



## USDA Forest Service Region 5 Regional Climate Action Plan

### What is the Regional Climate Action Plan?

In 2022, the USDA Forest Service released a national level [Climate Adaptation Plan](#) outlining the climate adaptation actions needed to reduce the risks to the agency's operations as the climate continues to change, so we can continue to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Region 5 Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) tiers to the national Plan, focusing on actions and goals specific to Region 5. Region 5 of the Forest Service is made up of California, Hawai'i, and the U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islands.

### What is Climate Adaptation?

Climate Adaptation can be defined as adjustment of systems in preparation or in response to climate change. Adaptation actions are designed to intentionally address climate change impacts and vulnerabilities in order to meet goals and objectives.



### How did we develop the Regional Climate Action Plan?

The RCAP was developed by the [Region 5 Climate Program](#) in collaboration with various subject matter experts (including engineers, ecologists, biologists), program leads, and higher-level leadership. Through this collaboration the Climate Program was able to ensure that projects and program areas were accurately represented in the RCAP. The RCAP also outlines strategic coordination across various programs.

There are four focus areas in the RCAP: Operations & Infrastructure, Organizational Capacity, Natural Resources Stewardship, and Serving People. Each of these focus areas are further broken down for a total of 12 different areas, as depicted in the graphic to the left. The actions included in the RCAP each fit under one of these areas.



### Operations & Infrastructure: Climate Ready Infrastructure

Infrastructure including recreation sites, trails, roads, and culverts are at risk due to changes in precipitation patterns, increased flooding, and increased wildfire. This is important to consider when repairing current and planning future infrastructure.

Region 5 collaborated with the Research & Development branch to develop Vulnerability Assessments (VAs), informed by climate science, that help resource managers determine appropriate adaptation actions. A VA for the [Sierra Nevada](#) landscape was published in 2021. The Northern California VA was completed in 2023 (report forthcoming), and the Southern California VA is underway. These VAs will inform engineers and planners of current and future effects of climate on infrastructure so more sustainable, long-lasting, resource-saving decisions can be made.



### **Organizational Capacity: Workforce**

In 2024, Region 5 has seen growth in the Climate Program with two newly filled positions focusing on 1) carbon stewardship and 2) climate and fire in Hawai'i and the U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islands. Together with the climate change program lead and sustainable operations specialist, this "Climate Cadre" supports science-informed decision making to set and meet Forest Service goals.



### **Natural Resources Stewardship: Carbon Stewardship & Adaptation**

The Region 5 Climate Program is integrating climate change adaptation and carbon stewardship considerations into land management projects and the [NEPA](#) planning process. While the Forest Service manages for forest health rather than carbon maximization, it is still necessary to understand the carbon stocks and pools on managed lands. Carbon reports for each Forest using data from the Forest Service's [Carbon Dashboard](#) are under development.

To provide a better understanding of climate adaptation and how to incorporate it into Forest-level planning, the R5 Climate Program in collaboration with the Office of Sustainability & Climate and the USDA California Climate Hub have hosted a series of Adaptation Workshops. During these workshop sessions, attendees work through an [adaptation workbook](#) that breaks down the process of incorporating climate considerations into planning.



### **Serving People: Partnerships**

To meet the goals of the Climate Program, we collaborate with many partners. We work closely with the regional [Tribal Relations](#) team, [Forest Service Office of Sustainability & Climate](#), [USDA California Climate Hub](#), [Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station](#), [CAL FIRE](#), [California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force](#), [Southwest Climate Adaptation Science Center](#), [California Landscape Conservation and Adaptation Partnership](#), and our counterparts in other regions. These collaborations ensure a holistic approach to our work and reduces duplicate efforts allowing for more effective, science-based, and practice-informed climate consideration integration.

### **What's Next?**

Moving forward, Region 5 will continue to provide climate adaptation training with an emphasis on post fire restoration and reforestation, pilot the Tribal Adaptation Menu, collaborate with Research & Development to develop refugia maps, and further develop the U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islands portion of the RCAP.

For more information about the Region 5 Climate Program, please visit our website:  
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/climatechange/>.