



File Code: 3400; 2400**Date:** July 27, 2015**Route To:****Subject:** R5 Insect & Disease treatment area designation request 2015**To:** 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.

After consultation with my Forest Supervisors, pest specialists and foresters across California, we have found that 403 watersheds at the 6th level HUC are in need of designation (shown in Attachment A Map and Attachment B Spreadsheet). This area represents approximately 5.3 million acres outside of wilderness. The Forest Supervisors are committed to active restoration using tools available under this designation. We actively collaborated with the California Resources Agency and Cal Fire and state agencies support 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. In fact, we have recorded a 4- to 10-fold increase in tree mortality from last year's survey in many of these areas.

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

/s/ Jeanne Wade Evans (for)

RANDY MOORE
Regional Forester Pacific Southwest Region

cc: Jacob Donnay, James Hubbard, Monica Lear, Bryan Rice, Jeanne Wade-Evans, Barnie Gyant, Sherry Hazelhurst, Debra Whitman

Enclosures

