



The aftermath of the 2021 Alameda fire in southern Oregon. Climate change is fueling increasingly destructive wildfires.

CODE RED

THE TIME FOR URGENT CLIMATE ACTION IS NOW.
HERE'S HOW TO MAKE YOUR COMPANY A FORCE FOR GOOD.



You're concerned about climate change. You recycle and bike to work. Maybe you've even bought an electric car. That's great. But here's the thing: It's still not enough.

If we don't act more aggressively *right now*, you can forget about shorter ski seasons and start worrying about the extinction of humankind. It's that bad. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres calls it a "code red" moment for humanity.

But we can keep this planet livable. The world's top scientists tell us that by swiftly phasing out fossil fuels and other sources of emissions, we can stabilize temperatures by 2050.

That means every person, country, and brand must make real changes. "Every business emits some greenhouse gases and will have to reduce them," says Bruce Usher, codirector of Columbia University's Tamer Center for Social Enterprise. If we don't? Then the climate heats up by **2°C or more***, and life on Earth becomes a disaster movie. Your kids will live to see this happen. You very well could, too.

Of course, one single business can't slow the climate crisis. But action begets action. "It helps drive your peers if you, as a single company, achieve reductions in your value chain emissions," says Richard Heede, cofounder of the Climate Accountability Institute. And there's a silver lining: Increasingly, consumers are rewarding brands that take action.

This special report is designed to help you make real change. Three outdoor businesses feeling the impacts of climate change offer a peek into the future on page 68. We cover why buying carbon offsets isn't going to cut it on page 74, and we spotlight climate justice issues on pages 76 and 78. And crucially, on page 70, we outline 11 steps to take now to achieve a net-zero business by 2050.

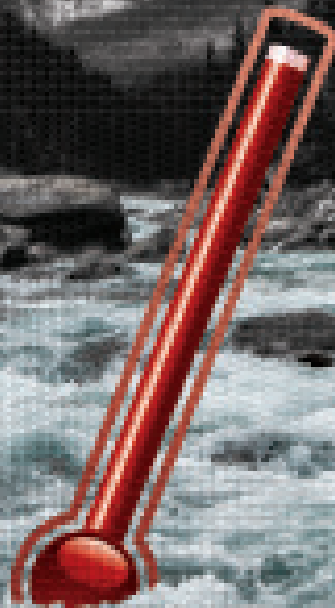
The clock is ticking. Let's get to work.

🔥 *1.5°C

– The upper limit of warming (above pre-industrial temperatures) the Earth can sustain before severe disruption to global systems. The planet has already warmed 1.1°C.



CODE RED



IT'S ALREADY HERE

SHUTTERED DOORS, DISTRIBUTION DELAYS, AND LOST REVENUE: FOR MANY OUTDOOR BUSINESSES, CLIMATE CHANGE IS ALREADY WREAKING HAVOC.

BY CHRISTINE PETERSON

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, Al Gore sounded the alarm about climate change, warning about melting ice caps, droughts, and rising sea levels. Some of us were seeing these changes firsthand in Alaska and other remote locations, but for most Americans the impacts of the crisis seemed awfully abstract.

Until now. According to *The Washington Post*, one in three Americans lived through a weather disaster in 2021. And the rise of megafires, superstorms, atmospheric rivers, and bomb cyclones is not just disrupting our summer adventures and ski seasons; it's also presenting very serious challenges to our shops, supply chains, trail crews, and business futures.

Here are three outdoor companies facing these issues head on.

[FLOOD] Shuttered in the Dark

It took 12 days to reopen Massey's Outfitters in New Orleans after Hurricane Ida smacked Louisiana with 150-mph winds and rain last summer.

That meant 12 days during which owner Bobby Johnson and others worked in the dark, cleaning up water that ran through a damaged roof and waiting for the internet and power to be restored. It was 12 days during which he had to turn away customers who needed generators, water filters, and other survival goods. Without power and internet, he says, the store just couldn't operate.

Johnson's father-in-law started Massey's Outfitters in 1972, and

he and his brother-in-law, Mike Massey, now own and operate three locations in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Covington, Louisiana. They know the realities of owning businesses in a hurricane-prone region. But the old stormproofing methods are becoming insufficient as climate change fuels longer and longer hurricane seasons with ever-stronger storms. “When I started in ’93, we would have a storm scare every couple of years,” he says. “Now it’s a storm scare every year.”

