



Donna Matrazzo, Editor
The Writing Works

19300 NW Sauvie Island
Portland, OR 97231
(503) 621-3049
matrazzo@msn.com

Oregon Forest Resources Institute

Book Editing Project:

Forests, Carbon and Climate Change: A Summary of Science Findings

Publication Date:
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EDITING SAMPLER

1. Paragraph edits for better flow and understanding

Original Text:

Although carbon is not particularly abundant on earth (it ranks 50th in terms of elemental abundance), it is a key component of living organisms. As a component of several key greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, it also plays a critical role in regulating the surface temperature on earth. With the release of carbon dioxide via the burning of fossil fuels, cement production, and changing land-use, humans have been increasing the concentration of this gas in the atmosphere for over 150 years. While carbon dioxide is a natural part of the atmosphere, both the current level and rate of increase observed exceeds that observed in the past 420,000 years. Although carbon dioxide is found in relatively small concentrations, these are sufficient to warm the earth's surface temperatures. Examining the global carbon budget shows that the atmosphere is one of several places where carbon is stored on earth. It also shows that because the atmosphere stores little carbon relative to other pools, small changes in those other pools can have a profound effect on the amount of carbon in the atmosphere and therefore its effect on climate. This chapter reviews what is generally known about carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, how it is measured, and how it is changing.

Edited Text:

Carbon is not particularly abundant on earth (of all elements, it ranks 50th), yet it is a key component of all living organisms. As part of several greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and methane, it also plays a critical role in regulating the surface temperature on earth. With the release of carbon dioxide through the burning of fossil fuels, cement production, and changing land use, humans have been increasing the concentration of this gas in the atmosphere for over 150 years. Although these concentrations are still relatively small, they are sufficient to warm the earth's surface temperature. Carbon dioxide is a natural part of the atmosphere. However, both the current concentrations, and rate of increase observed in recent decades, exceed that observed in the past 420,000 years.

This chapter reviews what is generally known about carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, how it is measured, and how it is changing.

2. Words defined for layperson

Original Text:

First, climate naturally *changes* over time and the changes *cycle*, or *oscillate*, rather than wander **stochastically** or follow pervasive linear trends (Fig. 1).

Edited Text:

First, climate naturally *changes* over time and the changes *cycle*, or *oscillate*, rather than wander **randomly** or follow pervasive linear trends (Fig. 1).

3. Consistency throughout

Original Text:

The total forest carbon pool is estimated at 2,190 **gigatonnes (Gt)** of carbon.

Deeper zones of the ocean hold 38,100 **Pg** of carbon ...

Edited Text:

The total biosphere carbon pool is estimated at 2,190 **Pg** (a petagram is 1.1 billion U.S. tons) of carbon.

Deeper zones of the ocean hold 38,100 **Pg** of carbon ...

4. Subject/Verb agreement corrected

Original Text:

The remaining 11 million **acres is split** between forest industry with about 6 million acres and non-industrial private owners with about 5 million acres (Campbell et al., 2004).

Edited Text:

The remaining 11 million **acres are split** between forest industry with about 6 million acres and non-industrial private owners with about 5 million acres (Campbell et al., 2004).

5. Wrong word corrected

Original Text:

Under a cap and trade system, it makes no difference whether projects **are** actions are additional or business as usual.

Edited Text:

Under a cap and trade system, it makes no difference whether projects **or** actions are additional or business as usual.

