

# CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL TREE SPECIES GRAND WATERSHED IN IOWA



The region's forests will be affected by a changing climate and other stressors during this century. The National Climate Assessment describes how a changing climate can increase the vulnerability of forests in the Midwest (NCA 2018). This report includes information on the current landscape, observed climate trends, and a range of projected future climates.

The Landscape Change Research Group recently updated the Climate Change Tree Atlas, and this handout summarizes that information for select HUC 6 watersheds in Iowa. More Tree Atlas results are available online at [www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/](http://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/). In this handout, two climate scenarios are presented to "bracket" a range of possible futures. These future climate projections (2070 to 2099) provide information about how individual tree species may respond to a changing climate. Results for "low" and "high" emissions scenarios can be compared on the reverse side of this handout.

The updated Tree Atlas presents additional information helpful to interpret tree species changes:

- **Suitable habitat** - calculated based on 39 variables that explain where optimum conditions exist for a species, including soils, landforms, and climate variables.
- **Adaptability** - based on life-history traits that might increase or decrease tolerance of expected changes, such as the ability to withstand different forms of disturbance.
- **Capability** - a rating of the species' ability to cope or persist with climate change in this region based on suitable habitat change (statistical modeling), adaptability (literature review and expert opinion), and abundance (FIA data). The capability rating is modified by abundance information; ratings are downgraded for rare species and upgraded for abundant species.
- **Migration Potential Model** - when combined with habitat suitability, an estimate of a species' colonization likelihood for new habitats. This rating can be helpful for assisted migration or focused management (see the table section: "New Habitat with Migration Potential").

Remember that models are just tools, and they're not perfect. Model projections can't account for all factors that influence future species success. If a species is rare or confined to a small area, model results may be less reliable. These factors, and others, could cause a particular species to perform better or worse than a model projects. Human choices will also continue to influence forest distribution, especially for tree species that are projected to increase. Planting programs may assist the movement of future-adapted species, but this will depend on management decisions. Despite these limits, models provide useful information about future expectations. It's perhaps best to think of these projections as indicators of possibility and potential change.

**SOURCE:** This handout summarizes the full model results for selected HUC 6 watersheds in the state of Iowa, available at [www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/combined/resources/summaries](http://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/combined/resources/summaries). More information on vulnerability and adaptation in Iowa can be found at [www.forestadaptation.org/iowa](http://www.forestadaptation.org/iowa). A full description of the models and variables are provided in Iverson et al. 2019 ([www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/57857](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/57857)) and [www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/59105](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/59105)) and Peters et al. 2019 ([www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/58353](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/58353)).

## CLIMATE CHANGE CAPABILITY

### POOR CAPABILITY

American basswood	Pignut hickory
Eastern cottonwood	River birch
Flowering dogwood	Serviceberry
Ohio buckeye*	Shellbark hickory
Pawpaw	Sugar maple
	Swamp white oak

### FAIR CAPABILITY

Black locust	Pin oak
Black walnut	Shagbark hickory
Chinkapin oak	Shingle oak
Eastern redbud	White oak

### GOOD CAPABILITY

American elm	Hackberry
Bitternut hickory	Honeylocust
Black hickory	Osage-orange
Black oak	Pecan
Blackjack oak	Red mulberry
Bur oak	Slippery elm
Eastern hophornbeam; ironwood	Sycamore
Eastern redcedar	White ash

### Green ash

### MIXED RESULTS

Black cherry	Northern red oak
Black willow	Post oak
Boxelder	Silver maple
Mockernut hickory	

### NEW HABITAT WITH MIGRATION POTENTIAL

Cedar elm	Shumard oak
Common persimmon	Sugarberry
Pin cherry	Water oak



**ADAPTABILITY:** Life-history factors, such as the ability to respond favorably to disturbance, that are not included in the Tree Atlas model and may make a species more or less able to adapt to future stressors.

- + **HIGH** Species may perform better than modeled
- **MEDIUM**
- **LOW** Species may perform worse than modeled

**HABITAT CHANGE:** Projected change in suitable habitat between current and potential future conditions.

- ▲ **INCREASE** Projected increase of >20% by 2100
- **NO CHANGE** Projected change of <20% by 2100
- ▼ **DECREASE** Projected decrease of >20% by 2100
- ★ **NEW HABITAT** Tree Atlas projects new habitat for species not currently present

**ABUNDANCE:** Based on Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) summed Importance Value data, calibrated to a standard geographic area.

- + **ABUNDANT**
- **COMMON**
- **RARE**

**CAPABILITY:** An overall rating that describes a species' ability to cope or persist with climate change based on suitable habitat change class (statistical modeling), adaptability (literature review and expert opinion), and abundance within this region.

- ▲ **GOOD** Increasing suitable habitat, medium or high adaptability, and common or abundant
- **FAIR** Mixed combinations, such as a rare species with increasing suitable habitat and medium adaptability.
- ▼ **POOR** Decreasing suitable habitat, medium or low adaptability, and uncommon or rare

SPECIES	ADAPT	ABUN	LOW CLIMATE CHANGE (RCP 4.5)		HIGH CLIMATE CHANGE (RCP 8.5)	
			HABITAT CHANGE	CAPABILITY	HABITAT CHANGE	CAPABILITY
American basswood	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
American elm	•	•	▲	▲	▲	▲
Bitternut hickory*	+	-	▲	▲	▲	▲
Black cherry	-	-	▲	▲		●
Black hickory	•	-	▲	▲	▲	▲
Black locust*	•	•	▼	●	▼	●
Black oak	•	-	▲	▲	▲	▲
Black walnut*	•	•	▼	●	▼	●
Black willow*	-	-	▼	▼	▲	▲
Blackjack oak	+	-	▲	▲	▲	▲
Boxelder*	+	-	▼	▼	●	●
Bur oak	+	•	●	▲	●	▲
Cedar elm	-	-	★		★	
Chinkapin oak	•	-	●	●	●	●
Common persimmon*	+	-	★		★	
Eastern cottonwood*	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Eastern hophorn-beam; ironwood*	+	-	▲	▲	▲	▲
Eastern redbud*	•	-	●	●	●	●
Eastern redcedar	•	•	▲	▲	▲	▲
Flowering dogwood	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Green ash*	•	•	▲	▲	▲	▲
Hackberry	+	•	▲	▲	▲	▲
Honeylocust*	+	•	●	▲	●	▲
Mockernut hickory	+	-	●	●	▲	▲
Northern red oak	+	-	▲	▲		●
Ohio buckeye*	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Osage-orange	+	•	●	▲	●	▲
Pawpaw*	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Pecan*	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲
Pignut hickory	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Pin cherry*	•	-			★	
Pin oak*	-	•	▼	●	▼	●
Post oak	+	-	●	●	▲	▲
Red mulberry*	•	-	▲	▲	▲	▲
River birch*	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Serviceberry*	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Shagbark hickory	•	•	▼	●	▼	●
Shellbark hickory*	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Shingle oak	•	•	▼	●	▼	●
Shumard oak*	+	-	★		★	
Silver maple*	+	-	●	●	▲	▲
Slippery elm*	•	•	●	▲	●	▲
Sugar maple	+	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Sugarberry	•	-	★		★	
Swamp white oak*	•	-	▼	▼	▼	▼
Sycamore*	•	-	▲	▲	▲	▲
Water oak	•	-	★		★	
White ash	-	•	●	▲	●	▲
White oak	+	•	▼	●	▼	●

\*Species with low model reliability based on five statistical metrics of the habitat models that affect change class. See maps and tables for more information ([www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/combined/resources/summaries](http://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/atlas/combined/resources/summaries)).