And the setbacks keep getting worse. In addition to closing the New Orleans store for 12 days, Hurricane Ida shut the Baton Rouge store for three days and the Covington one for six. Johnson figures it cost his business \$140,000 in lost sales—during a month that’s lean already.

“It’s frustrating,” he says. “And as a business owner, I worry about the staff and what they’re going through.”

The company’s operations staff was flung to hotels throughout the region during Ida, some working with spotty internet and cell service for three weeks. Many employees now worry every year about losing their homes or cars to the next monster storm.

Johnson is evolving. His stores established two more backup internet systems, and he’s looking into additional generators. He’s also stocking more disaster supplies. He sold almost \$20,000 worth of solar panels and GoalZero power stations in the days before Ida. “Find me a rechargeable fan, because I could have sold 150 of them,” he says.

But the silver linings, he notes, don’t outweigh the costs. “Any hurricane could cause our business to be wiped off the map,” he says. “But the biggest worries are all the stuff that will keep us from being open and the additional costs after the storm—everything you have to do that isn’t normal.”

[FIRE] Smoked Out

During the worst of the summer 2021 smoke season, the air quality index outdoors in Reno, Nevada, measured 400, well above the “hazardous” threshold of 300. Indoors, it surpassed 200: officially unsafe for working conditions.

As smoke rolled in from California’s Dixie and Caldor megafires, Patagonia’s major distribution center sent home hundreds of employees to protect them from the “stagnant, smoke-laden place,” says Chris Joyce, Patagonia’s head of distribution, logistics, people, and sustainability. Even public schools closed.

“Twenty-five years ago, when this building was built, it relied on the idea that you’d have nice, cold, clean mountain air to draw in at night in order to cool the building,” Joyce says. “We kept our energy usage low by not having air conditioning units to try to cool a 300,000-square-foot space. But that meant for the entire summer, we no longer could bring cool, clean air into the building.” Last summer was the center’s worst yet. Smoke season lasted 12 weeks in 2021 (up from six weeks in 2020), forcing the building to close for two full days and three partial days.

Patagonia took a bottom-line hit not only in employee wages for those days (paid out in full), but also in buying pallets of portable air-filtration systems for employees to take home at half price. The company noted losses from shipping delays to e-commerce and wholesalers: “Millions of dollars sitting on the dock,” Joyce says.

Joyce is working through how much it will cost to retrofit some kind of energy-efficient cooling system into the main warehouse.

Early estimates come in around \$2 million, and that doesn’t include the other nearly 500,000 square feet of warehouse buildings the company has in Reno.

Moving elsewhere seems futile. “Because this is climate change, there’s nowhere in the West that isn’t being impacted by smoke or fires more and more heavily each year,” he says. The brand has felt the impact before: In 2017, when Patagonia’s leadership team waged war on the Trump administration’s decision to shrink Bears Ears National Monument, they worked from hotel rooms spread out across Southern California after being displaced from their main campus by the 281,000-acre Thomas wildfire.

Patagonia has spoken out about public lands and climate change issues for years. And every year, it gets more and more personal.

[HEAT] In Hot Water

Hilary Hutcheson saw climate change coming. When she started guiding anglers on rivers in Northern Montana in the 1990s, climate scientists were already warning of what would come.

“They correctly predicted earlier snowmelt, which would make trees grow sooner and soak up the water that we’d need come August,” she says. “We’re seeing unprecedented warming on classic trout streams, which leads to undue stress on fish, plus hybridization of native and non-native species that threaten ecosystem stability, wacky runoffs that can strip native trout beds, dried-up riverbeds, increased nutrient loads, and epic wildfires that wipe out habitat and erase shade.” For a fly-fishing guide and the owner of a fly shop (Lary’s Fly and Supply in Columbia Falls, Montana), that means working in a fundamentally different place from what she’s known since childhood.

Fly-fishing has seen a resurgence since the pandemic, so business is good right now. But Hutcheson knows it likely won’t last. “I’m aware we can have good seasons,” she says, “but the overall impact of climate change is not something we can recover from in the long run if we let it continue to do what it’s doing right now.”

In 2018, a fire ripped through Glacier National Park, forcing Hutcheson off the river for nine days. Similarly, she’s heard from other fly-fishing outfitters that they experience a dramatic drop in business during bad fire seasons.

Already, many rivers face longer “hoot owl” restrictions, meaning anglers must stop fishing by 2 p.m. because hot water stresses fish (and angling makes it worse). Some rivers have closed completely, putting more pressure on other waterways. “And when we have wildfires, we get some cancellations because clients don’t want to breathe the smoke and they can’t see the mountain views,” she says. “For me, I don’t care about making money. I care about the people and the planet and the anglers coming. It is going to wreck the fishery overall.”

