National Policy Options to Encourage Credible Ecosystem Service Markets

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Defenders of Wildlife
Credible ecosystem service markets

• Positive ecological outcomes at scale
• Integrated, not fragmented
• High ratio of conservation to administration
• Attractive to landowners and businesses
Sustainability principles

- Ecological impact
- Economic efficiency
- Social equity
Systemic problems

1. Lack of integrated goals for water, air, biodiversity
2. Federal statutes fragmented
3. Regulations uneven across resources
4. Poorly developed measurements for services
5. Chronic under-funding, especially private lands
Regional experiments authorized, funded by Congress

- Integrated conservation strategies (water, carbon, biodiversity)
- Public and private lands
- Market-based approaches
- Payments for services
- Third or all party monitoring of results
Re-tool incentive programs

• More outcome-based programs
• Invest strategically in priority areas
• Integrate with other conservation efforts
Prioritize natural infrastructure

- More funding for projects including natural infrastructure
- Technical support for state and local governments
- Additional points for softer engineering in grant programs
- Assistance in evaluating costs and tradeoffs
Coordinate investment in metric development

- Scattered, uneven investment in metrics not working
- Build framework based on clear outcomes and practicality
- Involve government, non-government, business, academic
- Assign oversight to single agency
Reward voluntary investment

• Incentives for companies, governments that invest in ecosystem services
• Regulatory assurances, improved efficiency
• Special recognition
• Tax benefits
Re-visit regulatory structure

• Restructure for more integrated approach
• Adopt new generation of mitigation programs
  – Strategic
  – Flexible
  – Integrated with landscape scale plans
• Government prioritizes investment in unregulated resources
Elevate ecosystem services in government

- Quantify ecosystem services on public lands
- Assign to neutral agency, provide funding
- Support agencies in transition
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