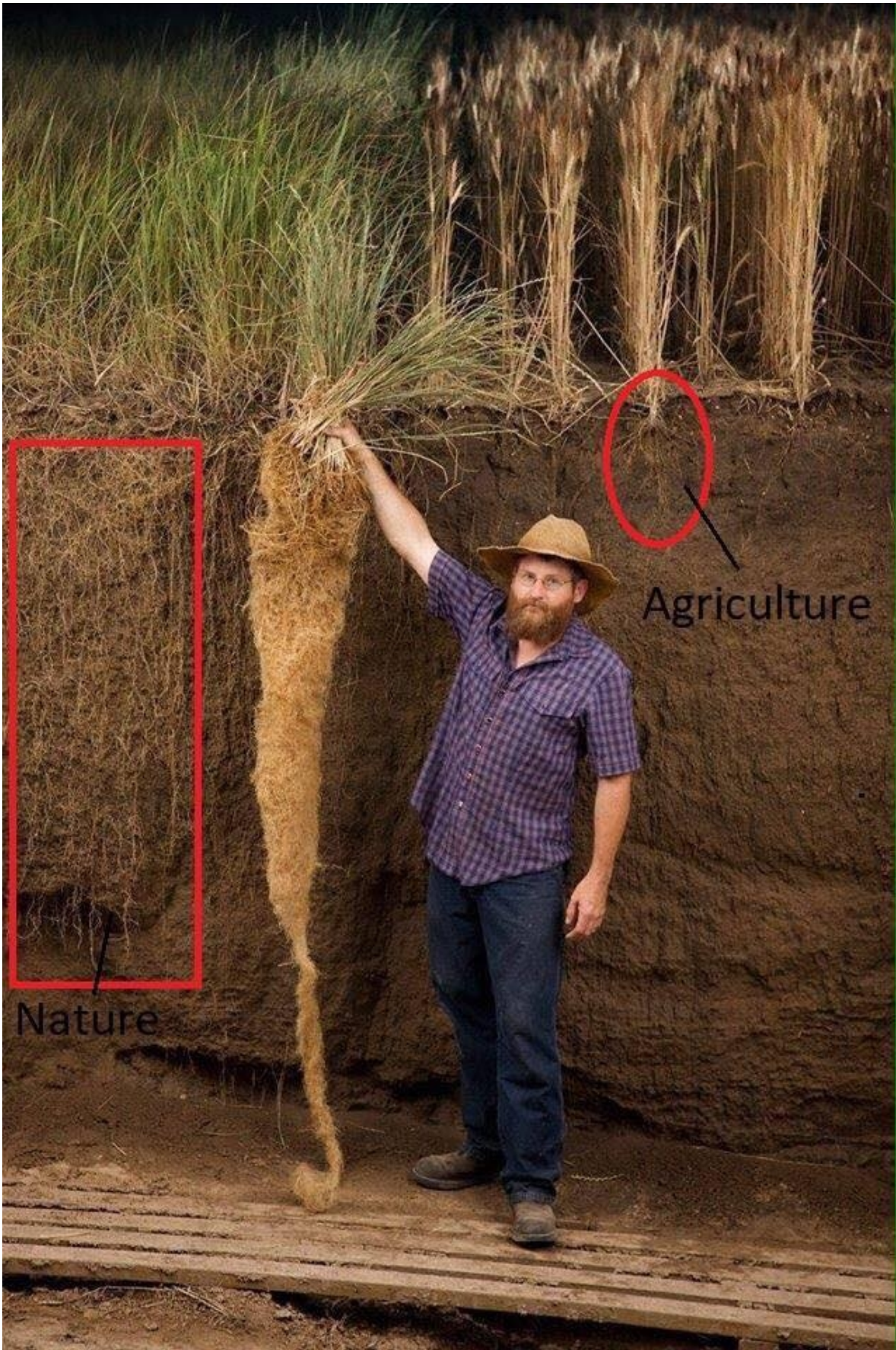


Prairies are some of the most endangered ecosystems in the world, with the tallgrass prairie being the most endangered. Only 1-4% of tallgrass prairie still exists.

Prairies are critically important, not only for the unique biodiversity they possess, but for their effect on climate.

The ability to store carbon is a valuable ecological service in today's changing climate. Carbon, which is emitted both naturally and by human activities such as burning coal to create electricity, is a greenhouse gas that is increasing in the Earth's atmosphere. Reports from the International Panel on Climate Change, a group of more than 2,000 climate scientists from around the world, agree that increased greenhouse gases are causing climate change, which is leading to sea level rise, higher temperatures, and altered rain patterns.

Most of the prairie's carbon sequestration happens below ground, where prairie roots can dig into the soil to depths up to 15 feet and more. Prairies can store much more carbon below ground than a forest can store above ground. In fact, the prairie was once the largest carbon sink in the world-much bigger than the Amazon rainforest-and its destruction has had devastating effects.



Nature



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