Hutcheson is using the opportunity to talk to clients about climate change and how they can make a difference. Her fly shop is carbon neutral: She’s reduced energy use from appliances and changed supply chain shipping patterns, and she buys carbon offsets. She recently produced a short film called *DROP* about the impacts of climate change and possible solutions.

“We’re focused on selling trips and fly rods, but our success gets the attention of policy makers who recognize the economic importance of the outdoor community,” she says. “So I hope we keep reminding them that we’re powerful and growing.” 🔥

THE ROAD TO NETZERO

HALTING CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIRES COMPANIES TO START SLASHING THEIR CARBON EMISSIONS NOW. HERE'S HOW TO GET ON THE PATH TO A COOLER FUTURE. BY LISA PALMER & ELISABETH KWAK-HEFFERAN

The science is clear: We must get to net zero by 2050. It's a big objective—truly, a mission—requiring ambitious action starting right now. But taking a stand on climate doesn't have to be a budget buster; in fact, leading outdoor businesses see it as a path to assuring long-term sustainability. What's more, the global transition to clean energy is already underway, and brands that aren't evolving risk getting left behind. "The sooner you get started on it," says Bruce Usher, codirector of Columbia University's Tamer Center for Social Enterprise, "the more

likely you can do it at a lower cost and more intelligently, and come up with the best practices for your business."

How, exactly, do you start? We put together the strategies that will have the greatest impact on your company's carbon footprint, from leaning on factories to produce your gear with renewable energy to upgrading appliances at HQ. Some steps are entirely within your control. Others require collaborating with industry partners and using your economic influence. Do that, and your business can make significant strides right now.

1. MEASURE UP

THE FIRST STEP in any net-zero plan is taking an inventory of your business's carbon footprint—a process divided into three levels, or scopes. The first one is fairly easy: Look at the direct emissions that occur from sources that you own or can control—known as Scope 1.

The next step is examining indirect emissions, which don't occur at your facility, but are part of your energy footprint nonetheless. This is Scope 2.

Scope 3, which covers emissions from your supply chain and product use, is the trickiest—and most important. Whether you make tents, water bottles, or wool socks, Scope 3 likely accounts for 65 to 80 percent of your company's total carbon footprint.

SCOPE 1

- COMPANY VEHICLES
- BOILERS & FURNACES IN HEADQUARTERS, RETAIL STORES & WAREHOUSES
- ON-SITE EQUIPMENT



SCOPE 2

- ELECTRICITY USED FOR LIGHTS, HEAT & COOLING ON SITE



SCOPE 3

- FACTORY EMISSIONS
- RAW MATERIAL EXTRACTION
- SHIPPING GOODS
- MANUFACTURING WASTE
- EMPLOYEE COMMUTING
- BUSINESS TRAVEL
- EMISSIONS FROM CUSTOMERS TRAVELING TO STORE
- PURCHASED GOODS & SERVICES
- INVESTMENTS
- PRODUCT END-OF-LIFE



Jeannie Renne-Malone, vice president for sustainability at VF Corporation, and her team have found that raw material extraction, processing, and manufacturing account for the majority of the company's climate impacts; VF Corp's direct operations only account for 1 percent of total emissions across their inventory. "So now we know to put the majority of our emphasis on raw materials and factory operations," Renne-Malone says. That includes a vision to source 100 percent of their company's top nine materials from regenerative, responsibly sourced, renewable, or recycled sources by 2030.

So how do you figure out your company's total emissions? Bring in the experts. The nonprofit Climate Neutral has so far helped 337 brands measure (as well as reduce and offset) their carbon emissions. REI's director of sustainability, Matthew Thurston, says the co-op joined Climate Neutral because the nonprofit brought a high level of methodology and standardization to the process. Another option is Cooler, the company that Outside Inc. selected to measure and neutralize the footprint of OBJ and the other brands in its portfolio. Cooler uses peer-reviewed calculators to help businesses figure out their total climate impacts, and its software enables brands to display product footprints and carbon reduction data at checkout (see page 75).

