American Forests™

Brand Guidelines

American Forests' Identity Manual

About These **Brand Guidelines**

This document describes the basic elements of the graphic identity system and provides guidelines for their application and use. These guidelines will help to establish a visual foundation on which to build the brand, creating consistency where possible while allowing for the creative flexibility required to satisfy a variety of communications needs across a diverse range of media applications.

Compliance with these guidelines is an important part of building the American Forests visual brand. Our ability to execute communications and marketing with a consistent brand voice — both verbally and visually — will help to create a more engaging experience for all with whom we interact.

TM

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Mission

American Forests creates healthy and resilient forests, from cities to large landscapes, that deliver essential benefits for climate, people, water and wildlife.

We advance our mission through forestry innovation, place-based partnerships to plant and restore forests,and movement building.

Vision

We envision a world in which the significant environmental, societal and economic benefits of forests are fully realized and equitably available to all people.

Core Values

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We see value in all people and every community. Across the totality of our work, we strive to advance the interests of all, with special attention to people and communities who are being left behind. We embrace all perspectives, which leads us to engage others through non-partisan and open dialogue.

Servant Leadership

Our approach to mission delivery embraces the contributions of all people and organizations, not just the work we can directly touch. We emphasize empowering others in diverse ways, including building coalitions and creating resources and policies that will advance the work of our entire field.

Moral Clarity

Our work is founded in science and directed for the best interests of people and nature — this is our moral imperative. We prioritize our work not by convenience or popularity, but rather by what is needed most urgently, such as action on climate change.

Intergenerational Responsibility

We are driven by a belief that our forests are an intergenerational legacy that must be stewarded as such. We engage in activities like planting trees and working to combat climate change where the results of our efforts might take decades to show results.

What makes American Forests stand out?

American Forests, like its peers, has a unique place in the ecosystem of organizations focused on environmental health, climate change, social equity, water and wildlife. While reviewing peers, it became clear that American Forests stands out uniquely in the following ways:

A Leader in Equity

American Forests leads the conversation on social equity and forestry where other organizations fall short, helping make connections for audiences so that they understand how equity and justice factor into the core of your work.

Bold & Dynamic

American Forests is fierce, loud and proud when it's not easy. While other organizations repeat the same messages over time, American Forests has always evolved to embody the change it wishes to see in the world — encouraging others in the forestry field to follows its lead.

Science-Based Solutions

American Forests defines the problems, pursues the science needed to address them, and works with partners (or internal programs) to implement the solutions to big problems. This science-based perspective guides and connects each of American Forests' programs.

A Servant Leader

American Forests leads through service. Whether as a facilitator, educator, content creator or collaborator, its approach is grounded in sparking a change that's much bigger than its own mission.

How to talk and write about American Forests.
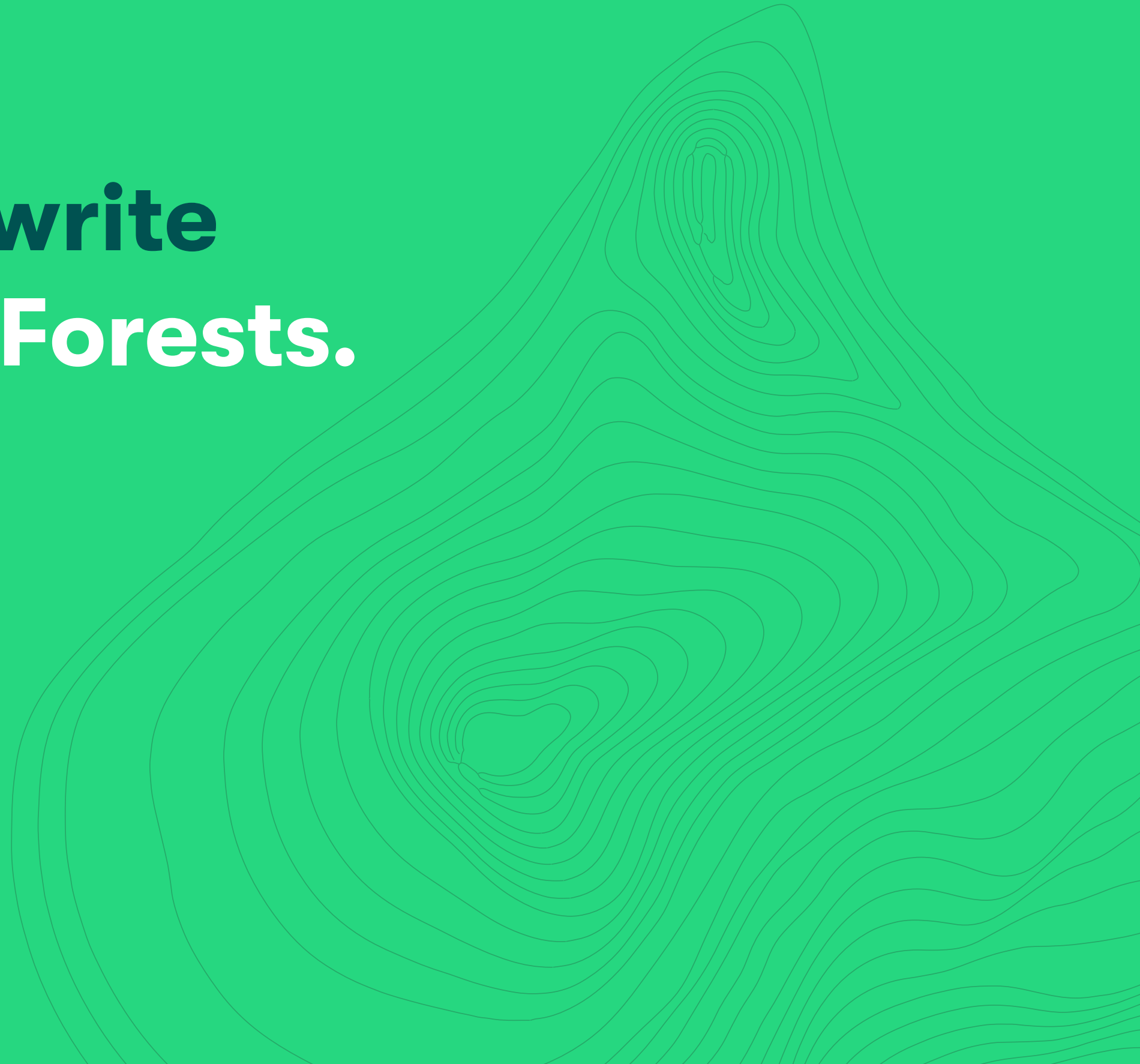
Guidelines

Balance urgency with efficacy

Climate change as a topic often brings out feelings of hopelessness or fatalism. So while some degree of "crisis framing" is okay as a means of communicating urgency, these messages need to be balanced with solutions — particularly specific examples of how the situation has improved in specific areas due to policy change or tree planting programs. That way, American Forests' ideal future isn't perceived as a fairytale.

Encourage audiences to take systemic action

American Forests advocates for systems-change on many of the issues it exists to solve. Messages about systemic issues need to engage audiences with systemic calls-to-action — often this involves supporting policies or elected officials, or learning more deeply about the problem. So while individual-focused calls-to-action, such as donation or membership links, will be an integral part of American Forests' website experience, they'll need to be balanced with ways for audiences to contribute to systemic change.

Guide people to the difficult topics

Research has shown that framing both climate change and racial equity with facts and "hard truths" divides people into their existing ideological trenches. American Forests can avoid that reality and increase support for its work by framing communications about the environment and equity with ideas of equal opportunity for all. Rather than sanitizing the issue, this framing mechanism ensures that even more audiences will stick with you as communications moves into more difficult topics.

