

August 30, 2022

Terry Cosby  
Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Cosby,

Our organizations are writing to you with a shared interest in agroforestry. The heightened attention to long-term carbon sequestration and climate adaptation has helped elevate the need and potential for scaling agroforestry. For this reason, and in light of the many other beneficial attributes of agroforestry, we are writing to urge you to fill the vacant position of NRCS National Agroforester at the National Agroforestry Center (NAC) in Lincoln, Nebraska.

We know that U.S. agriculture has the potential to capture massive amounts of carbon from the atmosphere and store it in soil and plant biomass. Within agriculture, agroforestry stands out as a largely untapped but key climate solution. In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2019 report titled *Climate Change and Land* listed agroforestry as a top land-based solution to sequester carbon.<sup>1</sup> In addition to mitigating climate change, agroforestry builds resilience to climate and economic risks and delivers multiple ecosystem benefits.

The contributions and continuity that a permanent National Agroforester could offer will provide important leadership for USDA as new projects and funding flow into agroforestry and enable more pathways for conservation programs to support agroforestry. All of us will welcome the opportunity to broaden our engagement with NAC and NRCS through this key position.

NRCS programs already serve as a source of technical and financial assistance to producers interested in agroforestry, including socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers who have shown a particularly strong interest in agroforestry. This increase in demand for agroforestry must be met with a corresponding increase in technical capacity at the national, state, and local levels. Filling this critical position will help meet NRCS training needs and producer demand and ensure that NRCS Conservation Practice Standards and payment scenarios are reflective of on-the-ground implementation of agroforestry. Furthermore, this position can also support collaboration with holders of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in embedding agroforestry more holistically into federal conservation programs – TEK is an important means to teach and share agroforestry practices and acknowledge the Indigenous roots of those practices.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working hand in hand with you to advance the health, diversity, and productivity of our working lands, waters, and communities through agroforestry.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

Agroecology Fund  
American Forest Foundation  
American Society of Agronomy  
Biomimicry for Social Innovation  
Carbon180  
Crop Science Society of America  
National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Association of State Conservation Agencies  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Soil Science Society of America  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

### **Regional Organizations**

Climate Land Leaders  
Ecology Artisans  
Green Lands Blue Waters  
Missouri University Center for Agroforestry  
Savanna Institute  
Southwest Agroforestry Action Network

### **State and Local Organizations**

Agroforestry Northwest  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties Agroforestry Resource Center  
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Tompkins County  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association  
Oregon State University  
Sustainable Farming Association  
Virginia Association for Biological Farming  
Washington State University  
Washington State University Extension

## **Companies**

Breakthrough Strategies & Solutions

Common Vision Consulting

Humble Hands Harvest

Propagate