2. COMMIT

YOUR NEXT STEP is committing your company to **science-based targets*** for reductions. But making a lofty promise isn't enough—you need interim goals to keep everyone accountable. "By not setting interim targets, many companies fall short of the climate ambition needed," says Amy Morse of the Environmental Defense Fund. "They're just setting a distant goal of net zero by 2050 without having a robust near-term action plan." A meaningful pledge must include:

INTERIM GOALS

SUCH AS CUTTING EMISSIONS BY A CERTAIN AMOUNT EACH YEAR AND BY 50 PERCENT BY 2030

CONCRETE PLANS

FOR NEAR- AND LONG-TERM REDUCTIONS IN SPECIFIC SEGMENTS OF YOUR BUSINESS

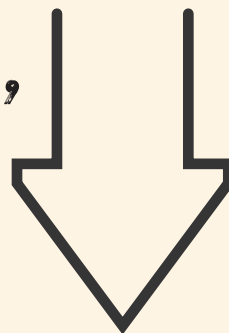
TRANSPARENCY

THROUGH PUBLIC PROGRESS REPORTS THAT CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND SHARE VALUABLE FINDINGS

***SCIENCE-BASED TARGETS**

– Greenhouse gas-reduction goals that are in line with the latest climate science. They require cutting emissions in half by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Science-Based Targets initiative helps businesses make meaningful commitments.

3. REDUCE, REDUCE, REDUCE



ONCE YOU'VE FIGURED OUT your company's emissions, it's time to slash them as aggressively as possible. Your plan of action will depend partially on what you're selling, but these measures are both significant and entirely under your control.

- » **SWITCH YOUR COMPANY FLEET TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES.**
- » **MOVE TO 100-PERCENT RENEWABLE ENERGY.**
CONSIDER DIRECT SOLAR AND WIND INSTALLATIONS IN ALL BUILDINGS AND/OR POWER-PURCHASE AGREEMENTS WITH UTILITIES.
- » **MAKE YOUR BUILDINGS AS ENERGY EFFICIENT AS POSSIBLE.**
TAKE STEPS LIKE INSTALLING LED LIGHTS AND EFFICIENT APPLIANCES.
- » **COMMIT TO ZERO WASTE.**
ENHANCE YOUR RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING PROGRAMS.
- » **SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYEE COMMUTING.**
PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR BIKING AND USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, AND/OR EXPAND WORK-FROM-HOME POLICIES.

4. EMBRACE BETTER DESIGN

CHANGING THE WAY YOU DESIGN your products can make a big difference in your brand's overall carbon footprint—and you can start today.

USE THE MOST SUSTAINABLE RAW MATERIALS POSSIBLE. "If you can use the recycled equivalent of raw materials—nylon, polyester, aluminum—that can take out a big chunk of emissions," says Michael Sadowski, a research consultant at the World Resources Institute (WRI) and for Outdoor Industry Association's Climate Action Corps. Beyond recycled, look for biobased and regenerative material substitutions. Though some ingredients may cost more initially, a recent WRI report notes that greater demand will increase production and drive down prices.

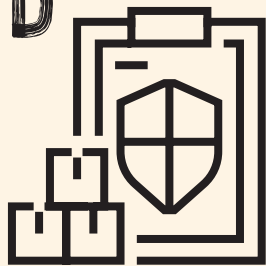
SUPPORT THE R&D OF INNOVATIVE GREEN MATERIALS, like mushroom-based leather (as adidas is doing with Bolt Threads) or fabric made from recaptured waste-carbon emissions (a project lululemon and LanzaTech have partnered up on).

REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR TEXTILE DYEING AND FINISHING. Many textile mills rely on coal-powered boilers to produce the heat necessary for fabric processing, but "there are plenty of design things you can do [to reduce emissions]," Sadowski says, including waterless dyeing, no dyeing at all, and minimal finishes.

ELIMINATE SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PACKAGING IN FAVOR OF GREENER ALTERNATIVES like reusable bags and compostable wrappings (see p. 28).



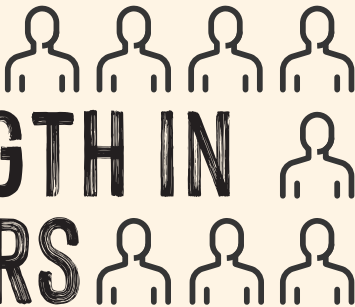
5. MAKE LESS, AND MAKE IT LAST



“ULTIMATELY, EVEN IF WE REDUCE EMISSIONS, we’re still creating impacts,” says WRI’s Sadowski. “So we have to make less stuff in the beginning, and figure out a way to keep goods in life for longer. If you can make one jacket that lasts for 10 years versus making 10 jackets that last for one each, you’re going to dramatically reduce the impact of that jacket.”

