



THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

A wide-angle photograph of two hikers standing on a red, rocky volcanic ridge. The hiker on the left is wearing a light blue jacket and a tan hat, while the hiker on the right is wearing a darker blue jacket and a black beanie, and is holding a camera. In the background, there are snow-capped mountains and a body of water under a cloudy sky.

**Publish with Planet Forward**

# Planet Forward's Mission

Planet Forward is dedicated to exploring the world's challenges through the lens of progress. That can mean a lot of things, and we've built Planet Forward on examining solutions and by asking what on Earth progress means...

Our collegiate community of contributing writers and multimedia storytellers focuses on solutions rather than just describing problems. We explore and report on ideas, innovations, and actions to address environmental sustainability. We're asking not just what is wrong, but what is possible.



We are looking for three types of stories:

### Long form

These cover are the big, expansive written, video or audio stories that can anchor a broad theme and are open to Contributors, too.

These stories can be profiles, process stories, or forward-looking narratives and run in the 1200- to 2000-word range, a 4-minute video, or a 15-minute audio story.

### Medium Form

These are often Multimedia stories. We welcome ideas for stories that can best be told visually or experientially through video, data, graphics, maps, audio, illustration, or other multimedia approaches.

### Short Form

These are smaller pieces (500 to 800 words) that hit on a theme we are addressing, but in a more particular or formatted way.

Examples include an informative map and photo mashup, original music, a Q&A, a photo essay, or a shorter written reflection.

Get creative! Focus on solutions.

# Types of Stories (continued)

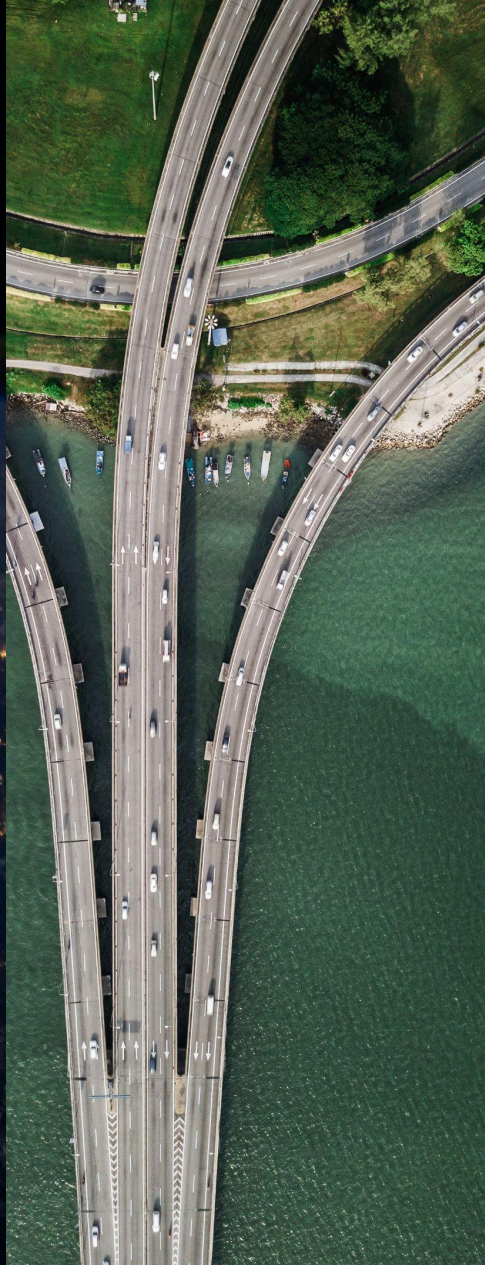


**LONG FORM:** We want ambitious stories with compelling characters, tension, a narrative arc, and big ideas. These stories can be profiles, process stories, or forward-looking narratives and run in the 1200- to 2000-word range, a 4-minute video, or a 15-minute audio story. One story of this type is the creative video on the resilience of Tucson's [Santa Cruz River](#). One story of this type is the creative video on the resilience of Tucson's [Santa Cruz River](#).

**SHORT FORM:** A few prototypes include an informative [map and photo mashup](#), [original music](#), a service-oriented story on [sustainable foraging](#), a Q & A story with [leaders on policy](#), a photo essay on a [SUPing garbage man](#), and a written reflection on how [climate hits home](#).

