

# News Release

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## **CONSERVATION FUND'S GO ZERO<sup>®</sup> PROGRAM GOES GOLD WITH CCB**

### **Voluntary Forest Carbon Program Benefits Climate, Community and Biodiversity in Louisiana**

Arlington, VA (June 1, 2009) – [The Conservation Fund](#), [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) and [Environmental Synergy Inc.](#) (ESI) announced today that a 1,182-acre forest carbon sequestration project along Louisiana's Red River has received Gold Level Validation, the highest level available under the [Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance](#) (CCB) standards.

Supported by donations from The Conservation Fund's [Go Zero<sup>®</sup>](#) program, the project, known as the [Red River Restoration Initiative](#), is helping to restore and protect native forestland at the [Red River National Wildlife Refuge](#), benefiting wildlife and people alike.

“The Conservation Fund's Gold Level validation against the CCB Standards is a great achievement because it shows through a rigorous independent evaluation that this native forest restoration project has been carefully designed to maximize social and biodiversity benefits, not only effectively reducing greenhouse gases but also restoring native habitats,” said Joanna Durbin, director of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance.

After decades of conversion from forestland to marginally productive farmland, much of the land in the Red River and Lower Mississippi River valleys is degraded and can no longer support wildlife with a natural flooding regime to help feed the nutrient-starved, isolated floodplains. Restoring these lands is one of The Conservation Fund's and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's highest priorities and requires a mix of public and private financing.

“When most people consider the impacts of deforestation, they discuss the Amazon or even Central America,” said ESI's president, Carol Jordan. “What they may not know is that we have lost approximately 20 million acres of bottomland hardwood forest over the last century along the U.S. Gulf Coast. No other wetland system in North America has suffered such tremendous loss.”

“Our continuing partnership with The Conservation Fund, ESI and others plays a significant role in our conservation success throughout Louisiana and the Lower Mississippi Delta,” said Sam D. Hamilton, Southeast regional director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “The blending of our collective innovation and creativity along with strong industry partnerships is allowing us to accomplish a great deal toward our conservation goals as well as those of our partners.”

Over the course of the next year, the Go Zero program will raise donations to plant 350,000 native seedlings on 1,182 acres at Red River National Wildlife Refuge. The cypress, oak and hickory trees will remove an estimated 426,000 short tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere as they grow into a mature forest over the next 100 years. Once planted, the land and trees will be managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to ensure long-term protection and stewardship for the benefit of the American people.

The Conservation Fund’s Red River Restoration Initiative was validated by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) under its SCS Greenhouse Gas Verification Program.

“The Conservation Fund has made significant efforts to improve this region’s forests and wetlands, and we are pleased that our validation of the project gives it the credibility to move forward,” says Dr. Robert Hrubec, SCS senior vice president. “Our verification has confirmed that the Fund’s Red River project will meet and exceed the requirements of the CCB standard for Gold Level Validation.”

“In a time when public financing for land conservation and habitat restoration are at historic lows, Go Zero donors are providing new, private capital that is used to further conserve and restore our nation’s land and water legacy,” said The Conservation Fund’s Go Zero director, Jena Meredith. “CCB Gold Level Validation further ensures the nation derives—and will continue to receive for many years into the future—significant public benefits, including cleaner air, filtered water, restored sensitive wildlife habitat and enhanced areas for public recreation.”

The Conservation Fund’s Go Zero program works with a diverse group of partners to develop solutions to climate change and habitat loss. Go Zero supporters include leading companies such as Dell, Delta, Gaiam, Land Rover Portland, New Jersey Resources, The North Face, Philadelphia Eagles, Travelocity and U-Haul as well as thousands of individual donors across the globe.

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**The Conservation Fund** is dedicated to advancing America’s land and water legacy. With our partners, we conserve land, train leaders and invest in conservation at home. Since 1985, we have helped protect more than 6 million acres, sustaining wild havens, working lands and vibrant communities. We’re a top-ranked conservation organization, effective and efficient. <http://www.conservationfund.org>

**Environmental Synergy, Inc.** (ESI) provides project development and carbon monitoring services for carbon based forestry projects. In the past 10 years, ESI has planted over 24 million trees on 81,000 acres in the U.S., which are expected to remove approximately 26 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

[www.environmental-synergy.com](http://www.environmental-synergy.com)

**Scientific Certification Systems (SCS)** has been providing global leadership in third-party environmental and sustainability certification, auditing, testing and standards development for more than 25 years. SCS programs span a wide cross-section of industries, recognizing achievements in green building, product manufacturing, forestry, retail, agricultural production, fisheries and energy. The SCS Greenhouse Gas Verification Program provides verification of project-based emissions reductions, project design validation and pre-assessment analysis. SCS is accredited to ISO 14065 for GHG Validation and Verification by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and, under this accreditation, offers Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS) and Climate Action Reserve (CAR) offset verification services. SCS also offers offset verification services under the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX) and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) standards. Learn more at <http://www.SCScertified.com>.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Visit: <http://www.fws.gov> and <http://www.fws.gov/southeast>.