The Global Forest Transition

Three days to change the way we save the planet’s forests

The forests of the planet, particularly in the tropics, are at a crossroads. The effects of land-use change, resource extraction and climate change are pushing these ecosystems towards a tipping point where their contributions to livelihoods and wellbeing risk being permanently damaged and forever changed.

Tackling deforestation would make a major contribution to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring the well-being of millions of the world’s most vulnerable populations on the front line of climate change. Forests and their contribution to climate change mitigation, are at the nexus of many of the challenges the international community is facing from inequality and poverty to biodiversity loss, conflict and mass migration.

The forests crisis has caught the world’s attention following the fires that have burned this year from the Amazon to Indonesia’s peatlands, and to the boreal forests of Europe and North America. Responses to the ongoing forests crisis have come from the G7, corporations such as Nestle and P&G making deforestation pledges, the New York Declaration on Forests as well as mounting interest and dollars from both individuals and institutions in tree planting and forest restoration. Forests are now front and center on the global agenda.

And yet, whatever we are trying to do to stop deforestation and restore forests, it is not working. We need to do things differently. We need new forms of decision-making and collective action.

Proposal

The Global Forest Transition is a proposal to bring together 20 world leaders, from opinion leaders to CEOs, to rethink global forest governance. Over three days these global thought leaders will immerse themselves in design thinking methods and collectively explore alternative futures using games coupling social and ecological processes. We want them to discover, explore and rethink global strategies to stop deforestation and upscale forest restoration.

Armed with concrete outcomes, we will bring proposals to a Leader’s Summit at the United Nations General Assembly in September and to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October and help shape the future of the world’s forests.

Leveraging the convening power of the Global Landscapes Forum, we aim to reach a diverse audience including business leaders, international media and global political leaders with a digital media campaign and at GLF events in 2020, including in Kunming, China at the CBD COP15.

We also aspire to catalyze future discussions using similar tools, improving the quality of decision making through decentralized processes, and reducing the reputation cost future participants still perceive when deciding to use games to explore possible futures.

We need a game changer
Where and when

We are inviting the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center, a 50-acre property located on the shores of Lake Como in northern Italy, to host this thought-leadership roundtable. The Rockefeller Foundation’s history with the Bellagio Center began in 1959, when Ella Holbrook Walker gifted the property “for the promotion of international understanding.” For more than half a century the Bellagio Center has supported initiatives through its residency and conference programs and is globally renowned for fostering cross-cultural and interdisciplinary exchange.

The retreat is proposed to take place in July 2020.

Details

The leader of the project, Claude Garcia, is one of the co-authors of the Global Tree Restoration Potential paper published in Science last June. In a TEDx talk he gave in November 2018, he explains how, through games and facilitation, it is possible for people, companies and governments to find new ways to solve problems. The method has been tested and proven successful; helping FSC, governments, logging companies, conservation NGOs and community leaders to agree on how to conserve intact forest landscapes in FSC certified concessions in the Congo Basin.

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