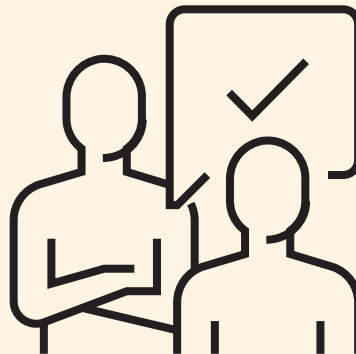
Yes, your CFO will immediately recoil at this idea. But conscientious consumers will pay more for higher-quality, lower-impact gear. And many brands are taking the climate crisis as a challenge to diversify their businesses. Some are streamlining their designs and operations to reduce costs (and carbon). Others are setting up rental programs, adding repair services, and adding used-gear sales to create new revenue streams (see p. 62).

7. FIND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



AND WHAT IF MANUFACTURING PARTNERS DON’T AGREE TO SWITCH? “If you’re a large brand and have a good portion of a facility’s production, you can go to the factory and say, ‘This is what we’d like,’” Sadowski says. Smaller brands with fewer orders don’t have that leverage. “That’s where multibrand collaboration becomes really important.”

OIA’s two-year-old Climate Action Corps is working on just that kind of joint effort. Led by Amy Horton, senior director of sustainable business innovation, the initiative brings together brands to investigate the scaling of lower-carbon materials like recycled nylon within the industry’s supply chain; get more accurate carbon footprint data; and push factories to embrace renewable energy.



6. PUSH YOUR PARTNERS

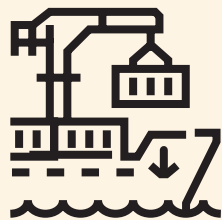
THE MORE AMBITIOUS OUTDOOR BUSINESSES ARE in their climate goals, the stronger the message they’ll send to manufacturers, materials producers, shipping partners, and providers of renewable energy: Business customers want zero-carbon options and expect the industry to rapidly accelerate its decarbonization efforts. Why is this so important? Because the number-one source of emissions for most manufacturers is the energy used to power the factories where our gear and apparel are made.

This transition won’t be easy. Most manufacturing happens overseas, and therefore depends on each country’s supply of renewable energy. “You want to go to your manufacturer and work with them to install rooftop solar,” Sadowski says. “Historically, that’s a challenge because brands haven’t necessarily paid for it. But if we want to green the supply chain, we have to make investments.”

The Clean Energy Investment Accelerator (CEIA), a public-private partnership, can help by turning company funds and purchase commitments into new renewable-energy projects. REI is now working with the CEIA on the clean-energy transition in Vietnam and Indonesia. “We think there’s a substantial opportunity to expand renewable energy access in those countries,” REI’s Thurston says, “and we want to make sure it’s clear that part of the value proposition for us working in the countries is that they are going to be progressing toward fully sustainable or fully renewable energy.”

THEREIN LIES THE STICK, as opposed to the carrot: Let manufacturing partners know your business depends on their decarbonization.

8. SHIP GREENER



HOW PRODUCTS TRAVEL FROM FACTORIES TO YOUR STORES and warehouses is a big source of Scope 3 emissions. Currently, annual maritime container shipping emits as much carbon as the entire national output of Germany—but cleaner fuels exist. The Aspen Institute's Cargo Owners for Zero Emissions Vessels coalition brings together companies to push for decarbonization in their shipping partners. Members—including Patagonia, Brooks Running, and Frog Bikes—commit to ship only with vessels powered by zero-carbon fuels by 2040.

9. SPEAK UP

NICK SARGENT, PRESIDENT OF SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRIES AMERICA, says that advocating for strong climate policies is the most important thing the outdoor industry should be doing. "It's great that our industry is reducing its own corporate emissions, but frankly, we're not going to solve climate change if that's all we do," he says. "It's vitally important that we use our voice to drive systemic change as part of a much broader climate strategy." That means making noise in Congress to support climate-smart legislation, like the renewable energy and electric vehicle provisions in the recent infrastructure bill, and donating to candidates who support strong action.

Money talks beyond Capitol Hill, too. Banks compete for big corporate accounts: By choosing to bank with institutions that don't invest in fossil fuel development, companies can use their financial leverage to reduce emissions. "As businesses move funds away from the banks funding fossil fuel projects, executives, boards, and stockholders will begin to see financing fossil fuel projects as a liability to their bottom line," says Mario Molina, executive director of Protect Our Winters.

