NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

Updated 6/26/2026

MONDAY — JUNE 29, 2026

8:00 AM

BREAKFAST / REGISTRATION DESK OPENS

Light breakfast and coffee are available in Ford Gardens from 8:00 AM to 8:55 AM each morning. Registration will be open 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM every day of the event.

9:00 AM

MCCAW HALL

Spanish interpretation provided

WELCOME / PLENARY: THE NATURAL CAPITAL ALLIANCE, PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

This session will feature founders of the Natural Capital Project discussing the need they saw in the world and what they created to address it and current leaders of the Natural Capital Alliance highlighting today's barriers and opportunities as well as visions for the future.

BREAK 10:30 AM-10:55 AM

11:00 AM

MCCAW HALL

Spanish interpretation provided

PLENARY: USING NATURAL CAPITAL UNDERSTANDING TO TRANSFORM POLICY AND FINANCE DECISIONS AT SCALE

In this session, we will explore inspiring examples of using natural capital understanding to transform policy and finance decisions at scale. These stories derive from partnerships between governments, International Finance Institutions, academics, consultants, philanthropists, and others. We will highlight outcomes from the People, Planet, Prosperity and the Nature Positive, People Positive projects and focus on how these successes can be replicated and scaled.

12:45 PM

LUNCH (GROUP PHOTO AT 12:25)

1:30 PM

MCCAW HALL

Spanish interpretation provided

THE PEOPLE, PLANET, PROSPERITY PROJECT: MAINSTREAMING NATURE IN POLICY AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS

Natural capital approaches provide a structured way to make the value of nature visible in the policies, investments, and decisions that shape development. At their best, they bridge science, economics, and policy, turning ecosystem data into evidence that can inform real-world action. The People, Planet, Prosperity (3Ps) project, a collaboration between the Natural Capital Alliance at Stanford University, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank, applied rapid natural capital assessments across 16 pilot countries to directly inform a range of policy and finance decisions.

1:30 PM

LANE ROOM

NATURAL CAPITAL FOR URBAN RESILIENCE

Urban areas face intensifying climate and health challenges, including extreme heat, environmental inequities, and declining well-being. This session brings together emerging research on how natural capital and nature-based solutions can enhance urban resilience across diverse global contexts. Contributions span empirical analyses of real-time human–nature interactions and mental health, assessments of heat mitigation and inequality in megacities, and evaluations of ecosystem service benefits from green infrastructure, community gardens, and large-scale urban greening initiatives.

NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

MONDAY

JUNE 29, 2026

1:30 PM
BARNES ROOM

ECOSYSTEM SERVICE ASSESSMENTS AND INVEST MODELING (INVEST TRAINING PART 1)

Join NatCap analysts to talk about the steps involved with doing an ecosystem service assessment, and get an introduction to InVEST, NatCap's modeling software.

BREAK 3:00 PM-3:25 PM

3:30 PM
MCCAW HALL
Spanish interpretation provided

INTEGRATING NATURAL CAPITAL AT MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS: FROM EVIDENCE TO INVESTMENT DECISIONS

This session examines how multilateral development banks (MDBs) are integrating natural capital into investment and financing decisions. While growing evidence demonstrates the value of ecosystem services for development outcomes, a key challenge remains: how this information translates into project design, risk analysis, and capital allocation.

3:30 PM
LANE ROOM

NATURE AND HEALTH: RESEARCH TO INFORM HEALTHIER, MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

This session will highlight research on how greenspace and natural areas affect physical and mental health outcomes. Presentations will include sharing recent studies conducted in clinical healthcare settings with patients, and work using epidemiological approaches focusing on the general population.

3:30 PM
BARNES ROOM

ECOSYSTEM SERVICE ASSESSMENTS AND INVEST MODELING (INVEST TRAINING PART 2)

If you're interested in the nuts and bolts of ecosystem service modeling, this session will cover several models from the InVEST toolbox, including technical details and illustrative case studies.

