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HOW PLANTING  
TREES CAN HELP  
YOU INTEGRATE  
THE SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS INTO YOUR  
BUSINESS

*Bhaskara Acres*  
**EAT ORGANIC**

BHASKARA ACRES

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) established a set of [SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS](#) (SDGs) to help businesses and governments build a more equitable and sustainable world. Since then, we have seen progress on every goal — but there's still a long way to go. As we consider the full scope of what these goals set out to achieve, and the challenges that implementers face, one surprising opportunity stands out as having the potential to positively impact ALL 17 Sustainable Development Goals: land restoration.

According to a report by the International Resource Panel (IRP), a global scientific panel hosted by the United Nations Environment Program, well-planned [REFORESTATION](#) and related land restoration activities have powerful cross-sectional benefits that can impact nature *and* communities.

## HOW PLANTING TREES HELPS THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### GOAL #1: NO POVERTY

Because 3 billion of the world's poor live on less than \$2.50/day and depend almost entirely on productive

land for their livelihoods, [reforestation](#) can improve human lives by providing short and long-term employment, increasing the land's ability to produce food and building materials over time, and protecting infrastructure from extreme weather events.

Any efforts to eradicate poverty, then, should include building a solid foundation of healthy, well-managed forests, watersheds, and soils. Many One Tree Planted projects that occur in resource-challenged areas have an educational and sustainable agroforestry component, so that the trees aren't just improving the environment and ecosystems, they are changing lives for the better.



### GOAL #2: ZERO HUNGER

36% of cropland, forest, and pasture systems are experiencing declining productivity, which is bad news for the over 2.5 billion people that depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. This is a key driver of global hunger and food insecurity.



### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



#### GOAL #3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**Reforestation** can improve human health by providing sustainable, high quality supplies of food and water over time, modulating temperatures, absorbing rainwater during storm events, providing a buffer against powerful storm systems, reducing the incidence and transmission of diseases, and more.

And the **tree benefits** don't stop there: in addition to **health benefits**, forests provide traditional remedies and key ingredients in 25% of all western medicines. An added bonus is that spending time in or near forests has been shown to significantly improve mental health.

There's even a term for this: **forest bathing**!

### 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



#### GOAL #4: QUALITY EDUCATION

In addition to providing jobs and restoring landscapes, many of our partners educate **reforestation** communities about topics that are relevant to them and the success of the planting, including **sustainable agroforestry**, land use practices, site monitoring, and micro-economics.

We have seen that planting trees and maintaining them directly promotes education by increasing incomes and reducing the time spent securing basic necessities such as food and fuelwood. This gives parents more time and money to educate their children, and exposes them to opportunities they may not otherwise have had access to.







### GOAL #5: GENDER EQUALITY

Degraded landscapes with reduced ecosystem services can place a severe strain on the ability of women to get water, collect fuelwood, and gather food. In some resource-challenges areas, women must travel for miles on foot to gather these basic necessities.

Naturally, [reforestation](#) can increase gender equity and [empower women](#) by increasing their access to quality nutrition and other essentials of life. By partnering with women-run and women-integrative cooperatives, we build on that empowerment by [helping women restore their local landscapes](#) and increase their family incomes by growing agroforestry crops.



### GOAL #6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Water is life, and access to clean, plentiful water could significantly improve the lives of the approximately 2 billion people that experience water stress due to pollution the degradation of important watershed resources including forests and wetlands.

Due to the links between land management and the water cycle — and the key [role that trees play in capturing, filtering, and retaining water](#)— reforestation can significantly improve water supplies by absorbing stormwater, reducing flooding and erosion, increasing moisture in the air and soil, and more.



## GOAL #7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Name any energy source, and the infrastructure related to, and activities associated with its extraction likely has a land impact — but bioenergy undoubtably has a larger **deforestation** footprint than wind, solar, and fossil fuels.

