



**File Code:** 2400  
**Route To:**

**Date:** NOV 13 2017

**Subject:** Region 8 Request for Additional Farm Bill Insect and Disease Designations

**To:** Deputy Chief, National Forest System

Per section 8204 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, I am requesting the designation of 250,000 acres of sixth-level hydrologic units (HUCs) as insect and disease treatment areas on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests. The HUCs that are proposed for designation can be found in the enclosed letter dated August 28, 2017, from the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests in Table 2 of the "Ozark-St. Francis National Forests-Request for Additional Designation of Insect and Disease Risk Areas".

The National Insect and Disease Risk Map, and the 2013 National Insect and Disease Risk Assessment were used to assess risk to watersheds across the Forests. There is a need for this designation because insect and disease threats include (but are not limited to) oak decline, Southern pine beetle, and Emerald ash borer.

**Inventory and Assessment indicates:**

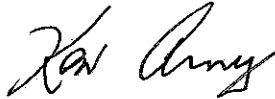
1. All sixth-level HUCs on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests are at risk of losing a percentage of basal area in oak trees as a result of oak decline. This was verified by on-site observations and past decline events (see enclosure figure 3 and table 2).
2. Southern pine beetle (SPB), *Dendroctonus frontalis* Zimmerman, has the potential to infest shortleaf pine across the southern portion of the Forests where it is more dominant and would have a significant negative impact. The continued active management of pine dominated forest communities are needed in order to reduce the density of shortleaf pine, and the possibility of future outbreaks having a large scale negative impact.
3. Emerald ash borer is present, and modeling indicates there are mixed stands of hardwood that have ash as a significant component. When the borer makes its way into eastern Arkansas, there will be stands that have species composition change as the ash dies out.

The designation request meets criteria 1 through 3 because the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests: 1) is experiencing forest health decline; 2) is at risk of substantially increased tree mortality in the next 15 years; or, 3) the acres proposed for designation include locations with hazard tree risk posing an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health, or safety.



The enclosure provides the supporting documents. In addition, GIS files for the Forest are located at: T:\AFS\NFS\OzarkStFrancis\Project\SO\OtherStaffProjects\Wildlife\OZF HFRA.

Please contact Peter Gaulke, Southern Region Planning Director, at 404-347-3183, or email at [pgaulke@fs.fed.us](mailto:pgaulke@fs.fed.us) for additional information.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ken Arney".

KEN ARNEY  
Acting Regional Forester

Enclosure