5:15PM
FORD GARDENS

HAPPY HOUR

6:15 PM

DINNER

Dinner in the courtyard behind the Arrillaga Alumni Center.

NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

TUESDAY

JUNE 30, 2026

8:00 AM

BREAKFAST / REGISTRATION DESK OPENS

Light breakfast and coffee are available in Ford Gardens from 8:00 AM to 8:55 AM each morning. Registration will be open 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM every day of the event.

9:00 AM
MCCAW HALL

PRESENTING THE NATURAL CAPITAL YOUNG LEADERS PRIZE

The vision of the annual Natural Capital Young Leaders Prize is to elevate young leaders who are advancing a world in which people – in government, the private sector, development banks, NGOs, and communities – recognize the values of nature in supporting human wellbeing, and routinely incorporate them into decision-making. The prize aims to shine a light on young leaders around the globe driving innovation and adoption of natural capital approaches.

9:50 AM
MCCAW HALL

PLENARY: INDIGENOUS INSIGHT AND LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION

This year's Symposium has a focus on using natural capital approaches to fundamentally reform policy and finance decisions at scale. While we need to speak the language of bankers and finance people, we also need to speak the language of care, and of stewardship. Creating a sustainable future requires a focus not only on the big picture but also the small scale, intimate connections between people and nature and between human communities and non-human communities. This session will focus on Indigenous perspectives and how they are vital to re-imagining a vibrant future. Two thought-leaders in this space will address the causes and costs of losing Indigenous stewardship, policy and other pathways for restoring Indigenous stewardship, and the need for Indigenous insight and leadership in the transformation to a world in which people and nature thrive.

BREAK 10:30 AM-10:55 AM

11:00 AM
MCCAW HALL

GROSS ECOSYSTEM PRODUCT (GEP): FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Gross ecosystem product (GEP) has gained growing international attention over the past decade. Defined as the aggregate monetary value of final ecosystem services produced within a given area, GEP captures how the many benefits provided by nature - such as water filtration, carbon sequestration, soil retention, and flood mitigation - undergird human well-being and economic activity. By combining into a single indicator the measurable economic value of a diverse set of ecosystem services, it provides a practical, context-relevant framework for private and public decision-making.

11:00 AM
LANE ROOM

DESIGNING SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES UNDER CLIMATE CHANGE

Agricultural systems sit at the nexus of climate change, food security, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods—yet the science needed to guide transitions in these systems remains fragmented. This session will highlight new approaches to modeling and decision support that simulate how agricultural landscapes respond to stressors like climate extremes, policy change, land use and market pressures, linking land management choices to broader environmental, economic, and social outcomes. The session will emphasize examples of where such tools—operating at multiple scales from parcel to region—are supporting coordinated action among researchers, policymakers, civil society, and producers and informing the strategic deployment of natural capital-based solutions for climate resilience.

NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

TUESDAY

JUNE 30, 2026

11:00 AM
BARNES ROOM

THE FUTURE OF INVEST SOFTWARE

The Future of InVEST Software kicks off the new InVEST Contributor Track, which is a series of sessions devoted to growing a contributor community around InVEST and ecosystem service modeling software. This session will see the maintainers of InVEST, the NatCap Stanford software team, give an update on the latest innovations and future direction of InVEST. It will cover the Natural Capital Alliance Data Hub, InVEST Reports, InVEST Compute, InVEST Plugins, and InVEST Contributor Pathways. Please join us as we look to expand what's possible with InVEST and how we're excited to co-develop it alongside the community.

