

June 10, 2024

Randy Moore
Chief of the Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Randy Moore,

Our organizations write to you with a shared interest in advancing agroforestry, the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into agricultural operations, in the United States. Increased interest in agroforestry has resulted in a sharp increase in need for technical assistance delivery and long-term, region-specific research and demonstration. As a result, the National Agroforestry Center (NAC) in Lincoln, Nebraska is tasked with meeting these needs with renewed urgency. **We are writing to urge you to fill long-standing vacant staff positions at NAC to ensure the Center can properly carry out its mission to accelerate the adoption of agroforestry.**

Agroforestry systems hold incredible potential to transform working lands by sequestering more carbon, building economic and environmental resilience, and supporting sustainable, regional food systems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2019 report, *Climate Change and Land*, listed agroforestry as a top land-based solution to sequester carbon.¹ Recently released data from the 2022 Census of Agriculture revealed that over 32,000 farm operations in the US leverage at least one agroforestry practice, representing a 6% increase since 2017.² This trajectory of growth requires a parallel increase in federal capacity, particularly staffing, to support on-the-ground implementation of agroforestry.

NAC plays a cornerstone role in advancing agroforestry by leading, coordinating, and conducting scientific research, and then leverages this research to deliver science-based outreach, education, and technical assistance to natural resource professionals. However, NAC has faced a disproportionate and consistent lack of staffing, with critical roles remaining vacant for years. NAC currently has only seven full-time employees — compared to 13 in 1990 — with four critical positions currently vacant: Technology Transfer Lead Agroforester, Information Assistance, Biological Science Technician, and Secretary. With growing interest in agroforestry across the country, it is essential to fill each of these integral positions and consider hiring additional staff to support the execution of NAC's daily operations and realizing its mission.

¹ IPCC, 2019: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems* [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.- O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)]. In press

² https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/index.php#full_report

With demand for agroforestry education, technical assistance delivery, and research at an all time high, NAC urgently requires sufficient staffing to ensure they can properly fulfill the Center's mission to advance the health, diversity, and productivity of working lands in the United States through agroforestry. Agroforestry education has reached an exciting inflection point, transitioning from increasing awareness to facilitating on-the-ground implementation, and NAC must be equipped with proportionate staff capacity to reflect and meet these evolving needs.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support for agroforestry systems. We look forward to working closely with you to support the needs of the agroforestry community in service of our shared goal to make American working lands more resilient, economically prosperous, and sustainable for communities long-term.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Agroforestry Coalition
American Forest Foundation
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Society of Agronomy
Carbon180
Clean Air Task Force (CATF)
Crop Science Society of America
Food System 6
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Soil Science Society of America
The Climate Reality Project- Chicago Metro Chapter
The Nature Conservancy
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Regional Organizations

Appalachian Sustainable Development
Climate Land Leaders
Green Lands Blue Waters
Interlace Commons
Pacific Northwest Agroforestry Working Group
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture

Renewing the Countryside
Savanna Institute
They Keep Bees

State & Local Organizations

Maryland Forest Service
Michigan Association of Conservation Districts
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Agroecology Lab at the University of Maine
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
West Michigan Agroforestry Partnership
White Buffalo Land Trust

Private companies

Agroforestry Partners
Alosa Ecological Strategies
Breadtree Farms
Brines Farm LLC
Here We Are Farm
Little Farm Black Mountain
Nettle Valley Farm
Nightfall Farm
Red Fern Farm
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Working Trees