11. BE FEARLESS

AT THE END OF THE DAY, says Sadowski, what we need most is courageous and visionary leadership. "It takes bold leaders at companies to just put stakes in the ground and say, 'This may cost us more, but we're going to do this because it's the right thing to do, and the economics will catch up.'"



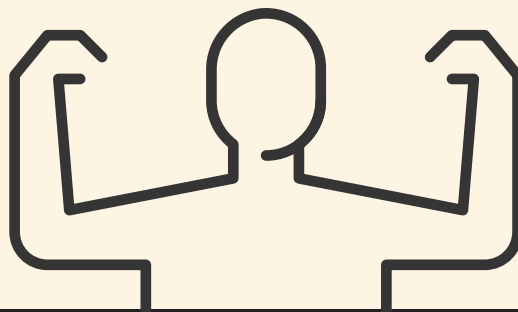
*IPCC REPORTS

– Periodic warnings about the accelerating risks of the climate crisis from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

10. NOW, FORGET CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

WE'VE BEEN HAMMERING the importance of climate neutrality for pages now, and the latest **IPCC report*** tells us to cut emissions in half by 2030 and be net zero by 2050. But let's do one better. OIA's Climate Action Corps has chosen more ambitious targets by focusing on a "climate positive" goal, Horton says. That means that companies shouldn't just cut emissions—they should actively seek ways to remove more carbon from the atmosphere than they emit. "We need to ratchet down the timeline much earlier for this industry," Horton says.

The Corps seeks to get the entire outdoor industry to climate positive by 2030. A key part of that goal is investing in projects that use nature to sequester carbon (which, incidentally, may have dual benefits for recreation through better water quality and wildlife habitat). Examples: forest regeneration, soil carbon sequestration, regenerative agriculture.



CODE RED

THE PROBLEM WITH OFFSETS

NOT EVERY CARBON CREDIT IS CREATED EQUAL.

BY NANCY AVERETT

PHOTO BY KHANH BUI/MOMENT VIA GETTY IMAGES

*COP26 GOALS

– Emissions reduction targets set at the most recent Conference of Parties (COP) convention in Glasgow, Scotland, in 2021. (COP events are global meetings run by the United Nations to address climate change.) At COP26, nations pledged to limit warming to 1.5°C.

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Simply planting trees won't solve the climate crisis.

CHRISTIAN RAWLES, CO-OWNER OF THE OUTDOOR APPAREL COMPANY AMBLER, is doing many of the things that a company executive who cares about fighting climate change should do. He's eliminated wasteful packaging, uses a courier with electric vehicles, and shares a warehouse with other brands to reduce emissions.

And when customers purchase one of Ambler's products, they'll find a tag that says the company has been certified by Climate Neutral, a nonprofit that works with brands to measure and offset their carbon footprints.

But what does "offset" really mean? At a basic level, an offset is a reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions that a company or consumer pays for to compensate for the carbon dioxide equivalent produced during the manufacturing and distribution process. When Rawles works with Climate Neutral, he's buying carbon credits that the nonprofit has carefully vetted and selected to fund forest conservation, hydropower, and other projects. Ambler is still generating emissions—his hand-knit beanies come from the Himalaya, which means transportation is a major impact—so Climate Neutral provides enough credits to remove a quantity of greenhouse gases equal to his products' footprint.

Not all offsets on the market get a careful vetting, though, and some are much better than others. So while the purchase of offsets is a popular way for companies to lower their impact, your business should do some homework before jumping on the bandwagon.

One key problem is that some projects aren't actually sequestering carbon to the extent the sellers claim. "[Offsets] are controversial, in terms of what should and shouldn't be counted, and if people are really doing what they say they're going to do with your money," says Lisa Ellram, a professor of supply chain management at Miami University of Ohio who studies business sustainability.

For instance, nearly 30 percent of offsets sold through California's forest carbon offset program did not result in real climate benefits, according to a recent analysis by the nonprofit CarbonPlan. And hundreds of thousands of acres of trees that were planted and sold as offsets burned up in California and Oregon's 2021 wildfires.

Both instances illustrate a concern that climate experts raise about permanency: A quality offset must result in a permanent reduction of greenhouse gases. Put simply: If you plant a tree, it will sequester carbon. But if it burns 10 years later, those gases will be released back into the atmosphere.

Another concern is a concept called additionality. Experts say offset investments must be the catalyst for something that wasn't going to happen anyway. For example, if a landowner was already planning to install windmills, he can't turn around and sell offsets to pay for it. (There are other tripwires with offsets, including biodiversity and concerns that some projects benefit certain communities and harm others.)