Explain the roots of inequity

American Forests is very familiar with the issues it works to solve — but some of your audiences might have a less complex understanding of those same issues. When discussing social and racial equity in particular, communications need to take the time to explain the inequity. Without a detailed explanation of its causes and implications, audiences tend to fall back on subconscious biases to explain the gaps.

Guidelines cont.

Humanize the problem and the solutions

The systems, structures and policies we advocate for and against are real, and so are the people that create, perpetuate and disrupt them. Tell the stories of those people. Use terms that conjure images of people, rather than abstract concepts or structures. This is especially useful when communicating about contentious, controversial or complex problems like climate change. Climate change is more than just its impact on the planet and its ecosystem. It affects how people produce and consume food, how and where we work and play, and the quality of the air we breathe. Humanizing the problem is the first step to humanizing the solution.

Use data to bolster a claim, not as the claim itself

When science and research justify one's position, it can be easy to rely purely on the data to make our case for us. Research shows when facts don't fit the frame, audiences reject the facts, not the frame. When audiences are presented with irrefutable evidence of the error in their thinking, the human reaction is to question the evidence. Data is effective in influencing mindsets when presented within an alternative frame.

Unframed data: Most of the warming occurred in the past 40 years, with the seven most recent years being the warmest. The years 2016 and 2020 are tied for the warmest year on record.

Framed data: Heat-trapping emissions from fossil fuels have already disrupted Earth's climate system. At this very moment, the resulting changes are undermining human health and harming the natural places on which people depend. The problem is getting worse as the last seven years have been the warmest in recorded history.

Explain the connection between trees and climate change

While we may take for granted that most Americans understand the connection between carbon dioxide-reducing trees and the slowing of climate change, research shows that when such concepts are carefully explained — through a cause-and-effect model — audiences more readily grasp necessary solutions and see their role in those solutions. This means more than just stating that trees and forests can deliver needed carbon dioxide reductions, but going a step further and stating how. This can be done in layman's terms without having to get too wonky or technical. Rather than sanitizing the issue, this framing mechanism ensures that even more audiences will stick with you as communications moves into more difficult topics.

Frame the future, not the past

Climate advocates need to energize and mobilize people to support a big vision, without appearing to be advocating for the impossible. American Forests can do this by emphasizing how much we can achieve despite difficulty (pragmatism) and by not framing solutions with how much we need to sacrifice or remove from our lives. Balance "bold and necessary" with "feasible and possible." Show that we have choices: We can choose to invest now in sustainable energy sources, or we can miss yet another opportunity to act boldly for our shared future. Highlight collective actions that can alleviate climate concerns.

Waterfall Frameworks

Social impact storytelling is at its best when it meets audiences where they're at, and strives to create a change beyond the words on a page. In order to establish a consistent brand narrative for American Forests' work on social equity and climate change, we've outlined a flexible "waterfall" framework that can be repeated across touchpoints and media.

"Don't just talk, put substantive work on the table. Don't just say the right things, do the right things."

- Jad Daley
American Forests' president and chief executive officer

Equity

Exposition: Lead with the shared value that all Americans, regardless of ZIP code, should have the opportunity to live in a healthy community.

Inciting Incident: Then, introduce the inequity central to American Forests' work: In America's cities, this opportunity has not been equally distributed. Use asset framing to refer to the communities impacted by this inequity. Try to introduce systems as the antagonists in this story who contribute to the problem.

Climax: Describe this inequity and the systems involved in detail and explain why it's a problem for individuals, communities and societies. Use data to make the case for the urgency of this problem. American Forests' boldness comes in here, by shining a light on details that are often left unsaid.

Falling Action: Introduce solutions to this inequity, describing not only how they would work but also providing examples of how this solution has been successful elsewhere.

Resolution: Pair solutions with concrete actions audiences can take to support this change — both individual actions such as donations, and systemic actions such as policy support/advocacy. This is an opportunity to advocate for American Forests' science and research work and to elevate the work of your partners.

Climate Change

Exposition: Lead messages about climate change with the value of protecting the places we all depend on from being harmed. Frame this as collective action we can take to protect ourselves, each other and future generations rather than reversing existing damage.

Inciting Incident: Then, introduce the specific climate-related challenge being talked about, forest loss for example, implicating the systems that perpetuate the issue.

Climax: Describe this challenge in greater detail, being sure to clearly explain the relationship between phenomena — in this case, the relationship between trees and climate change. Explain both the systemic nature of this problem and how this problem impacts people's lives. This is where data should be incorporated to support the case you're already laying out.

Falling Action: Introduce solutions to this issue, describing not only how they would work but also providing examples of how this solution has been successful elsewhere. Data can be powerfully used here, too, to demonstrate measurable improvements.

Resolution: Pair solutions with concrete actions audiences can take to support this change — both individual actions such as donations, and systemic actions such as policy support/advocacy. This is a good opportunity to promote American Forests' climate research, science and policy work — and in doing so, balance solutions that are "bold and necessary" with "feasible and possible."

Design System
that connects the brand.

Brand Design Principles

Our Design Principles reflect the values with which American Forests embodies to reach our strategic goals. These principles inform all design decisions that support our goals to offer the best brand experience for our audiences.

1. Be an innovation leader in forestry.

2. Expand beyond limitations of "just planting trees."

3. Be leading edge and credible.

4. Be bold, dynamic and proud.

5. Embody scientific certainty.

6. Lead with social equity.

7. Collaborate with diverse stakeholders.

The Logo

The American Forests logo signifies a strong symbol fit for a movement. The mark is comprised of two sides, symbolizing the two pillars of focus at the organization: restoring and protecting large forest landscapes and working to achieve Tree Equity across America's urban areas. The two sides converge to a tip, symbolizing unity. The mark points upwards to signal growth and hope. The horizontal lines can be interpreted as tree branches and as urban pathways towards progress.

Two orientations of the logo have been created for use depending on the proportion of space in which the logo will apear. When possible, use the primary lockup, but for more vertical or square spaces, the secondary lockup may be used.

Here are a few general tips when working with the logo:

- In order to preserve the integrity of the new logo, maintain the rotation, size and color palette of the logo.

- Follow proper spacing guidelines, see page 15 for more details.

- Always use only the color backgrounds established in the guide.

Click title to access assets.

Primary Lockup / Horizontal

Secondary Lockup / Vertical

The Mark

The American Forests mark refers to the icon and can be used on its own in the context of the brand. The logo is the composition of the mark and the name. The intention is that the mark will be interchangeable with the logo over time. The mark can also be used in the same application alternatives as the logo.

Click title to access assets.

Proper Spacing

To preserve the integrity of the logo, it is important to have clear space around the logo and have no other graphic elements intrude on its space. The clear space is calculated by taking the height of the name, which is then applied to all sides around the logomark and wordmark.

Logo Colorways

Whenever possible, use the primary logo colorway. Here are options for exceptions or specific use cases*:

Primary Logo / Knockout can be used on an image background. If the background image is too light or too busy, apply a black 20% opacity tint overlay on top of the image so the logo is legible.

One-Color Light Green + One-Color Forest Green should only be used when two colors aren't permitted.

One-Color Black should be used only when a third party partner asks for a single color logo. The logo can also be used on documents that will be printed in black and white.

all of the options shown may be applied to the primary and secondary lockups as well as the mark

Primary Logo

Primary Logo / Knockout

One-Color Logo

Light Green *using 45% screen for left side of mark*

Forest Green *using 50% screen for left side of mark*

Black *using 40% screen for left side of mark*

One-Color Logo / Knockout

Knockout using 40% forest green for right side

Knockout using 35% light green for right side

Knockout using 30% black for right side

Logo Misapplications

To ensure the logo appears as consistently as possible, we have identified the ways we don't want the logo to appear. Applications listed here or similar versions are not permitted, for either the horizontal or vertical logo orientations, in the brand guidelines because they violate the logo's integrity.

