The Permanence Trust:
Ensuring Durability for Climate Solutions

American Forest Foundation

The Problem: Managing Non-Permanence Risk

For carbon markets to credibly scale and maximize their climate impact, all stakeholders —funders, buyers, standards bodies, and project developers alike—need assurance that claims from carbon projects represent and retain their true climate benefit.

The risk of non-permanence must be credibly managed to deliver high-integrity credits that attract investment. But to date, there is no universal approach that completely addresses this risk.

Enter: the Permanence Trust.

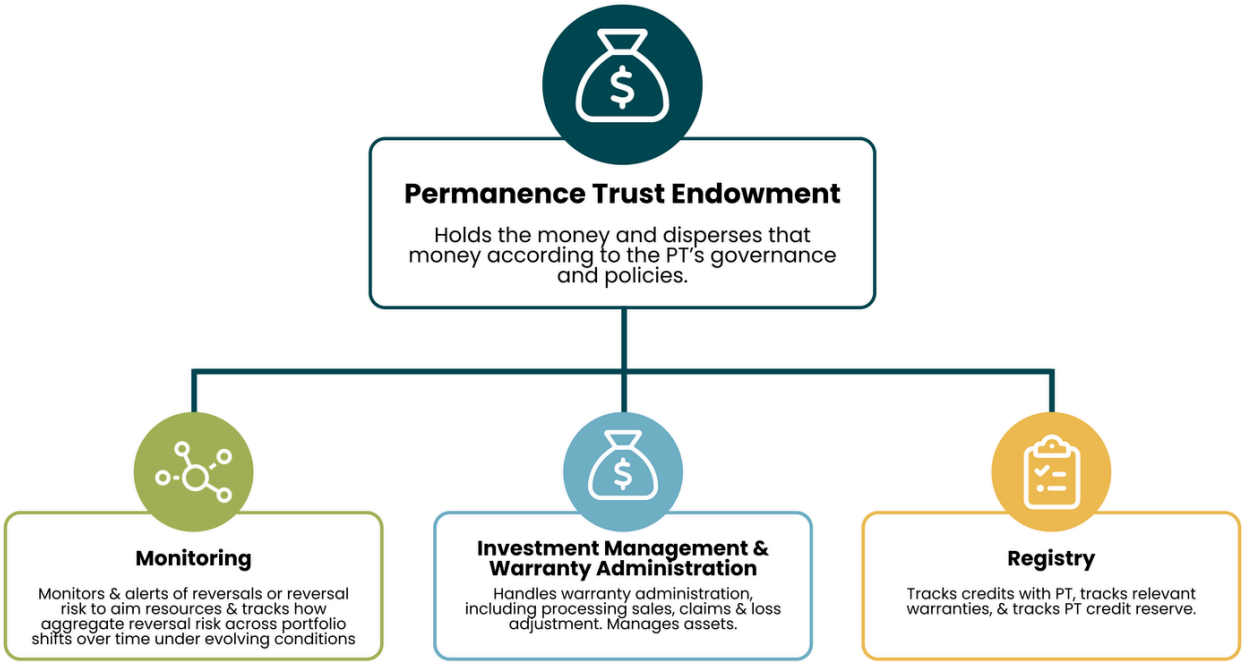
Permanence and Durability

Permanence refers to the intended length of time that greenhouse gases are kept out of the atmosphere as a result of a mitigation activity with enough certainty to support a claimed climate benefit.

Durability is a metric for permanence and comprises two elements: the timeframe a tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent is held out of the atmosphere, and the likelihood it will remain stored for this timeframe.

The Permanence Trust: A Concept for Contracted Durability

The American Forest Foundation has conceived an innovative approach aimed to fill all core functions necessary for permanence for all credit types. The Permanence Trust would calculate how many financial resources should be set aside today to grow and be actively used across a portfolio to manage non-permanence risk to any durability threshold.



Trust in the Market

While other market tools exist to address non-permanence risk, the Permanence Trust uniquely works over the very long term by monitoring for reversals and funding mechanisms for recourse long after a project's landowner contract expires.

How is the Trust Different?

- **Compatible** with existing non-permanence risk management solutions
- **Works for all project types** and promotes portfolio diversification
- **Manages multiple durability thresholds** and does not require a universal permanence standard
- **Boosts demand** for both nature-based and novel CDR
- **Shifts from passive to active** permanence assurance
- **Prices in cost** to manage reversal risk, creating an incentive to design projects with lower risk

Permanence Method	Clear Liability	Mechanism for Recourse	Definition & Length of Permanence	Clear Acknowledgement of Credit Level Permanence	Operational Long-term Monitoring System	Incentive to Prevent Reversals	Scalability
Permanence Trust	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Buffer Pool	!	!	!	!	✗	✓	✓
Removing Permanence Requirements	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Tonne Year Accounting	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Emmissions Liability Management	✓	!	✓	!	✗	!	✗

Who Benefits from the Trust?

Landowners, whose ongoing stewardship for durability is further resourced and ongoing liability is a manageable commitment

Project developers, as liability shifts to a separate entity and de-risks their climate investments

Credit buyers, who can invest in carbon projects knowing they will have a long-term climate impact

The entire carbon market, which has another tool to address non-permanence risk

The Permanence Trust Feasibility Study

AFF, in partnership with Kita and Climate Resilient Solutions, is conducting a feasibility study, supported by a robust Advisory Group of more than 50 organizations representing all stakeholder groups through the carbon market. AFF recently released a summary of the preliminary findings (scan the QR code) and a full report is expected in Q4 2026. The feasibility study is made possible with support from the High Tide Foundation's Carbon Policy and Markets Initiative.