



Forest Service

Rocky Mountain Region

740 Simms Street
Golden, CO 80401
303-275-5350
FAX: 303-275-5366

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Date: MAR 16 2016

Route To:

Subject: Review Process for Healthy Forest Restoration Act Section 602(c), Additional Insect and Disease Landscape-Scale Area Designation

To: Deputy Chief, National Forest System

We are requesting an additional designation under Section 8204 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, known as the 2014 Farm Bill, of an area that is at risk of or is currently experiencing an insect or disease epidemic. We recommend that the San Isabel National Forest be designated as an Insect and Disease Landscape-Scale at risk area.

The San Isabel National Forest is currently experiencing a spruce beetle and spruce budworm outbreak. These are large landscape scale events affecting over 153,000 acres to date. Mortality of mature spruce alone may exceed 75% in the next 15 years based on the conditions of other forests in the region including the Rio Grande and Gunnison National Forests. Total tree mortality on the San Isabel is predicted to exceed 25% in 118 of 135 6th level Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) watersheds. These at risk watersheds cover 95% of the forest. The other watersheds contain individual stands of trees that are at risk of significant basal area loss. These events pose a substantial risk to public infrastructure, health, and safety. It is critical that we expand the use of the National Environmental Policy Act tools on the San Isabel to accelerate the forest's management response to these major forest health events.

Enclosed is the justification for the additional designation per the criteria in the 2014 Farm Bill, a 2015 Forest Health Protection Insect and Disease Activity map showing high levels of spruce beetle and spruce budworm activity on the San Isabel, a map showing predicted tree mortality by 6th level HUC watershed based on National Insect and Disease Forest Risk Assessment data, a shapefile of the forest administrative boundaries, and a shapefile of predicted tree mortality by 6th level HUC watershed (field "MEAN_STD").

Please contact Deputy Regional Forester Jacqueline Buchanan at 303-275-5452 or jabuchanan@fs.fed.us should you have any questions.

DANIEL J. JIRÓN

Regional Forester

Enclosures (4)

cc: Jake Donnay, David Gwaze, Cherie Hamilton, Rick Cooksey, Roy Mask, Robert Cain, Jeffrey Underhill, Sharon Paul, Erin Connelly, Sara Mayben, James Gerleman

