

‘Earth looks fragile from space’: Jeff Bezos pledges \$1bn to conservation

Donation from \$10bn Bezos Earth Fund will go towards biodiversity hotspots in Congo Basin and Andes



Jeff Bezos said he was reminded of Earth’s fragility when he went into space with Blue Origin. Photograph: Mandel Ngan/AFP via Getty Images

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Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, has said he realised just how fragile the Earth was when he looked back down at it from space, while committing \$1bn to conservation projects around the world.

The money, made through the \$10bn **Bezos Earth Fund** that he **formed last year**, will go towards the conservation of nature in biodiversity hotspots such as the Congo Basin, the tropical Andes and the Pacific Ocean. It will help finance a goal to protect 30% of the world's oceans and land by the end of the decade, a draft target in **Paris-style UN agreement** on nature being negotiated.

“Nature is our life support system and it's fragile. I was reminded of this just this July when I went into space with Blue Origin. I'd heard that seeing the Earth from space changes one's point of view of the world. But I was not prepared for just how much that would be true,” the Washington Post owner said at the launch event on Monday.

“Living down here, the world and the atmosphere seem vast and they seem stable. But looking back at Earth from there, the atmosphere seems thin and the world finite. Both beautiful, both fragile.”

Bezos, one of the world's richest men, said the money would help expand, manage and monitor protected areas while also putting indigenous and local communities at the heart of efforts to protect biodiversity. **Critics of the 30%** target have warned it could legitimise land-grabs of indigenous lands and it has faced opposition from some countries during UN talks.

Grants from the \$1bn pledge, which were announced during New York Climate Week, will start to be distributed this year and will prioritise regions and countries with a standing commitment to protecting nature. Bezos said the announcement was the first of a three-part nature strategy for his environmental fund that will also cover ecosystem restoration and food system transformation.

In an **Instagram post** in February 2020, Bezos said he was donating \$10bn of his \$200bn fortune to save the Earth's environment by 2030. Boris Johnson and the Colombian president, Iván Duque, welcomed Bezos's latest donation to conservation. Both the UK and Colombia are **among dozens of countries** that

have made the 30% commitment to protect land and sea for nature, part of the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People led by Costa Rica, France and the UK.

“Last year, global loss of primary forest equaled twice the emissions of all cars on the road in the US. To turn the tide on the climate crisis, we must stop destroying forests and other fragile ecosystems, and conserve and restore the world’s carbon sinks,” said John Kerry, the US special presidential envoy for climate.

“The Bezos Earth Fund’s commitment of \$1bn to conserve and expand critical high carbon stocks comes at a pivotal moment as we seek to avoid the loss of irreplaceable biodiversity and further destabilisation of the climate.”

Jeff Bezos pledges \$1 billion to protect 30 percent of the Earth’s land and sea

Bezos’s large donations are transforming climate philanthropy — even as Amazon’s cloud-computing business and shipping operations have a significant carbon footprint

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Amazon founder Jeff Bezos spoke at the National Press Club in 2019 about the e-commerce giant's sustainability efforts. (Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg News)

By
Jay Greene
and
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Amazon founder Jeff Bezos earmarked \$1 billion of his \$10 billion environmental philanthropy to conservation efforts Monday afternoon, aiming to protect 30 percent of the Earth's land and sea by 2030 in an effort to prevent mass extinctions.

The Bezos Earth Fund, which [he formed in 2020](#), did not identify any of the groups or initiatives it intends to back with the new

donations. It said, in a news release, only that it will prioritize “areas that are important for biodiversity and carbon stocks and will give emphasis to the central role of local communities and Indigenous peoples in conservation efforts.” It added that the philanthropy will focus on the Congo Basin, the tropical Andes and the tropical Pacific Ocean.