



Media Contact: Andrew Goldberg, Dogwood Alliance
andrew@dogwoodalliance.org
828.280.1793

New Large-Scale Forest Carbon Project Advances Conservation, Commerce

Finding new value in conserving forests for their climate benefits, companies, conservationists and landowners announce the Carbon Canopy, the first regional forest carbon projects

PHILADELPHIA, PENN. (Nov. 20, 2013) – Dogwood Alliance, in partnership with Interface, Inc., Staples, Inc. and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), today announced the first two carbon offset sales contracts from the Carbon Canopy, a first-of-its-kind exchange where tons of carbon from Southeastern forests are sold as carbon offsets.

“Together with Staples, a long-standing partner in sustainable forestry practices, we have developed an ecosystem market strategy to expand forest conservation and FSC certification in our nation’s private forests,” said Andrew Goldberg, Director of Corporate Engagement at Dogwood Alliance. “The two inaugural projects encompass 14,000 acres in Western North Carolina and Southwestern Virginia and will create more than 100,000 metric tons of offsets in their first year. It’s a win-win, as Carbon Canopy landowners have made a 100-year commitment to good forest management practices and to keeping CO₂ out of the atmosphere. This commitment ensures carbon stocks will increase over time and biodiversity will be protected.”

Carbon Canopy is a new ecosystems services model developed by Asheville, N.C.-based Dogwood Alliance and office-supply giant Staples, Inc. By participating in these projects, forest landowners maximize the value of their lands, forest-product companies improve sourcing, and corporate green leaders participate in a forward-thinking solution to habitat loss and climate change.

As the world’s largest source of forest products, Southern forests have long been a revenue mainstay for landowners and lumber and paper companies. But the forests’ ecological assets have suffered at the expense of commerce. Considered the world’s most biodiverse temperate forests, the region has lost critical habitat through unsustainable forestry practices. With the passage of California’s Global Warming Solutions Act in 2006, the door opened for the development of forest carbon as a tradable asset called a carbon credit. Each credit represents

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one metric ton of carbon dioxide-equivalents, offset by the natural process of trees absorbing carbon dioxide. Carbon credits are regulated by California's cap-and-trade policy and offer a conservation-minded revenue alternative to owners of forest land, while contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Staples and Dogwood Alliance brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to develop an approach to carbon asset development in Southern forests. Using rigorous scientific protocols established and tested by Carbon Canopy partner Pacific Forest Trust, the model achieves the following outcomes: landowners receive revenue for their carbon, but also agree to follow FSC sustainable forestry practices; forest-product companies agree to purchase sustainably harvested timber from Carbon Canopy landowners, improving supply-chain standards; and corporate partners purchase the project's carbon assets, which reduce energy footprints and support an ecosystem services marketplace in support of Southern forest conservation.

"We're excited about our role as one of the first partners to purchase offsets from these projects," said Erin Meezan, vice president of sustainability at Interface. "We've watched the project evolve from concept to working model and are excited about the prospect of Carbon Canopy to provide a high quality offset that will allow us to expand our carbon neutral product offerings."

The key Carbon Canopy partners are: Staples, Columbia Forest Products, Domtar, The Coca-Cola Company, Wells Fargo, The Home Depot, Interface, Inc., The Forestland Group, Rainforest Alliance, Pacific Forest Trust, the National Woodland Owners Association and Forest Stewards.

About Dogwood Alliance

Dogwood Alliance is increasing protection for millions of acres of Southern forests by transforming the way corporations, landowners and communities value them for their climate, wildlife and water benefits. Dogwood Alliance has revolutionized the environmental practices of some of the world's largest corporations. For more information on Dogwood or the Carbon Canopy Project, please visit dogwoodalliance.org.

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