

# Bridging Nature & Climate

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## Message Guidance

Frameworks and examples for funders, practitioners, and advocates to communicate climate through nature and shared values.

Nature connects across issues—health, culture, education, and climate—creating common ground for broader engagement. This companion resource builds on insights from Rethink Outside’s message testing to offer practical framing guidance for reaching audiences beyond the climate choir.

Across our testing, one pattern was clear: **relatability matters more than urgency or societal benefit**. Messages rooted in culture, identity, and everyday outdoor experiences outperformed those focused on the societal benefits of parks and green spaces. The guidance below reflects this shift, from leading with climate to leading with what people already value.

## Messages that resonate

Through message testing, two narrative frames stood out for their ability to bridge nature and climate, especially among audiences traditionally outside the climate-support base.

1. **Climate impacts to outdoor sports**
2. **Cultural connection**

Rather than asking people to care about climate first, these frames invite engagement by grounding climate impacts in familiar experiences and activities.

### Climate impacts to outdoor sports

**Core message:** Whether its training in scorching heat or games called off from smoke, conditions for outdoor athletes are changing for the worse.

**Why it resonates:** Messages framing nature as prevention and This framing connects climate impacts to activities people already love or are interested in, making the issue feel personal rather than political.



By focusing on sports and recreation, it bypasses ideological triggers and invites curiosity through lived experience.

#### How to apply it:

- Start with disruption to everyday routines and **let the activity lead the story**, using climate as context rather than the headline.
- Share specific, **relatable examples** such as local sports seasons, outdoor training, community leagues, etc.
- Consider partnering with **athletes or coaches as trusted messengers** and storytellers.

## Cultural connection

**Core message:** Our towns and cities are abundant with edible plants whose stories are closely tied to ours. History and tradition can be found right outside your doorstep.

**Why it resonates:** Cultural framing resonates strongly with apolitical audiences, positioning climate as a shared concern tied to identity, heritage, and belonging.

#### How to apply it:

- Emphasize **care** and **stewardship**, helping audiences see climate action as an extension of honoring culture and place, rather than a political stance.
- Lead with **identity** and place-based stories such as local foodways, traditions, and community relationships to land, to connect climate impacts with lived experiences.



## Supporting Frames

While less immediately engaging in our message testing campaign, frames around parks as resilience or greener schoolyards can support deeper understanding once audiences are already engaged.

#### How to apply it:

- Use **after** values-based entry points have built initial interest
- Avoid abstract resilience language without grounding in **place and concrete examples** such as flood mitigation, cooling centers, etc.
- Position these frames as solutions that **protect what people already care about**.

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### Learn More

These frameworks are part of Rethink Outside's Narrative Hub, helping funders and practitioners share a more powerful story about how nature and time outside strengthen our communities.

Visit [rethinkoutside.org/narrativehub](https://rethinkoutside.org/narrativehub) to explore additional resources and case studies.