

## **National coalition announces forward-looking federal policy agenda for conservation and environmental justice**

(February 12, 2024) A historically broad and diverse coalition of hundreds of organizations is announcing the release of a unified and ambitious [2024 national policy agenda](#) aimed at conserving 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030. The America the Beautiful For All Coalition (ATB4All) comprises people representing hundreds of organizations, missions, cultures, and identities. The Coalition developed the 2024 Policy Agenda to achieve the most ambitious conservation goal of the century.

The ATB4All Coalition views the loss of nature as a global and national threat with potentially devastating impacts on communities nationwide. According to their research, if past trends continue, the United States can expect to lose an additional 15.3 million acres of nature over the next 10 years. Currently, 34 percent of plants and 40 percent of animals are at risk of extinction, and 41 percent of ecosystems are at risk of collapse. Nature disparities add to racial injustices, too: 74 percent of communities of color in the contiguous United States live in nature-deprived areas, compared with just 23 percent of white communities. The impacts of these trends disproportionately harm communities of color and communities on the frontlines of the nature-loss and climate change crises.

“The climate crisis exacerbates environmental injustice in communities nationwide and beyond. It is imperative that we do not overlook the social determinants of health with any proposed solutions,” said Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, Co-chair of ATB4All & Executive Director, Children’s Environmental Health Network. “Disruptions in food access, daily routines, increased health risks, displacement of families, and their exposure to harmful pollution are all too common. To combat these serious challenges, our policy agenda prioritizes climate justice, and equitable access to natural spaces and integrates conservation efforts with the critical principles of environmental justice and public health protections. This approach is part of key climate mitigation strategies and a step towards a healthier, more just society.”

This Policy Agenda emphasizes public health and justice-oriented priorities for conserving the ocean, freshwater, public land, wildlife, and urban parks and green space. The Agenda is the Coalition’s central tool for collective action as we move the Biden Administration and Congress to meet the twin goals of conservation and environmental justice.

“By uniting this diverse group of organizations and stakeholders to tackle the most ambitious conservation goal in our nation’s history, we are ensuring that we live in a future where access to nature is equitable, and conservation efforts are guided by justice,” said Mark Magaña, ATB4ALL Co-Chair and Founder & CEO of GreenLatinos. Mark continues, “At the heart of this policy agenda, our goal is that those communities closest to the problem are driving the solutions. Our network of environmental and conservation champions is uniquely capable of addressing the

continued devastating impacts of the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and inequitable access to nature for our people.”

The 2024 Policy Agenda includes a *progress report* on action, risks, and backsliding on 2023 Policy Agenda priorities. It highlights:

- More than \$141 million America the Beautiful Challenge Grants in 2023 with 40% of funds going to Tribal communities.
- Extremist attacks on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) continue in pursuit of so-called "permitting form" and the guise of supporting renewable energy. These are diversion tactics meant to weaken the environmental bill of rights for communities.
- The waiving of critical environmental laws like the Endangered Species Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Clean Air Act in the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge (TX) border wall expansion.
- Ensuring marine protected area management and implementation.
- Enacting a Bureau of Land Management Rulemaking to modernize 245 million acres of public lands management.
- Expanding access to existing open space through community use agreements.
- A host of new and expanded priorities, including bolstering the Farm Bill, increasing access to conservation funding for native communities, restoring natural river systems, establishing a national biodiversity strategy, and other steps.

For more information about ATB4All and the 2024 policy agenda, please contact [tony\\_iallonardo@tws.org](mailto:tony_iallonardo@tws.org) on behalf of the coalition. Read more at our [website](#).

### **About Us:**

The America the Beautiful for All Coalition consists of 150 organizations working collectively to thwart the rapidly advancing impacts of climate change; stem the loss of biodiversity; increase more equitable access to nature’s benefits; and ensure at least 40 percent of conservation spending occurs in communities of color and frontline communities that have historically seen little to no conservation investments. Member organizations range in focus from urban parks and green space, Indigenous rights, public lands protection, public health, wildlife, outdoor recreation and freshwater and ocean conservation — all representative of identities and issue areas that have traditionally been underrepresented in conservation decision-making in the United States.

Read the full 2024 policy agenda [here](#).