❌ Do not use a solid tone for the mark

❌ Do not use solid white for the mark

❌ Do not change the wordmark language

❌ Do not add a tagline

❌ Do not reverse the logo placement

❌ Do not add a stroke around the logo

❌ Do not change the wordmark typeface

❌ Do not rotate the logo

❌ Do not alter the proportions of the logo

❌ Do not stretch the logo

❌ Do not alter the colors of the logo beyond the approved versions outlined on page 17

❌ Do not add a drop shadow

Typeface Families

The logotype uses a geometric sans serif typeface to complement the mark. The typeface's strong structure helps audiences identify with the scientific-based face of the brand. While other elements of the typeface, such as the circle "i" and the low horizontal lines of the capital "A" make it approachable and friendly.

Type plays an important role in the American Forests brand system by creating visuals that feel consistent with the brand.

Primary Typeface: GT Walsheim, this typeface is meant for headlines and short introductory paragraphs.

Secondary Typeface: Miller Text, this typeface is meant for body text, it is necessary in long format texts.

If you have questions about accessing our default fonts, please contact rpatricio@americanforests.org.

GT Walsheim

Aa

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyx
1234567890$%&*()!

Miller Text

Aa

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyx
1234567890$%&*()!

Typeface Alternatives

We always encourage the use of the primary brand fonts listed on the previous page. But when access to the primary fonts is not possible, these are good default alternatives.

Instead of GT Walsheim
Arial Bold is the sans serif alternative typeface.

Instead of Miller Text
Georgia is the serif alternative typeface.

Arial Bold

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Georgia

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Primary Color Palette

Forest Green: This grounding green is considered the color of nature, and it brings out emotional harmony, stability and endurance. It is associated with refreshment and peace. It can help people feel rested and secure.

Deep Forest Blue: The color of empowerment, navy blue is a color that represents loyalty, peace, confidence and success. It is also associated with depth, expertise and stability.

American Forests Green: Mint is a vibrant, light shade of green. Lighter shades of green, such as mint, also represent tranquility, health and good luck. They are associated with freshness and creativity.

Forest Floor Beige: As a softer, warmer form of white, beige represents simplicity and serenity. Beige is unpretentious and is a great supporting color. Beige, when in the presence of other hues, helps to accentuate them.

#0B193B
CMYK 100 89 42 55
RGB 11 25 59
Pantone Solid Uncoated = 281 U
Pantone Solid Coated = 281 C

#26D780
CMYK 68 0 76 0
RGB 38 215 128
Pantone Solid Uncoated = 353 U
Pantone Solid Coated = 7479 C

#005251
CMYK 91 46 61 34
RGB 0 82 81
Pantone Solid Uncoated = 329 U
Pantone Solid Coated = 7719 C

#FFFFF
CMYK 0 0 0 0
RGB 255 255 255

#FAF8F7
CMYK 2 2 2 0
RGB 249 247 246

Secondary Color Palette

We have a broader selection of secondary colors which can support the American Forests brand. We want a strong contrast, so the supporting colors should compliment but not substitute the primary colors.

#004346
CMYK 91 58 65 43
RGB 0 67 66
*for use as darker shade of green on tree patten graphics ONLY

#006838
CMYK 90 33 100 25
RGB 0 104 56

#019851
CMYK 86 13 100 2
RGB 1 152 81

#14E1D2
CMYK 65 0 20 0
RGB 20 225 210

#E9FBF2
CMYK 9 0 7 0 RGB 233 251 242

#E1DCD5
CMYK 11 11 14 0
RGB 225 220 213

#F2C127
CMYK 2 26 100 0
RGB 242 193 39

#E94D4D
CMYK 0 91 73 0
RGB 233 77 77

Primary Color Combinations

These are the main color combinations that clearly signify the presence of American Forests' brand. The combination of colors are accessibility compliant.
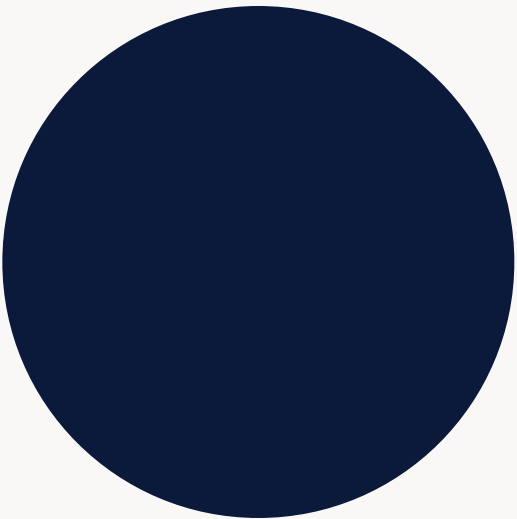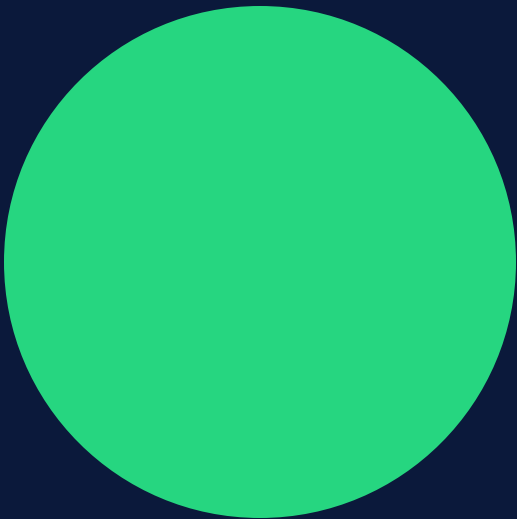
Graphic Element
Zoomed In

Graphic Element Zoomed Out

The American Forests design system also has a pattern that originates from the logo. The pattern could be used in a zoomed-in effect, which is more abstract and focused on the shapes contained in the logo. The zoomed-out modality visually references a forest, with urban pathways and streams of water.

Click title to access assets.
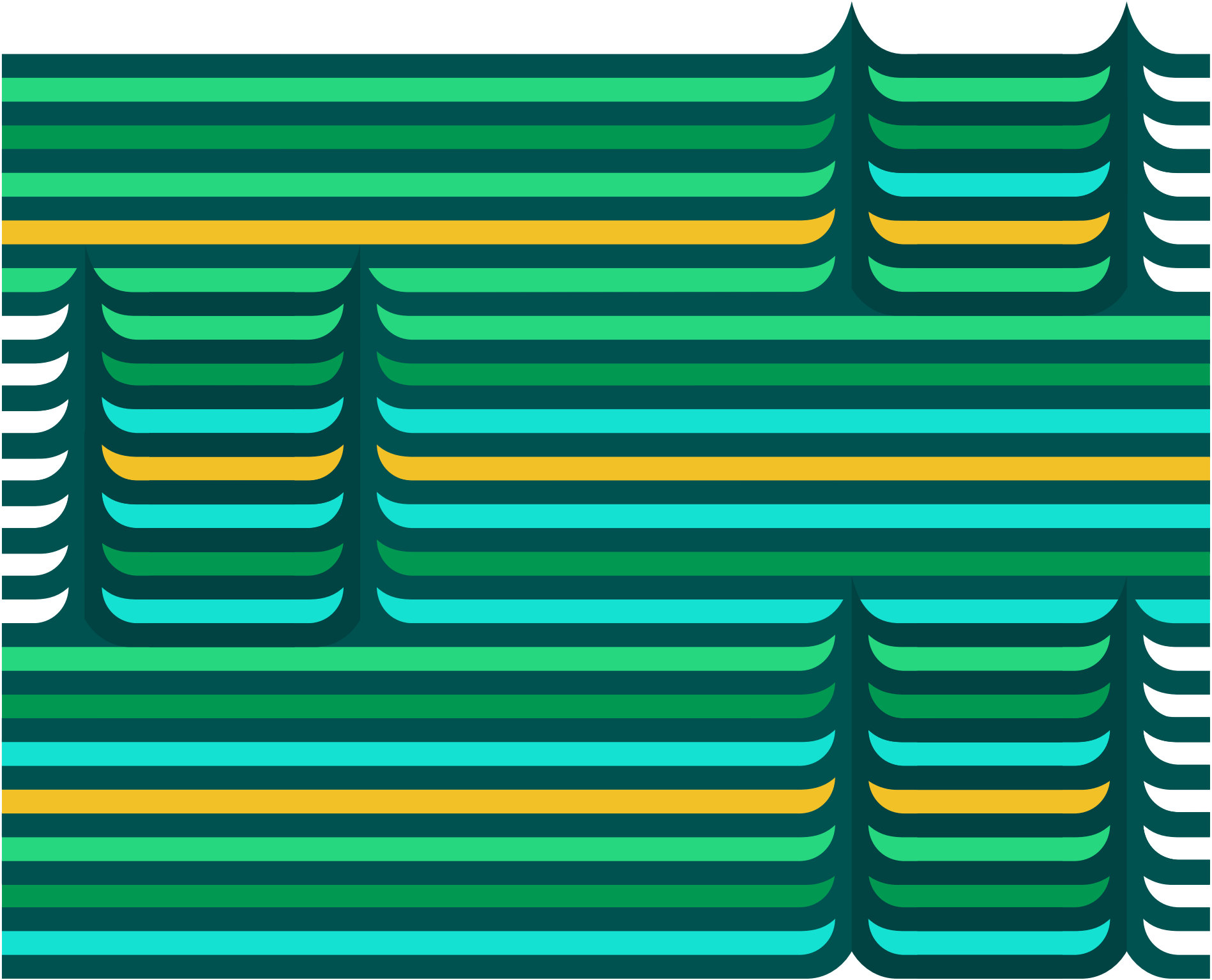
'What Drives Us' Iconography

