

Guest Essay: Nature-Based Carbon Offsets Are Critical in the Climate Fight

Shenna Fortner, CEO of Carbon Market Exchange Ltd. outlines the importance of carbon markets in taking on the global climate crisis.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- This Earth Day the world must respond to the United Nations [climate report](#) warning that we are only a few tenths of a degree from

catastrophe. Nature-based carbon offsets are an important and growing part of this response. They will help protect the world's ecosystems from destruction and development, prevent the worst climate change harms, and meet the UN call to protect 30-50 percent of the Earth's freshwater, land and oceans.

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The time is now. Carbon offsets will help protect the world's ecosystems from destruction and and prevent the worst climate change harms.”

*Shenna Fortner, CEO of
Carbon Market Exchange*

The timing for carbon offset solutions could not be better. The Earth's carbon-dense natural systems like old-growth forests, coral reefs and peatlands are being lost at an unprecedented rate with devastating consequences for every layer of life. The nature-based Voluntary Carbon Market protects millions of hectares worldwide and avoids more than 500 million metric tons of CO2 emissions per year by sequestering carbon in natural ecosystems. The market is based on the quantification of carbon through

carbon offsets, a legal, international tool to fight climate change.

There is a concerning narrative on carbon markets based on false information and skewed results in some projects. Baseline studies for UN [REDD+](#) projects calculate and predict what would have happened if a carbon offset project was not implemented. Some data inputs on these calculations are intentionally inaccurate. To prevent future greenwashing and misinformation that harms carbon markets, baseline studies must be transparent and all stakeholders must conduct this important work with integrity.

The scrutiny on carbon offsets has led to updated standards for verification and increased



transparency in carbon markets. This action raises the bar for future work and better ensures high-quality carbon offsets protect the world's fragile ecosystems. It is also essential carbon offset projects respect local and Indigenous communities, and ensure financial support reaches those working on the front lines of conservation sites around the world.

Nature-based efforts are also hindered by a push for overestimated technological solutions. Excessive investments in carbon removal technology, direct air capture and carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) have little to no effect on protecting remaining natural ecosystems. We cannot manufacture the benefits of protecting the biodiversity of a coral reef or the endangered species that thrive in the world's rainforests.



The Carbon Market Exchange carbon offsets in Belize's Maya Forest Corridor connect two of the largest areas of unbroken protected habitat in Mesoamerica.

For example, a CCUS facility it costs up to \$500-million per unit and takes about two years to build, making this technology limited in the urgent work to avert climate disaster. Carbon capture technology nets about [2 billion metric tons](#) of CO₂ annually, or about 5% of the world's CO₂ emissions, and that's not enough. To make matters worse, many CCUS facilities use captured CO₂ for enhanced oil recovery by injecting it into geologic formations to ease extraction of hard-to-recover oil.

Technology investments should be directed to regenerative agriculture and renewable energy projects to help break our dependence on fossil fuels, grow the economy and protect nature. Renewable energy technologies like wind, solar, geothermal and green hydrogen are leading a new era of clean energy systems that are competitive with fossil fuels and better protect public health. Last year renewable energy outpaced coal for the first time in U.S. history. Regenerative agriculture can restore water and soil quality and improve crop yields that strengthen our food systems.

Nature-based climate solutions are working. They restrict extraction of raw materials in environmentally-sensitive areas, which in turn requires new modalities of economic development. A United Nations report on the potential of nature-based solutions is 10 billion offsets by 2030, merely 25% of 2021's global emissions. There is an opportunity for nature-based solutions to prevent the worst effects of crossing the 1.5-degree threshold. We need

collaboration, transparency and credibility to mitigate climate disaster, and as we learned from the United Nations recently – the future of humanity depends on it.

Shenna Fortner is the CEO of Carbon Market Exchange, a market leader in nature-based carbon offsets.

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