



changeNOW 2024 Featured Solution

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BUYING UP THREATENED LAND TO PROTECT FORESTS

 SUSTAINABILITY

An organisation works closely with local communities to preserve valuable existing forests

Spotted: Recent research into the productivity of mature trees as carbon [sinks](#) found that the average age of peak net primary productivity ranged from 35 to 75 years. As a result, the many millions of trees being planted as part of reforestation efforts are not going to be fully effective at helping to mitigate climate change for several decades. Reforestation should therefore not be seen as a panacea for climate change, especially if it normalises people to the destruction of forests on the mistaken belief that we can ‘bring them back’ at will.

This is the argument of Green Sanctuaries, which is focusing its attention on preserving the forests that are still intact. The French organisation connects financial supporters with forests and communities needing support. It oversees projects around the world, including forest ecosystems in Ecuador, Zimbabwe, and Namibia that are especially important to the world’s biodiversity. Companies can get involved by donating money, time, and equipment. Individuals can contribute financially via a one-off or regular monthly donation.

The Green Sanctuaries team includes a global network of ‘forest watchers’ – biodiversity experts who identify the most precious plots of forested land in private hands. Once a parcel of land is confirmed as at risk, Green Sanctuaries tries to buy or long-term lease as much of it as possible. Once ownership has been transferred, the organisation works closely with local communities to design and implement long-term management strategies that include water access, creation of conservation jobs, and the opening up of the forest to research projects. In some areas, the Green Sanctuaries team also helps local and Indigenous communities protect the land from neighbouring pollutants, such as runoff from industrial farms.

aces for biodiversity that in just one of Green Sanctuaries' protects more than 100,000 species of insects, around 200 and 550 species of birds, while providing critical habitat space

for the endangered tapir.

From creating a [database](#) of the world's forests to using forest products as new [food](#) sources, innovations in Springwise's library highlight the diversity of the projects working to save some of the world's most important carbon sinks.

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Takeaway:

With researchers noting that avoiding emissions from logging larger trees has a “significant” climate impact, advocates of forest preservation point to the need for improved policy support by governments to avoid potentially costly conflicts with commercial interests such as logging companies. Green Sanctuaries' approach of buying and leasing vulnerable land, and working in partnership with local groups to manage the habitats, provides crucial protection for land where regulations may not be easily enforced. And importantly, local land management techniques have the potential to contribute to long-term economic stability for the communities involved in the preservation.