Click title to access assets.

Climate
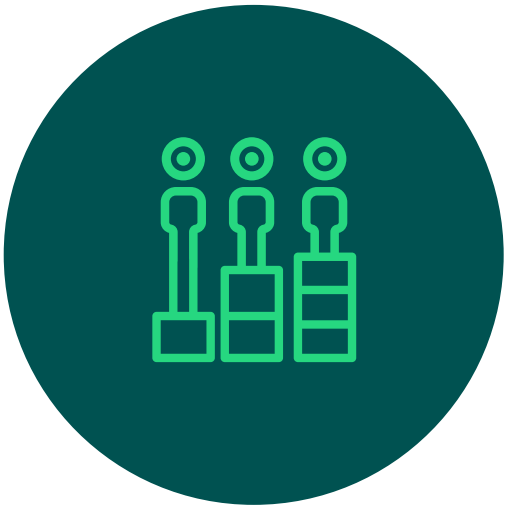
Social Equity

Wildlife

Water

Secondary Iconography
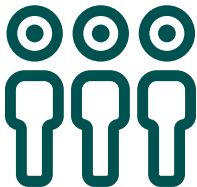
Click title to access assets.

Urban Forestry

Forest Restoration

Gift of Trees

Sequoia Circle

Movement Building

Resilient Forests

Science/Innovation Lab

Tree Equity

Champion Trees

Action Center

Secondary Iconography

Click title to access assets.

