



File Code: 3400
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Subject: R5 Insect & Disease Treatment Area Designation Request 2017

To: Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief, National Forest System

I am writing to request additional designations of landscape-scale areas on national forests in California to address insect or disease threats under Section 602 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591a), as added by section 8204 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, known as the 2014 Farm Bill.

Tree mortality continues to increase in California with an estimated 102 million trees across 7.7 million acres dead due to an ongoing drought, increasing temperatures and bark beetle infestation. In 2016 alone, 62 million trees died on 4.3 million acres in California. Dead trees pose a threat to public and employee safety and major infrastructure.

We continue to work on restoration projects within our currently designated watersheds, but the ongoing tree mortality crisis requires us to shift focus to high hazard areas in need of treatment.

After consultation with my Forest Supervisors, pest specialists and foresters across California, we have found that 118 additional watersheds at the 6th level Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) are in need of designation (Shown in Attachment A Map and Attachment B Spreadsheet). This represents approximately one million acres outside of wilderness. The Forest Supervisors are committed to active restoration using tools available under this designation. We have also collaborated with Cal Fire who supports these designations.

All proposed watersheds meet one or more of the criteria outlined in the 2014 Farm Bill. These watersheds are experiencing declining forest health based on annual surveys; are at risk of substantially increased tree mortality over the next 15 years due to insect or disease infestation, based on the National Insect and Disease Risk Map; and/or contain hazard trees that pose an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health and safety. They are all experiencing increased bark beetle activity and tree mortality due to current drought conditions.

For the reasons above, I am recommending these additional watersheds for designation as priority treatment areas under the 2014 Farm Bill. These designations will give us an additional



tool to accelerate restoration efforts across California's forests. Please contact Chris Fischer, Deputy Director State & Private Forestry at cfischer@fs.fed.us or 707-562-8921 for any additional information or questions.



 RANDY MOORE
Regional Forester Pacific Southwest Region

cc: John Crockett, David Gwaze