Climate Neutral addresses those concerns, according to CEO Austin Whitman, with an annual third-party review and verification of the projects it funds. Such verification is important for consumer trust, and it may soon be a necessary investment for many businesses in this industry. Earlier this year, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission announced that it will propose a rule requiring publicly traded companies to begin making climate disclosures.


Michel Gelobter, CEO of Cooler, provides a different path to credible carbon neutrality. (Full disclosure: OBJ and our parent company, Outside Inc., use Cooler's services to eliminate our own footprint. See p. 10.) Gelobter's company helps its partners purchase carbon permits from regulated markets in states or regions where emissions are capped by law, such as California. Cooler attends the quarterly auctions where the permits are sold, competing directly with industrial polluters for the finite supply of permits.

"WE ARE NEVER GOING TO MAKE THE COP26 GOALS UNLESS WE START POLLUTING LESS."

—LISA ELLRAM, MIAMI UNIVERSITY OF OHIO

Cooler retires the permits it buys, thereby preventing polluters from using them, reducing emissions permanently, and driving up the cost of being a polluter. Bonus: The money collected from permit purchases is reinvested in renewable energy development and support for energy bills in low-income communities.

Carefully selected offsets can be a powerful tool for climate action, but experts say that what's most important is acting to *reduce* emissions. "We are never going to make the COP26 goal* unless we start polluting less," Ellram says, emphasizing that purchasing offsets should be a step taken only after brand officials do everything possible to cut emissions.

Experts recommend starting with direct emissions—installing renewables at HQ, purchasing electric vehicles, and minimizing employee commuting. Then consider emissions created by suppliers and partners. Many companies will find that in the current global system, using today's technology, they can't eliminate every kilo of carbon. So, yes, offset what you can't immediately cut—but remember that offsets aren't an excuse to continue business as usual. 



PERSPECTIVE

ALL DUE RESPECT

OFFENSIVE NAMES AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS ARE BOTH SYMPTOMS OF A MUCH DEEPER PROBLEM: OUR COLLECTIVE DISCONNECTION FROM THE NATURAL WORLD.

BY JENNI MONET

LAST FALL, TWO POPULAR SKI RESORTS ANNOUNCED name changes after decades of demands made by Indigenous women and their communities. The legendary Squaw Valley Ski Resort in California unveiled its rebranding in August, followed by Maine's Big Squaw Mountain Ski Resort in December.

The changes followed an overdue recognition among corporate and outdoor industry leaders about the deep links that exist between racism and the environment, including the climate crisis. The word *squaw*, a slur toward Native American women, is merely one example. Today, more than 1,000 offensive place names dot the nation's public lands. They are emblems of the deeper historical and present-day inequities that people of color, including Indigenous people like me, have long faced: exclusion from the greater climate movement, sanitized versions of land theft, and the fact that we suffer disproportionate exposure to environmental health hazards, from risky oil pipelines to abandoned uranium mines.

Prioritizing what's in a name may seem trivial amid the greater goals of reducing emissions and advancing sustainability. But when we identify the climate crisis as one caused by a continuous breakdown of our relationships to the natural world—our kinship connection to life itself—correcting this crisis begins with reexamining the respect we have for the land, and ultimately, for each other.

Drawing from Indigenous ways of knowing, “kin theory” embraces not just our human relationships, but the interwoven bonds we keep with the earth, including how we name and regard the land. The Wāšiw (Washoe) Tribe of Nevada, who consider Tahoe the center of their world, emphasized kin theory in its advocacy about Squaw Valley. And ultimately, it was this thinking that got through to resort executives to change the name to Palisades Tahoe.

But there is much more work to do, and America's recreation industry plays an outsize role in responding to the wellness of our planet, beginning with repairing its entire relationship to the land and its original stewards.

“Racism, like other concerning issues such as climate change, pandemics, violence, insurrection, mental illness, and addiction,

is a symptom,” said the late Sagkeeng First Nations Elder Dr. Dave Courchene, referring to our broken kinship practices. And yes, fixing these essential relationships begins with changing names.

In November, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, a tribal citizen of Laguna Pueblo, ordered the renaming of more than 650 federal land units bearing the word “squaw” because of its disparaging reference to the female genitalia. Meanwhile, an examination is underway of many rock climbing routes, such as Slavery Wall in Wyoming's Ten Sleep Canyon, where the first ascensionist agreed to rename the wall and several of its routes after many climbers began pushing for a change.