Tree 1

Tree 2

Planting

Forest Policy

Becoming a Member

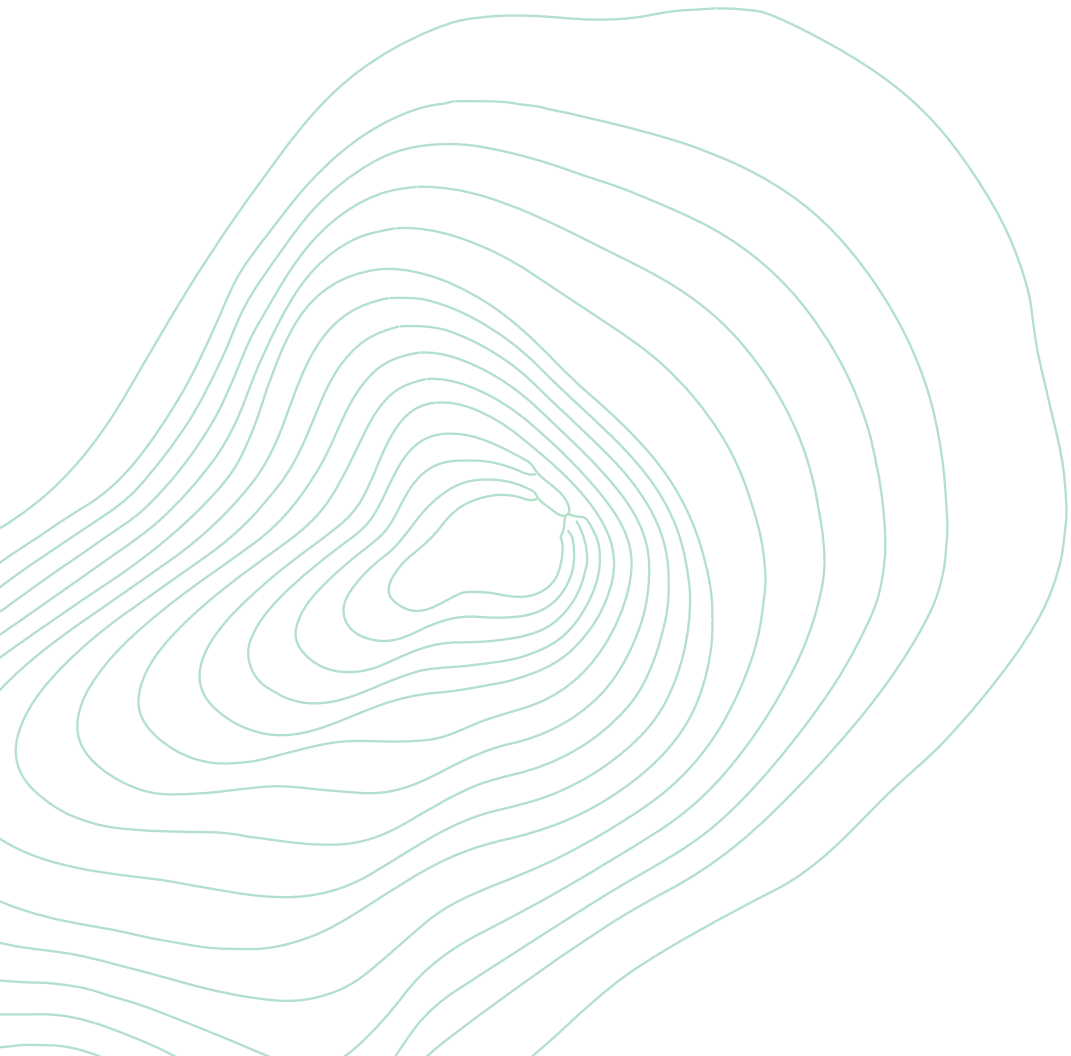Planned Giving

Place-Based

Graphic Elements
Topography

To enrich designs with texture, there are 2 different graphic elements for the design system: The topography elements, which are organic shapes symbolizing terrain in the natural world, and city maps that reference urban work.
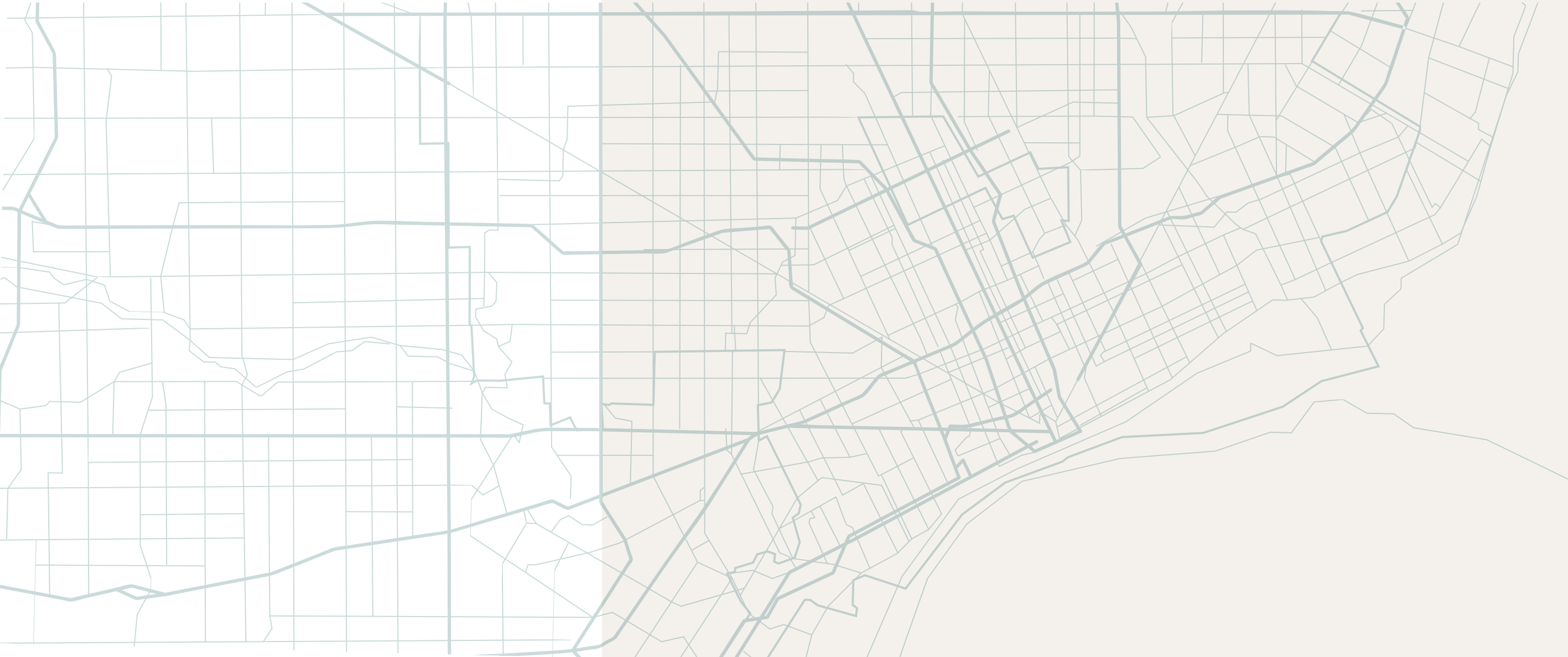
Click title to access assets.

Graphic Elements for City Maps
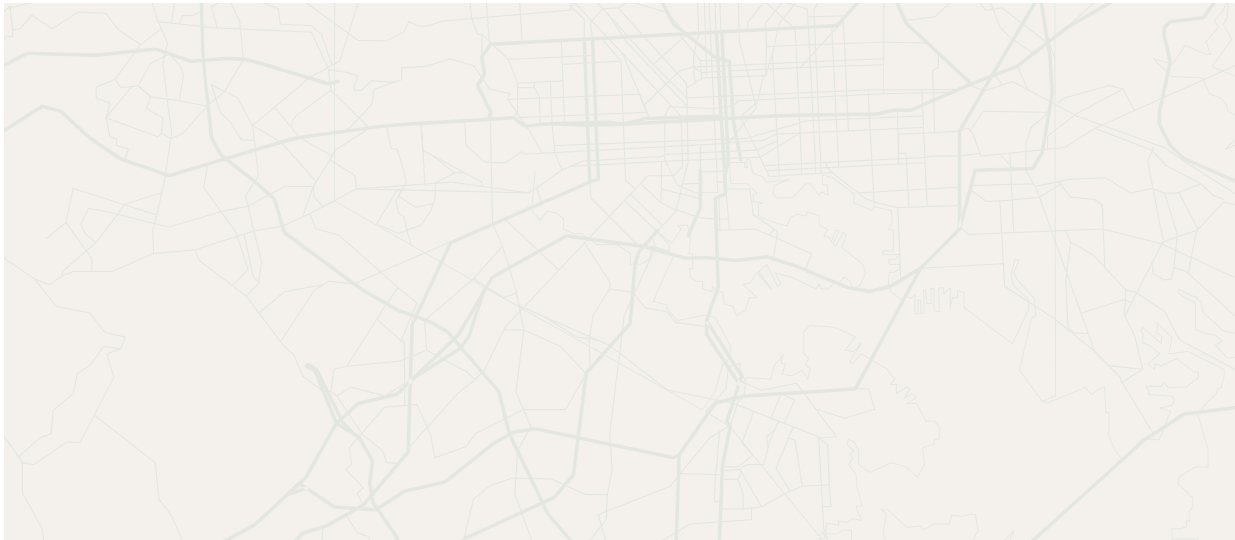
Click title to access assets.
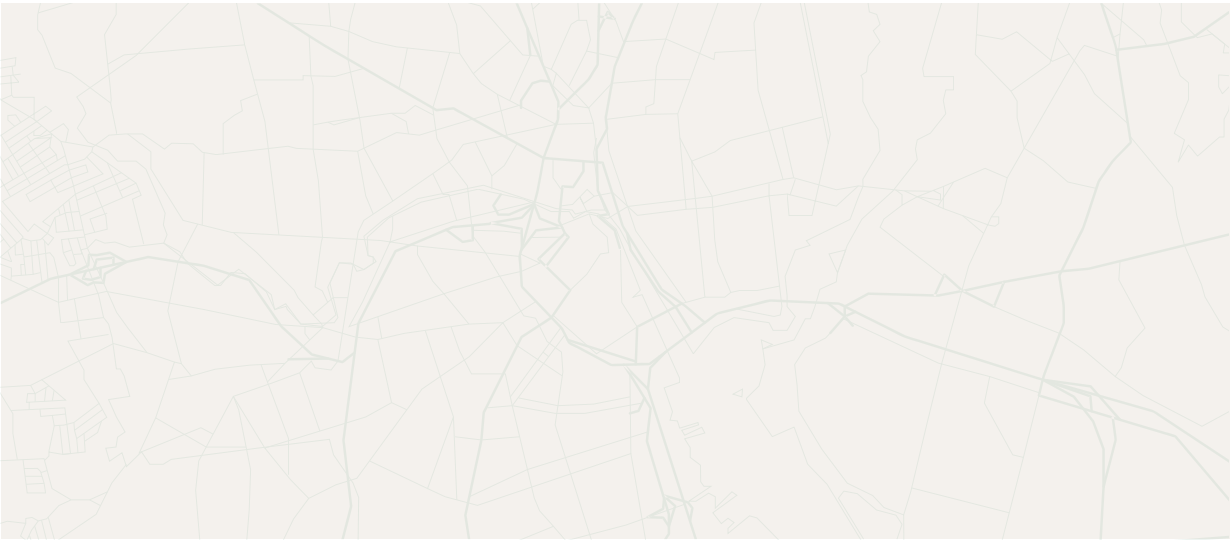
Graphic Elements
When Using a Set of City Maps