12:30 PM

LUNCH

1:30 PM
MCCAW HALL

FROM RISK TO RESPONSE: CATALYZING ACTION FROM BUSINESSES ON NATURE

The landmark IPBES (Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) Business and Biodiversity Assessment was released in February 2026, developed by 79 global experts and approved by IPBES's 150 member governments. The assessment makes clear that all businesses impact and depend on nature, and that nature loss poses a critical and systemic risk to businesses, the economy, and human well-being. Businesses can act now to address their nature-related risks and opportunities, but current business incentives are insufficient to drive the action needed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

1:30 PM
LANE ROOM

FROM ECOSYSTEMS TO PEOPLE AND ECONOMIES: INVESTING IN RESILIENCE AT THE SHORES

Coastal and island communities are on the frontlines of climate change impacts and ecosystem degradation. At the same time, healthy ecosystems—from watersheds to coral reefs—offer powerful opportunities to strengthen resilience. This session brings together researchers, practitioners, and finance experts working at the intersection of nature-based solutions, climate resilience, and sustainable finance in coastal and island communities – including but not limited to Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Instead of traditional presentations, speakers will introduce real-world challenges in relation to these themes, and lead small group discussions to explore how coastal and island nature-based approaches can reduce climate risks while supporting biodiversity, livelihoods, and long-term economic resilience.

1:30 PM
BARNES ROOM

INVEST PLUGIN CONTRIBUTOR TALKS AND AN INTRODUCTION TO INVEST PLUGIN DEVELOPMENT

Last year a plugin feature called InVEST Plugins was added to the InVEST software. This feature allows users to add an InVEST-like model to the InVEST Workbench. In this session we will hear early InVEST Plugin developers present their models and use case for creating a plugin. Following those talks and a QA, NatCap software developers will walk through what you need to know about InVEST Plugins to get started.

NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

TUESDAY

JUNE 30, 2026

BREAK 3:00 PM-3:25 PM

3:30 PM

MCCAW HALL

NATURE POSITIVE, PEOPLE POSITIVE: INTEGRATING NATURAL CAPITAL TO IMPROVE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

This session will showcase an in-progress collaboration between the Natural Capital Alliance, international finance institutions, and six countries promoting nature-positive and people-positive development.

3:30 PM

LANE ROOM

THE HIDDEN HEALTH COSTS OF INFRASTRUCTURE: WIN-WIN NATURE-BASED APPROACHES TO REDUCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE RISK

Infrastructure development, including dams, irrigation systems, roads, and urban expansion, profoundly reshapes socio-ecological systems and can influence the transmission of environmentally mediated infectious diseases. Vector-borne and water-related diseases such as schistosomiasis and dengue are particularly affected by infrastructure development. Yet health risks linked to ecological change are rarely considered in infrastructure planning or investment decisions.

3:30 PM

BARNES ROOM

SOFTWARE MODELING, WORKFLOWS, AND TOOLS FOR ADVANCING ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

A session of contributed talks that will cover a variety of modeling, data, and software workflow topics. These talks will be more technical in nature but also cover the problem and use they are attempting to address.

5:15PM

MCCOLL PLAZA

HAPPY HOUR & POSTER SESSION

6:30 PM

DINNER

Dinner in the courtyard behind the Arrillaga Alumni Center.

NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY

JULY 1, 2026

8:00 AM

BREAKFAST / REGISTRATION DESK OPENS

Light breakfast and coffee are available in Ford Gardens from 8:00 AM to 8:55 AM each morning. Registration will be open 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM every day of the event.

9:00 AM
MCCAW HALL

FRONTIERS IN NATURAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTING

This session showcases advances in natural capital accounting from diverse geographies and contexts around the world. Case studies will cover methodological advances as well as innovation in embedding accounting in policy and decision-making.

9:00 AM
LANE ROOM

NATURAL CAPITAL APPROACHES IN MARINE AND COASTAL APPLICATIONS

This session will feature a diverse set of talks on natural capital approaches in marine and coastal contexts. It will focus on the ways in which coastal ecosystems–such as reefs, mangroves, salt marshes, and beaches–support human wellbeing. It will examine themes of coastal resilience under climate change, how assessments of coastal ecosystem services can inform priorities for conservation and restoration activities, and how coastal ecosystems support lives and livelihoods.

