabwe and Niger by managing forests; Togo, Rwanda and Ethiopia by restoring forests that have been lost. Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea can make a significant contribution by protecting wetlands, and many other countries through a combination of these solutions.

"These solutions represent one of the most promising climate mitigation opportunities available right now. Yet they're under-represented in national climate action planning in the Paris Agreement process and receive a tiny fraction of public climate mitigation finance," says the press release.

A dozen natural solutions like these, implemented across 79 tropical countries, could cost-effectively mitigate 6.6 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year, the report says, reversing more greenhouse gas emissions than the annual emissions of the United States.

Most of those savings—3.5 gigatons—would come just from protection actions. The rest from management and restoration.

The report was prepared by scientists from Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, Woods Hole Research Center, and several universities. It also finds that:

Twenty countries hold 80 percent of cost-effective natural climate solution potential across the tropics;

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Four large countries (Indonesia, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and India) hold 53 percent of this potential;

A variety of small and medium-sized tropical countries are best positioned to become carbon negative nations through natural climate solutions, and

In half of tropical countries, cost-effective natural climate solutions could mitigate more than 50 percent of their individual greenhouse gas emissions.

In more than a quarter of tropical countries, that potential is greater than their national emissions.

The authors focused on tropical countries because they have the greatest potential, but they call for further studies in temperate and boreal regions as well.