Maps can be used to reference the cities where
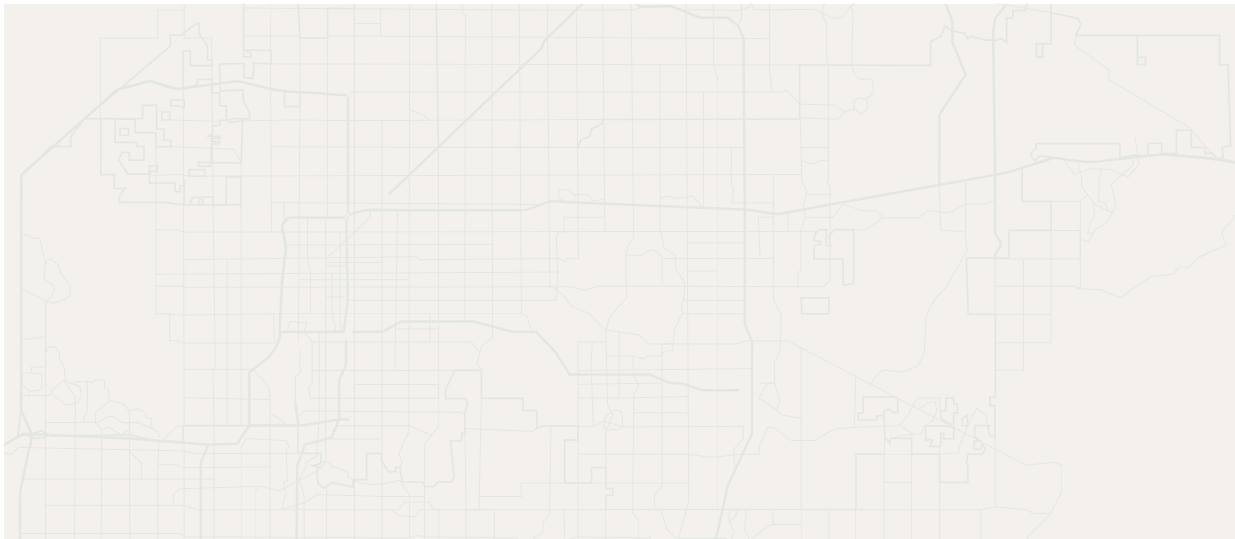American Forests works.
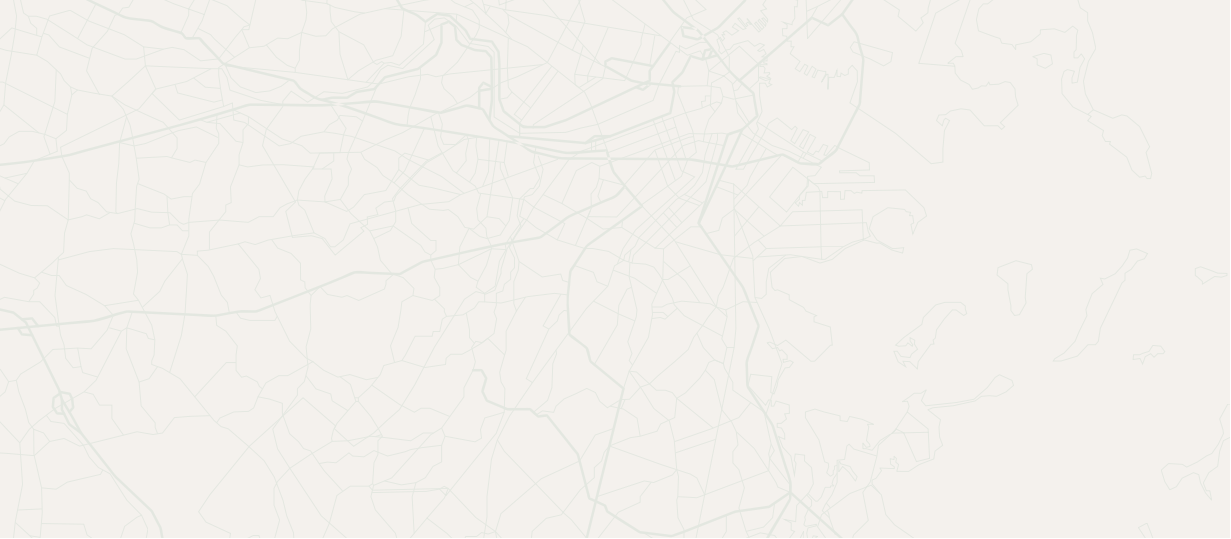
Click title to access assets.

Baltimore

Providence, R.I.

Phoenix

Boston

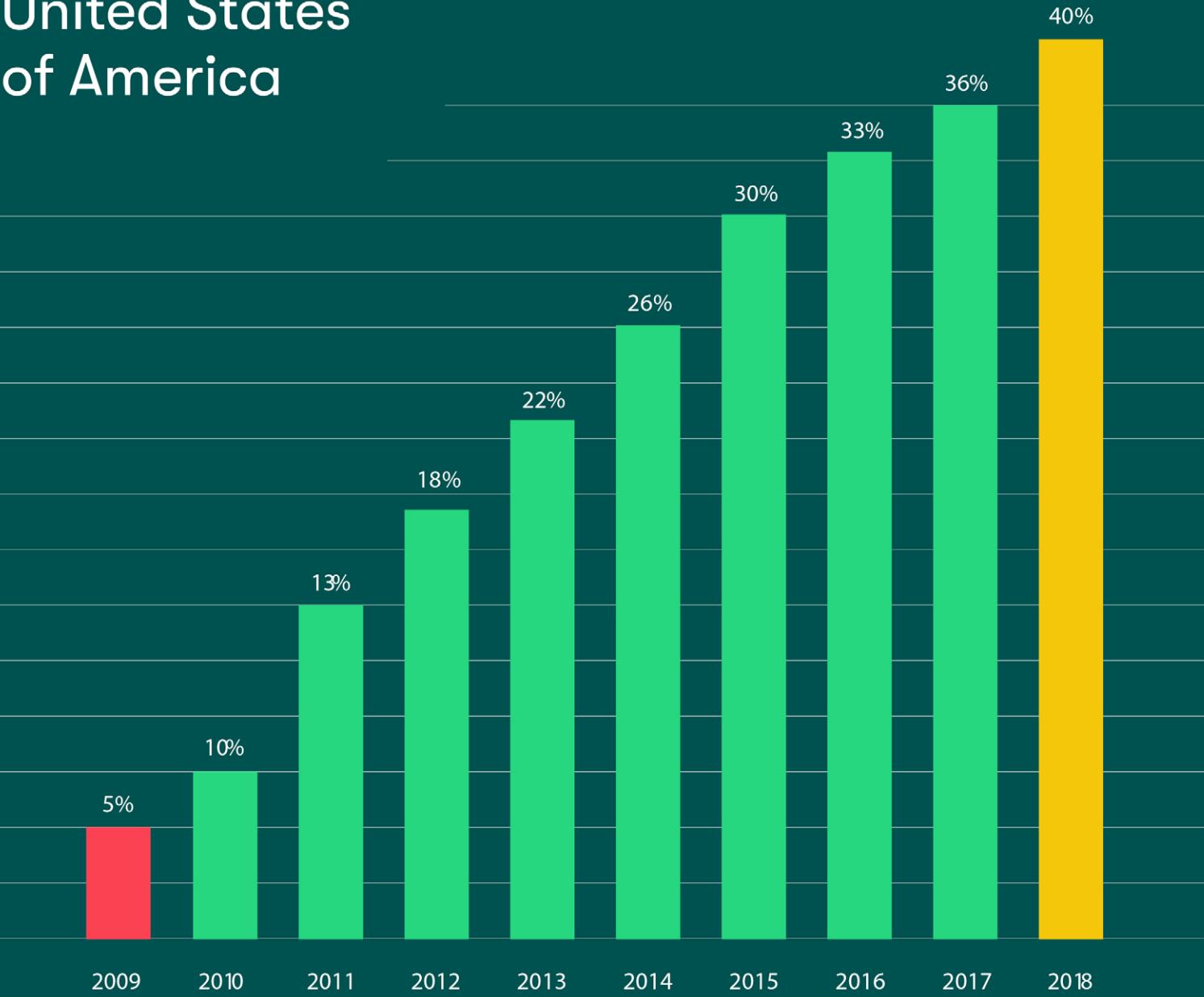# Data Visualization

that tells a story.