**Reforestation** and sustainable land management, then, can significantly improve sustainability by reducing reforestation pressure on primary forests that are ecologically priceless. It can also help to heal the land degradation impacts of mining for coal, gas, and petroleum-based fuels.



## GOAL #8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Throughout history, human societies and economies have grown on the back of healthy ecosystems that provide food, fuel, and clean water — and little about that has changed today.

From collecting seed to growing and planting seedlings, managing projects, monitoring planting sites, and growing food crops via **sustainable agroforestry**, reforestation both directly and indirectly generates jobs and economic activity — and can have a profound impact on local economies.



## GOAL #9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The development of “quality, reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure” requires healthy forests and land that is managed and restored sufficiently to minimize flooding, landslides, dust storms, and other threats.

Degrading land and deferring maintenance burdens new and existing infrastructure, shortening its life-span and minimizing its long-term effectiveness. In contrast, healthy ecosystems will support and complement them. That's where the simple act of planting trees can help create healthy thriving communities.





## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



### GOAL #10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Inequality often leads to land degradation when disadvantaged communities cut down forests for fuelwood, hunt wildlife for food, and clear land for agriculture.

On the other hand, [reforestation](#) can increase incomes, make land more productive, and reduce the need for migration to more fertile lands.

Done correctly, [planting trees](#) it's a win-win for people and the planet!

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



### GOAL #11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

[Planting trees](#) can help to restore important ecosystem services in urban and suburban areas — and the rural areas that supply these centers with food, water, energy, and raw building materials.

When water, soil, and air quality are improved, environmental risks and impacts such as flash floods, respiratory illnesses, and the UHI effect are reduced. And reclaiming brownfield areas for [urban forests](#) can increase urban resilience and take pressure off of rural habitats, too.

## 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



### GOAL #12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

[Reforestation](#) and forest science have key roles to play in developing more sustainable ways to produce and extract agricultural goods, forest products, energy, and minerals from the land.

The interconnectedness and availability of resources informs decisions and drives innovation, helping us to do and be better.



## 13 CLIMATE ACTION

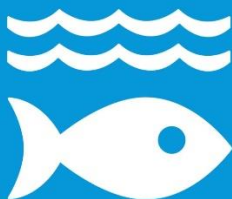


### GOAL #13: CLIMATE ACTION

Healthy **trees cool the planet** by absorbing and storing harmful particulate pollutants and GHGs — in fact, a **mature tree can absorb an average of 22lbs of CO2 per year**.

Planting trees can increase the resilience of ecosystems, help minimize **climate change** effects, and buy people and governments time to adapt to changing conditions. Planting native seedlings in ecologically appropriate areas can also counteract soil and biodiversity loss and improve human well-being.

## 14 LIFE BELOW WATER



### GOAL #14: LIFE BELOW WATER

Everything is connected — and that goes for terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems, too! In fact, everything that happens on land has implications for oceans — including surface run-off, sediment flows, and atmospheric emissions.

Land restoration, then, reduces pressures on these underwater ecosystems, allowing them to continue providing economic and social benefits for coastal communities. That's what our Pacific Northwest reforestation project is all about: **plant trees for the orcas!**

## 15 LIFE ON LAND



### GOAL #15: LIFE ON LAND

**Reforestation** and conservation are essential to building a better, more sustainable future where poverty is reduced, food and water are available, **biodiversity** is safeguarded, and sustainable livelihoods are possible.

Healthy forests = happy people!





## 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



### GOAL #16: PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

When land is degraded and food supplies run low, human populations necessarily focus on basic survival, which can lead to resource conflict and competition.

This “rush” then drives further degradation and [deforestation](#). Restoring forests can help to reverse these trends and reduce the likelihood of clashing between communities.

## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



### GOAL #17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

[Reforestation](#) can foster partnerships between organizations and governments, allowing local initiatives to be scaled up to regional, national, and so on.

The relationships that are built by working together to [plant trees](#) can make all of the difference in getting access to funding and other resources.

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