



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH *All of God's Creation*

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, February 19, 2023

Champion for Protecting Nature and Increasing Access

Christine Hill is Sierra Club's new Senior Campaign Director of *Our Wild America*. She grew up near Washington, DC and now lives near the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. She has spent fifteen years as an environmental advocate.

She writes, “**Every thirty seconds we lose a football field’s worth of nature to industrialization and resource extraction.** Under the pressure of habitat loss and climate change, more than a million species are being pushed to the brink of extinction. The climate crisis is harming both our everyday surroundings and iconic landscapes, and drilling and fracking on our public lands are making the problem worse. Currently, fossil fuel extraction on our public lands accounts for a quarter of U.S. carbon emissions.

The problems we face are daunting, but we have the power to solve them – literally from the ground up. **Protecting more nature, along with transitioning from fossil fuels to clean energy, is an important part of the solution to the climate crisis.** We can reduce the amount of climate-disrupting emissions in our atmosphere and offer threatened species a better chance at survival by phasing out extraction on our public lands and preserving our natural carbon sinks – the forests, wetlands, and other landscapes that draw carbon out of the atmosphere. **Scientists tell us that to achieve those goals, we need to safeguard at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.**

Thankfully, we now have federal leadership that publicly supports protecting 30 percent of the United States’ wild places by 2030. Making that commitment was just the first step, however; we’ll need to mobilize, organize, and lobby our representatives to ensure that the Biden administration follows through. No matter where you are in the country, you can get involved by connecting with your [local Sierra Club chapter](#) or by taking action with us at [sierraclub.org](#)....

I learned early that whether you live in a rural, suburban, or urban area, there’s much work to be done to protect nearby nature. **Today, too many Americans, especially those who are Black, brown, or low-income, lack access to nature’s benefits.** About 100 million people in the United States, including 28 million children, live beyond walking distance from a quality park or green space.

Addressing this ‘**nature equity gap**’ is a key part of our lands protection work, alongside tackling the climate and biodiversity crisis.... Wherever you live, I urge you to connect with the natural beauty you have near you – and consider how you can help protect it.... The choices we make now will shape our society’s direction and the health of our planet for decades to come....”



Senior Campaign Director of the Sierra Club’s Our Wild America

Photo: Chris Cresci