Data Visualization

When visualizing data we can use brand assets, such as typography and color, to help tell a compelling story. As shown in the examples, the graphs can be displayed in color or off-color backgrounds.

Utilizing the condensed GT Walsheim type style can help in composing within tight spaces.

We can use the primary and secondary color palette freely and as required by the data. However, there is a universal rule to use red to communicate negative or low data, green for growth and yellow to highlight.

Tree Reforestation Growth in the United States of America

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
5%	10%	13%	18%	22%	26%	30%	33%	36%	40%

Source: American Forests

Data Visualization

Tips

Keep colors consistent

- Turn first to American Forests' primary and secondary color palette

- Forest Green is a nice background, but a neutral background — e.g., Forest Floor Beige or White — will support the addition of multiple colors on the chart

- Use neutral greys (or white on a dark background) liberally — for text, labels or supporting data

- Use Forest Green as the identifier — if not the background, use Forest Green for header elements

Highlight the story

- Be careful about highlighting data on a chart using color without explaination — use labelling/annotation to tell readers what to look at, to highlight a data point, and to quickly tell the story of the chart without the reader having to interpret any numbers

Reduce clutter

- Truncate numbers where space is limited (e.g., years on x axis)

- Legends take up space and can be complicated to read — where possible use labels instead (e.g., label each line on a line chart, label or annotate your bars, etc.)

Yearly Donations Through Website

Partnership Relations

Source A
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing. Aliquam a iaculis eros. Praesent malesuada nisl atm .

Source B
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing Aliquam a iaculis eros. Praesent malesuada nisl atm

Source C
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing Aliquam a iaculis eros. Praesent malesuada nisl atm .

Source D
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing Aliquam a iaculis eros. Praesent malesuada nisl atm .

Source E
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing Aliquam a iaculis eros. Praesent malesuada nisl atm .

Source A
Source B
Source C
Source D
Source E

Planting by Species

by 2022, momentrum has built along the reforestation pipeline

Douglas fir
White bark pine
White oak

limited seed stocks

2018 19 20 21 22

100K
80K
60K
40K
20K
0

*this is a demo chart - data are not real

In 2022, American Forests planted the most trees ever

2018 19 20 21 22

100K
80K
60K
40K
20K
0

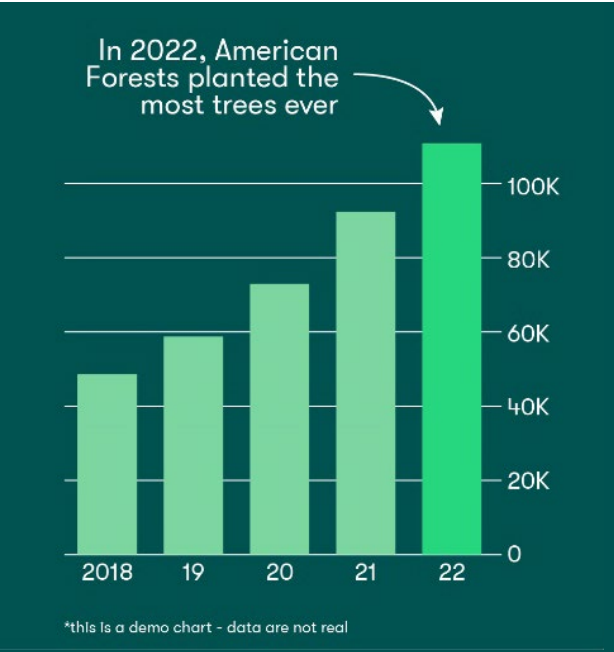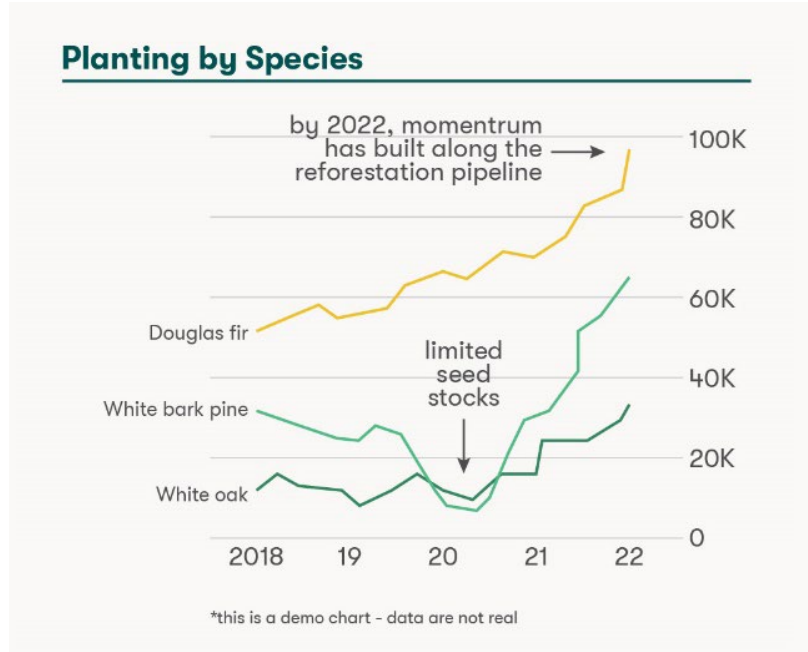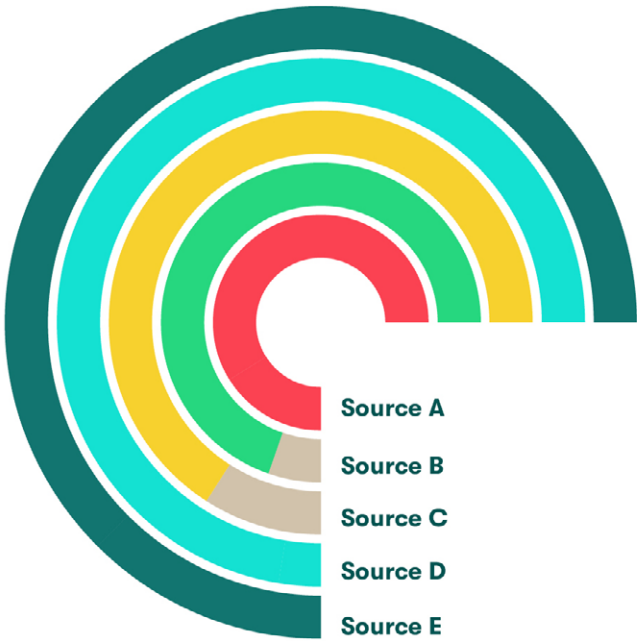*this is a demo chart - data are not real

Image Standards
that reflect the brand.

Image Themes

American Forests is an image-rich brand. Images help to convey the mission, vision and values of the brand in a simple and easily digestible way.

We have nine main themes to ensure images selected communicate the diverse aspects of the brand.

Photo Credit Convention:

When crediting photos we use 3 naming options. The photographer's name is always first, followed by the organization. This could be commissioned photographers for American Forests, stock imagery found on the internet or partner/associate images.

Examples:

• John Smith / American Forests
• John Smith / Shutterstock
• John Smith / The Nature Conservancy

Aerial Shots

Communicates the vastness of our work, in a large forest landscape or urban setting.

Detail Shots

Zooms into the details that evoke the feeling of being within the forest of the details of the work itself.

Before and After Shots

Reveals how our work has impacted a landscape over time.

People in Action Shots

Captures the activities that people do, whether at work or in the forest.

Large Landscape Shots

Brings the classic and familiar view of forest landscapes in order to convey place and environment.