The recreation industry has an opportunity to take these correctional strides even further, particularly in the crowded marketplace of outdoor gear where everything from coolers and backpacks to fancy jackets bear our Indigenous names, legacies, and languages, as if we are not here to witness the appropriation. But our identities—*Chilkat*, *Kuiu*, *Ignik*, *Cotopaxi*—are not for sale. And for others to profit from them represents another oppressive act similar to branding a ski resort with the “S-word.” Companies everywhere should reevaluate whether the names they rely on perpetuate the cycle of colonial harm that has historically stoked the climate crisis.

Scientifically, climate change is caused by an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. But we must also acknowledge the human side of the problem. Generations of industrial activity and resource extraction have polluted ancestral Indigenous lands, leading to misery, dispossession, and genocide—all stemming from a clear disrespect for kinship. To continue at this pace, while also ignoring the harmful impacts that offensive names bear on our shared planet, including its original stewards, is to continue hurting the planet. Right now, what's needed are intentional steps toward healing. 🌱

Jenni Monet is the author of the weekend newsletter *Indigenously* and a tribal citizen of Laguna Pueblo.

MATTERS OF JUSTICE

THREE ADVOCATES BREAK DOWN WHY—AND HOW—BUSINESSES MUST MAKE JUSTICE A KEY PART OF THEIR CLIMATE STRATEGIES.

AS TOLD TO HEELY LARSON

1. PEOPLE WORKING WITHIN the outdoor industry care a lot about climate change. However, the people who actually hold the power—who have a lot of knowledge about climate change and probably also do care—don't act because they're either 1. too worried to make mistakes; or 2. too worried about the bottom line. I mean, when is there even time to prioritize the greater good under capitalism? We need to make an industry-wide shift to stop seeing profit as the only key performance indicator. Positive impact for people and planet is another critically essential KPI.

What I see are individual people within brands taking stands and pushing a climate justice-first agenda, one that advocates for the planet and people. As they gain like-minded colleagues and momentum, corporate change starts to take shape. Would it be great if this was starting at the top? Yes. However, in most cases the change is being driven by motivated individuals rather than the C-suite.

Two people making huge strides on climate action within the outdoor industry are Whitney Clapper at Patagonia and Martha Garcia of I Am Collective. Clapper is identifying other allies inside her workplace and using her power, privilege, and connections to advocate for what she cares about—Black Lives Matter, queer inclusion in the outdoors, and intersectional climate justice. Garcia is creating authentic partnerships among brands, advocates, and organizations from systematically excluded communities in the outdoors. I also see her caring deeply about relationships and the people on her teams.

— **Pattie Gonía**,
“queer environmentalist/drag queen”
@pattiegonia



2. MANY IN THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY, and those who participate in frequent outdoor adventures in general, tend to have the privilege of relative wealth and often come from predominantly white communities that have blinders on regarding climate injustices. But we have the responsibility to use those privileges to make a positive change. One of the simplest ways to include climate and environmental justice in climate change plans is to center people, especially people on the frontlines of the climate and environmental crises. Instead of donating to a huge wildlife conservation organization, donate to small, grassroots environmental justice organizations who are often doing the most good with the least amount of resources and could do so much more if they were well-funded.

Both Patagonia and REI seem to put people and the planet above profits and contribute to environmental justice initiatives and ecosystem restoration projects. They both advocate for better access to the outdoors for everyone. I also like how they promote repair, reuse, and resell over constant consumption of new products.

— **Philip Aiken**,
founding member of Intersectional Environmentalist
@intersectionalenvironmentalist & @philthefixer



3. WHEN WE LOOK AT CLIMATE CHANGE and the need for climate justice on a macro level, we need to also look at the factors that contribute to it on a micro level. By doing that, it becomes obvious that climate justice is only achievable through actionable change on intersectional issues like equity within the industry, outdoor recreation, outdoor education, and more. Transparency and accountability on these issues matter now more than ever, and consumers seem more likely to invest in brands that are investing back into us and our planet.

Outdoor companies can make justice part of their plans to fight climate change by applying conservation initiatives internally, as much as they might already be doing so externally. For example, Parks Project's mission to give back to our parks is at the core of the brand and goes beyond just its marketing campaigns. I've seen how it applies these standards internally and externally. The brand holds staff events and provides educational resources in the parks for its team, and it has even started a field crew to help bring volunteers to its stewardship events. 🌱

— **Ambika Rajyagor**,
digital creative and activist
@gangesgal