9:00 AM
BARNES ROOM

INVEST CONTRIBUTOR WORKSHOP

This hands-on session will introduce participants to InVEST plugin development and provide everything needed to start building your own plugin. Plugins are user-owned and developed ecosystem service models or workflows that can be run within the InVEST Workbench. The NatCap software team will walk through the interactive process of developing and installing custom code as an InVEST plugin. Participants will gain an understanding of what an InVEST plugin is, why they might want to develop one, and how to get started! We are excited to work with complete beginners to advanced developers.

BREAK 10:30 AM-10:55 AM

11:00 AM
MCCAW HALL

NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS: VALUING NATURE'S CARBON SINKS TO HELP REALIZE CLIMATE STABILITY

Natural systems can serve as a potent ally in the fight against climate change. By absorbing the greenhouse gases that accelerate global warming, forests, soils, and other ecosystems can serve as net carbon sinks that store excess carbon created by human activities. But if these natural systems are poorly managed, damaged, or converted to other uses, they can emit more carbon than they remove from the atmosphere. This session will explore how to realize Natural Climate Solutions: the sustainable conservation and restoration of nature's carbon sinks. This requires fundamental knowledge and measurement of carbon storage and emissions from natural systems; robust quantification of co-benefits from NCS interventions; and economic and policy incentives that translate this into resource management on the ground. Learn from experts in each of these three areas, including their recent research advances as well as practical case studies demonstrating effective NCS.

NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY

JULY 1, 2026

11:00 AM
LANE ROOM

FROM NATURE RISK TO FINANCIAL LEVERAGE: NEW FRONTIERS IN ASSESSING AND SHAPING FINANCE FOR BIODIVERSITY

This session explores how biodiversity and natural capital are becoming increasingly material to financial decision-making, both as sources of risk and as opportunities for institutional and financial innovation. The first set of talks examines emerging methods for diagnosing nature-related risk, including spatially explicit assessment of physical and transition risks in Spain using InVEST-based ecosystem service modelling and asset-level data; a national framework for Australia that extends ENCORE by integrating ecosystem classifications with environmental and economic accounting standards; and a systematic analysis of early TNFD-aligned corporate disclosures, showing how firms are using frameworks such as LEAP and ENCORE in practice, but also revealing the fragmentation and limited standardization that still characterize nature-related assessments.

11:00 AM
BARNES ROOM

BEYOND THE MODEL: INVEST FIELD NOTES

Applying InVEST in real-world contexts requires managing data limitations, crafting justifiable scenarios, and addressing and incorporating the values and realities of communities and decision-makers. This session will present case studies from practitioners who have leveraged InVEST models for diverse uses around the world — including in watershed planning, ecosystem service assessments, and development finance and policy.

11:00 AM
PALM COURT

NATCAP LEARNING LOUNGE

Drop in for an informal one-on-one chat with NatCap software team and analysts about InVEST modeling, software, data, and the technical side of ecosystem service assessments. If you attended the InVEST Training Track or Contributor Track sessions, this is a great place to continue those conversations. If you'd like to talk value or accounting, this Learning Lounge session also features experts on ecosystem service valuation.

12:30 PM

LUNCH

1:30 PM
MCCAW HALL

ALIGNING ECONOMIC PRACTICE WITH ECOLOGICAL REALITY: INCORPORATING NATURE INTO MACROECONOMIC MODELS, POLICY, AND PLANS FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY

Macroeconomic frameworks guiding public spending, debt sustainability, financial stability and sovereign risk were designed for a world in which nature was assumed to be stable. That assumption no longer holds. Drawing on recent work, including from the University of Minnesota, London School of Economics and Political Science, and The Nature Conservancy, this session brings together scientists, economists, and policymakers to explore how nature-related risks and dependencies can be embedded into real-world decision-making.

NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY

JULY 1, 2026

1:30 PM
LANE ROOM

DE-RISKING AGRICULTURE THROUGH NATURAL CAPITAL: ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, PROFITS, AND PLANETARY HEALTH

Agriculture drives approximately 90% of global deforestation, eroding critical ecosystem services including water provision, carbon sequestration, disease regulation, and climate resilience. Nature-based solutions and natural capital approaches are key to de-risking agriculture by aligning productivity and profits with biodiversity conservation and ecosystem integrity.

1:30 PM
BARNES ROOM

WATER, NATURE, AND SOCIETY: ADVANCES IN WATER ECOSYSTEM SERVICES ASSESSMENT AND APPLICATIONS IN POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Water and watersheds have been central to the inception and evolution of the ecosystem services (ES) paradigm. Early ES thinking was shaped by the understanding that ecosystems influence hydrological processes, such as storing, filtering, and releasing water, sustaining water quality and aquatic habitats, and supporting human health, livelihoods, and economic development. For over 30 years, ES science has evolved, developing methods of quantifying, mapping, and valuing the various—and sometimes conflicting—services associated with water at different scales, from headwaters to coasts, and from terrestrial, freshwater and atmospheric domains. This evolution reflects a growing appreciation of trade-offs, uncertainty, and governance in the complex relationships between water, nature and society.

1:30 PM
PALM COURT

NATCAP LEARNING LOUNGE

Drop in for an informal one-on-one chat with NatCap software team and analysts about InVEST modeling, software, data, and the technical side of ecosystem service assessments. If you attended the InVEST Training Track or Contributor Track sessions, this is a great place to continue those conversations.
If you'd like to talk value or accounting, this Learning Lounge session also features experts on ecosystem service valuation.

BREAK 3:00 PM-3:25 PM

3:30 PM
MCCAW HALL

INVESTING IN NATURE: NATURAL CAPITAL APPROACHES FOR RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

This session will bring together leaders and experts from government, academia, and international financial institutions to share experiences and emerging practices from across Asia and the Pacific. Discussions will highlight examples including the Philippines' integrated resilient river basin approaches under the INFRA2 Project, Bhutan and the PRC's experiences with GEP and eco-compensation, landscape restoration initiatives, and emerging financing mechanisms such as payments for ecosystem services and nature credits.

NATURAL CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2026

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY

JULY 1, 2026

3:30 PM
LANE ROOM

U.S. NATIONAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES ASSESSMENT: QUANTIFYING NATURE'S BENEFITS TO PEOPLE

As climate risks intensify and scrutiny over conservation spending grows, decision-makers need clear, defensible evidence that nature underpins U.S. prosperity, safety, and resilience. In this session, representatives from the Science for Nature and People Partnership (SNAPP) working group, "Nature Assessments for Impact," will share the first comprehensive, high-resolution, spatially explicit valuation of multiple ecosystem services across the coterminous United States. Using best-in-class datasets and advanced spatial-socioeconomic analyses, the assessment quantifies how natural systems deliver critical benefits, highlighting a subset of the 15 ecosystem services mapped: flood mitigation, regulation of water quality and availability, grazing, nature-related jobs, urban cooling, and recreation.

3:30 PM
BARNES ROOM

PEOPLE, POWER, AND NATURE: EQUITY AND GOVERNANCE IN NATURAL CAPITAL APPROACHES

As natural capital approaches and nature-based solutions scale globally, critical questions emerge about who benefits, who bears the costs, and how decisions are made. This session explores how power, institutions, and social dynamics shape real-world outcomes. Presentations will examine how nature valuation approaches, governance systems, and financial mechanisms interact with issues of equity, Indigenous rights, and community participation.

3:30 PM
PALM COURT

NATCAP LEARNING LOUNGE

Drop in for an informal one-on-one chat with NatCap software team and analysts about InVEST modeling, software, data, and the technical side of ecosystem service assessments. If you attended the InVEST Training Track or Contributor Track sessions, this is a great place to continue those conversations.

4:45 PM
MCCAW HALL

CLOSING PLENARY