

# Conservation Carbon



Darkwoods Conservation Area, British Columbia (NCC)

## Harnessing the power of the carbon market to further conservation in Canada.

**The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) offers high-quality carbon offsets on the voluntary carbon market to businesses, governments and other organizations that are seeking to reduce their carbon footprint.**

In the global effort to address climate change, land conservation is gaining increasing recognition as a key factor in reducing greenhouse gas pollution. Forests, grasslands and wetlands are all vital carbon sinks, capturing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. By preventing deforestation and the conversion of grasslands and wetlands, conservation projects safeguard the ability of these natural lands to continue to sequester atmospheric carbon and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

NCC's Conservation Carbon program was developed to capitalize on the ecological goods and services that our conservation projects provide. Developing carbon offset projects allows us to generate much-needed financing to steward existing properties and conduct future conservation activities.

Participating in NCC's Conservation Carbon program demonstrates our clients' commitment to reducing their own greenhouse gas emissions and taking responsibility for the impact of their energy use on the planet. Because these credits are offered on the voluntary market, clients who purchase Darkwoods offsets are demonstrating their position as global leaders in the effort to fight climate change.

### United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

These global goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. NCC's Conservation Carbon program supports at least three of these international priorities.



(Bruce Kirkby)

# Counting trees to save the forest



(Bruce Kirkby)

## Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project

The Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project is an award-winning carbon credit initiative that was created to support the conservation and stewardship of a globally significant tract of forest in southeastern British Columbia. Offsets generated from the Darkwoods Conservation Area are sold through the voluntary carbon market to businesses, governments and other agencies that want to offset their carbon footprint.

The Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project creates climate, community and biodiversity benefits through the permanent conservation of 55,000 hectares (136,000 acres) of private forestry land for ecological conservation purposes. The conservation of this landscape has prevented the release of stored carbon within the forest that would have occurred if extensive clearcut harvesting had taken place.

As a large-scale managed conservation area, Darkwoods retains and sequesters significant carbon stocks in its rich stores of inland temperate rainforest. The project area provides net ecosystem services benefits (e.g. emissions reductions, water quality, etc.) and key ecological benefits for biodiversity. This includes significant protection and enhancements of niche habitats and fully-functioning ecosystems, which provide essential support for dozens of threatened and endangered species.

NCC's management on Darkwoods includes forest stewardship and protection activities, various scientific and biodiversity initiatives, recreational use and other non-consumptive activities that support the community, biodiversity and climate goals of the project.



(Steve Dale)

## Improved Forest Management

The Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project is an “Improved Forest Management” project. As a result of NCC's conservation purchase and management of the property, the project creates greenhouse gas reductions and removals through the avoidance of emissions due to timber harvesting,

The project's 100-year permanence protection ensures the longevity of its carbon credits—or Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)—which is backstopped by a buffer pool, as well as ongoing verification of additional VCUs.

The Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project was developed by a team of carbon experts who have been involved in the carbon and climate change industry for many years. This ensures that the carbon credits generated by the Darkwoods project will not only offset greenhouse gas emissions, but will provide critically important co-benefits for the planet.



## Global relevance, global leadership

The Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project is validated and verified under the international Verified Carbon Standard (VCS). Offsets are issued by VCS as Verified Carbon Units (VCUs). These VCUs are recognized for their many co-benefits under the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) standard.

The Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project is VCS's largest North American carbon project. The co-benefits it brings include the protection of old-growth inland temperate rainforest and critically-important watersheds, as well as the conservation of habitat for many rare or threatened species.

The ecosystem services provided by the Darkwoods landscape, such as water filtration and air purification, contribute to the well-being of many local communities. The enormous stores of carbon held within the landscape contribute meaningfully to Canada's role in addressing climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

Our clients are today's climate leaders. They are looking for carbon credits that bring valuable co-benefits along with the direct carbon offsets. Because of the enormous co-benefits that Darkwoods offers, this project has attracted buyers from around the world, including international companies such as Microsoft, UPS and other global leaders. We are also supported by our local communities, such as the Village of New Denver.

## Current stock

The Nature Conservancy of Canada works through the IHS Markit Registry to make our conservation carbon credits available to purchasers around the world.

Darkwoods is expected to generate approximately 12 million credits over the 100-year life of the project. Since going to market in 2011, we have sold approximately 1 million VCUs.

Year	Available VCUs
2010–2016	>1,000,000
2017–2018	Verification pending in 2019
2019–2110	Will be verified in future

## Internationally-Certified & Award-Winning Project



The Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project is certified under the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), the leading international voluntary forest carbon standard. Darkwoods is the largest VCS-validated forest carbon project in North America.



The Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project has been validated under the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance, receiving Gold Level certification for Exceptional Biodiversity Benefits.



The Darkwoods Forest Carbon project was awarded a Non-Profit Sector Land Award by the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia for leadership, innovation and collaboration in sustainable land use and conservation.

## CO-BENEFITS: THE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES OF DARKWOODS

Darkwoods harbours a wide variety of habitats. Ranging from old-growth forests to alpine tundra, and from tumbling creeks to the deep, cold waters of Kootenay Lake, an abundance of plants and animals live here. This is a living landscape and NCC is committed to managing these lands so that the many natural systems of this landscape are maintained, restored and even enhanced.



### Freshwater

Water is the fundamental element to life, and Darkwoods abounds with freshwater. Creeks and streams carve their way through the property's deep valleys. Over 140 lakes, most of them alpine, are found within the Darkwoods boundary. The internationally renowned wetlands of the Creston Valley touch Darkwoods's southern limits, and the cold waters of Kootenay Lake abut its eastern shores.

Seventeen watersheds wholly or partially flow through Darkwoods. These freshwater systems not only provide sustenance to the forests and animals in the South Selkirks, they also purify the water being used by nearby communities.

NCC is committed to ensuring that the freshwater resources on Darkwoods are managed to provide the greatest benefit for the species and communities that depend on them.



### Snowforests

Most rainforests occur on the coast, but in the interior of British Columbia an incredibly diverse and unusually wet forest region has evolved. Stretching from Prince George south into Idaho, these forests are sometimes called "snowforests" because they receive most of their moisture from snow.

Supporting at least 17 different species of trees, the inland temperate rainforest region ranges from valleys of towering cedar and hemlock to sub-alpine forests of spruce, fir and endangered whitebark pine.

These highly productive forests shelter grizzly bear, wolf, wolverine and deer. They provide essential habitat for endangered mountain caribou.

With almost 70% of its total area covered in forest, Darkwoods represents a significant tract of one of the world's only inland temperate rainforests.



### Species at Risk

Darkwoods supports at least 50 plant and animal species that are at risk of disappearing from this area. Protecting large, connected landscapes is crucial in the effort to save these species from further decline or even extinction.

Grizzly bear, wolverine, mountain caribou, bull trout, western skink and western screech owl are just some of the animals that rely on Darkwoods for their ongoing survival. As a result of habitat restoration and recovery programs here and on adjacent lands, the South Selkirk grizzly bear population is showing excellent signs of recovery.

By carefully managing access into Darkwoods, as well as undertaking strategic restoration activities in previously impacted areas of the conservation area, NCC is supporting the recovery of a number of at risk species found on these lands.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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