Cityscape Shots

Emphasizes the presence of trees in everyday urban life and settings.

Wildlife Shots

Showcases animals within the forest and connects to the idea of the diversity of forest life.

Climate Events Shots

Illuminates the reality of how climate change is impacting forests through wildfire, extreme heat, pests and diseases.

Archive Shots

Zooms into the details that evoke the feeling of being within the forest of the details of the work itself.

Aerial

Goal

To communicate the vastness of the work, in a large forest landscape or urban setting. Aerial shots are an ideal visual vehicle to capture the magnitude of the areas positively impacted by American Forests' work.

Tips

- Create or find interesting images that develop patterns through repetition but have a focal point or clear area of visual interest.

- Limit place-based images to within United States.

If you need access to American Forests' image library, please contact rpatricio@americanforests.org

Detail

Goal

To offer the viewer a zoomed-in view that translates specific elements of American Forests' work or evokes the feeling of being in a forest. These details can range from images of people planting trees to convey action, to texture-based images of bark or vegetation which can complement the graphic design.

Tip

- Create or find interesting images. Be mindful of unfocused elements when capturing details.

If you need access to American Forests' image library, please contact rpatricio@americanforests.org

Before and After

Goal

To clearly depict how our work has impacted a landscape over time. This can provide a tangible visualization of our tree planting and reforestation efforts on a long-term scale.

Tips

- Use shots from before a planting or right after a climate event in comparison to an after shot following a planting or reforestation effort.

- When possible, utilize a variety of after shots from various timeframes post planting to convey long-term results.

- It's important to get shots of the same exact locations over time.

If you need access to American Forests' image library, please contact rpatricio@americanforests.org

People in Action

Goal

To capture people being active, whether at work or in the forest. This is an opportunity to humanize the brand.

Tips

• Create or find interesting images which reflect people in action. These can be photos of people enjoying the forests or working in the fields.

• Look for diversity in race, age and gender.

• Make sure the person's face is always visible and avoid pictures of people's backs.

If you need access to American Forests' image library, please contact rpatricio@americanforests.org

Large Natural Landscape

Goal

To bring in a classic and familiar view of forest landscapes to convey place and environment.

Tips

• Create or find interesting images which capture the beauty of nature.

• Look for images that are rich in saturation, light and visual interest.

• Avoid sunset pictures.

If you need access to American Forests' image library, please contact rpatricio@americanforests.org

Cityscape

Goal

To emphasizes the presence, or lack thereof, of trees in everyday urban life and settings.

Tips

• Look for images that convey the intersection of trees and urban infrastructure.

• Use images that emphasize a lack of trees to express the need for Tree Equity.

• Prioritize shots that include people interacting with greenspaces.

If you need access to American Forests' image library, please contact rpatricio@americanforests.org
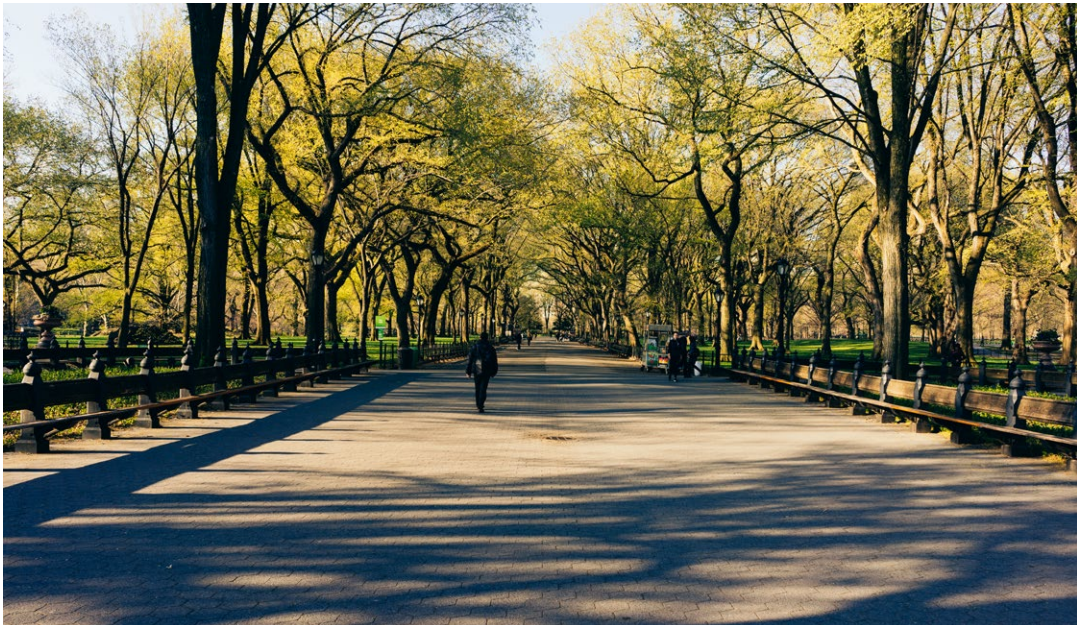
Wildlife

Goal

To bring in a classic and familiar view of forest landscapes to convey place and environment.

Tips

• Create or find interesting images which capture the beauty of nature.

• Look for images that are rich in saturation, light and visual interest.

• Avoid sunset pictures.

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Climate Event

Goal

To illuminate the reality of how climate change is impacting forests though wildfire, extreme heat, pests and diseases.

Tips

• Look for images that show the effects that climate change is having on forests.

• Use images that vividly portray climate effects to emphasize a sense of urgency in addressing the threat.

• Prioritize shots that depict the vastness of impact on a landscape.

• When possible, look for images of areas reforested decades earlier following a climate event (Example: Tillamook Fire reforestation in Oregon).

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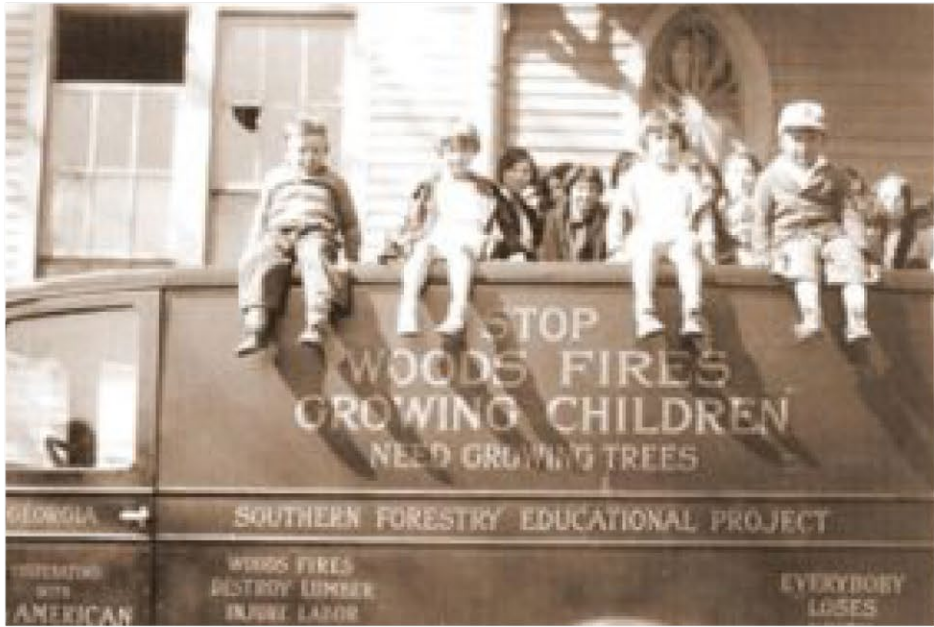
Archive

Goal

To uncover the rich history and legacy of American Forests by curating images that best represent the past efforts of the organization.

Tips

• Avoid highly deteriorated images.

• Make sure images are scanned in high resolution.

• When possible, color correct the images digitally.

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