

Soil carbon: policies and politics

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Soils and two pillars of climate action

- Adaptation
- Mitigation

Carbon basics

- Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas responsible for global warming. Humans keep adding it to the atmosphere, primarily by burning *fossil* fuels.
- Carbon is also what we put into soils when we incorporate manure or compost or mulch or cover crops.

Some concerns about soil carbon markets

- Fungibility
- Measurement – uncertainties, costs
- Land-grabbing
- Speculation

Three take home points

- Permanence matters
- Can't assume we can fit the geosphere in the biosphere
- Focusing on measurement takes attention and scarce resources away from things that matter

California leading the way

Look at the inspiring legislative summary from the California Climate and Agriculture Network

<http://calclimateag.org/climate-and-agriculture-legislative-roundup-2015/>

Conclusions

- prioritize permanent mitigation solutions – methane and nitrous oxide
- prioritize adaptation, and the role of healthy soils
- healthy soils deliver many climate benefits -- no need to focus on temporary mitigation potential