**MEDIUM FORM:** We appreciate visual stories that can cut complex challenges down to scale, such as this look on the [past, present, and future of marine protection](#), or the [illustrated, entangled lives](#) of crabs and whales. Planet Forward publishes audio stories, such as [how perennial grains](#) could change U.S. farming; and videos like this one that take audiences to [the Navajo nation](#) to examine responses to water inequities. We'd also like to hear your short-take on environmental issues around the world, such as [this adventure to Iceland](#). Think TikTok vertical. If you have an innovative idea, let us hear them!

# THEMES

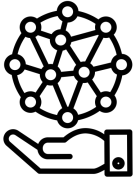


# We are looking for stories that fall under a variety of themes:



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from Noun Project

- **WATER** - We're interested in pitches about notable shifts from wasteful practices to conservation, from actions that pollute waterways and degrade water sources to ones that promote clean water. What are the solutions and who benefits? How are justice and community playing a central role in these stories?



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- **FUTURE FORWARD** - How are you thinking of our planet's future? How can our interconnectedness, sense of community, and our institutions all play a part in sustaining its health. Send us your creative work in this area - poetry, essays and short fiction are welcome.

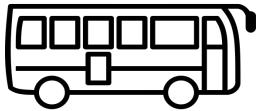


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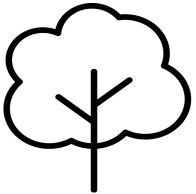
- **JUSTICE** - Climate justice and environmental justice connects public health and quality of the environment with concerns for social and economic matters. Environmental justice is the basic right of all people to be free of poisons and other hazards. Where are the stories that demonstrate how communities recognized and halted the disproportionate burdens imposed by lower economic and people of color communities by environmentally harmful conditions and moved toward a vision of environmentally healthy, economically sustainable, and culturally thriving communities?



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- **COMMUNITY-BASED AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO AGRICULTURE** - Help us see beyond the plate of food in front of us. Whether it's growing practices that can stand up to a changing climate, or an introduction to eating and purchasing practices that reduce waste and emissions in your dorm and at home, or taking us into present-day, cultural shifts in how the food we eat is grown, produced, or otherwise eaten, recovered, and composted.
- **ALLEVIATING EMISSIONS WHILE IMPROVING MOBILITY** - How are people getting around within your city and beyond, and within and between countries? Help people see beyond current transportation: Introduce us to sustainable practices like apps that help us rideshare, skip a trip, or ride a bike, or taking us to a future-forward cultural shift in how communities and the private sector transition to electric-powered mobility. How do we get there?
- **HEALTH BENEFITS OF ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE**- We're on the hunt for stories about communities taking notable approaches to improving human health amid a changing climate. Some solutions to reducing greenhouse gases, such as planting trees, have free, local, and immediate benefits for people and communities.
- **BIODIVERSITY** - Some projections indicate that the planet is headed towards a period of extraordinary change: A sixth mass extinction, the first in Earth's history driven by the actions of a single species – our own. What existing and future innovations can reduce species loss, build resilience to a changing planet, and support solutions? How can we fix the drivers of extinction while also improving human well-being? Who is doing this work? Tell their story.



# Pitching a Story:



We tend to get a certain type of pitch, a story about one novel project in a particular place. A project may be beneficial to the local people and ecosystem, but the connection to a wider application or scalable model is not made. These pitches generally don't work for us.

We are interested in pitches when a program is important enough to change conventional thinking, has good data and evidence of success, and provides a lens through which we can tell a bigger story about larger ideas. These stories can still be about your local area, but they should have a larger meaning. We will be using only a few of these each semester, so each story must carry weight, even if it is short.

Another type of pitch that could work for us is a visionary or trailblazer community: Data shows that a certain place is doing better against a certain problem than others with comparable resources. Your job is to show us how and why this is so. We can't wait to hear more!



# Pitching a Story (continued)



We want contributing writers and multimedia storytellers to consider these things while pitching:

- How do we know this project is “working” and what does “working” mean?
- Is there evidence to draw on?
- What does the data say?
- Does the project relate in a broader way to other programs or larger ideas?
- Is there enough history to enhance our understanding?
- Who can you interview that has a compelling story to tell?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

If you need further guidance on how to pitch, The Open Notebook has a gallery of pitches in their [pitch database](#), details on [errors and how not to pitch](#) and [sharpening your ideas from topic to story](#).

# How to Pitch



Email to [pitch@planetforward.org](mailto:pitch@planetforward.org)

Please include:

- Two to three paragraphs
- Your name
- Your school
- Your year (whether an undergraduate or graduate student)

We respond to pitches on a rolling basis, but we decide much of our slate of assignments in weekly pitch review meetings.

# Contacts

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School of Media  
& Public Affairs

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