



**File Code:** 2400; 1950  
**Route To:**

**Date:** JUL 25 2017

**Subject:** Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) Section 602(c): Request to Designate Additional Insect and Disease Acres on the Payette National Forest.

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

I am writing to request additional designations of landscape-scale areas within the Intermountain Region on the Payette National Forest (PNF) to address insect or disease threats under Section 602 of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 16 U.S.C. 6591a), as added by Section 8204 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, known as the Farm Bill.

Federal forests cover over 20 million acres in Idaho, representing about 75 percent of the forested landscape and 38 percent of the entire State. Approximately 12.6 million acres of federal forest land is identified as suitable for some level of management. Of the suitable land base, 8.8 million acres is at high risk of mortality and fire as defined by the criteria in the Farm Bill. The initial designation of 1.8 million acres represented a modest effort to begin to address forest health issues across the entire landscape of the National Forest System in Idaho.

The PNF administers approximately 2.3 million acres. In March 2014, the Idaho Governor requested and received designation of 50 priority landscape areas, covering approximately 1.8 million acres on a number of National Forests in the State. The PNF had one area designated as a priority landscape for treatment under the 2014 Farm Bill, totaling approximately 6,123 acres in the Lower Kennally Creek watershed (See Attachment A).

At the time of the initial request for designation the Forest and our collaborative group, the Payette Forest Coalition, were very focused on the CFLR landscapes. With recent demonstrations of the benefits of the Good Neighbor Authority, both are interested in expanding the use of the Farm Bill Authorities to increase the pace and scale of restoration across the Forest. Subsequent to the initial designated area request, the PNF has conducted a more thorough evaluation of insect and disease issues across the Forest.

After consultation with forest staff, entomologists and pathologists, the Forest identified an additional 67 sixth field hydrologic units (see Attachment C [Table of Watersheds proposed for designation]) that meet the 2014 Farm Bill criteria for designation as priority landscapes for treatment. These 67 watersheds encompass approximately 1,400,000 acres and are displayed on Attachment B as the "proposal outer boundary". Of these 1,400,000 acres, approximately 782,000 acres are within the PNF Administrative Forest Boundary. Of these 782,000 acres, approximately 558,000 acres are National Forest System ownership and have management direction in the PNF Land & Resource Management Plan that support active management. These 558,000 acres are what the PNF is proposing to be designated as additional priority landscape areas for treatment and are displayed as the "proposal area" on Attachment B.

These additional areas proposed for designation as priority landscapes are:

- within the PNF administrative forest boundary;
- in areas where the PNF Land & Resource Management Plan supports active management; and
- are primarily located in the roaded front country.



Areas excluded from this request include:

- existing and recommended Wilderness areas;
- Research Natural Areas;
- Inventoried Roadless Areas; and
- the area previously designated area on the PNF.


All proposed watersheds meet one or more of the criteria outlined in the 2014 Farm Bill. The proposed watersheds are experiencing declining forest health based on annual surveys; are at risk of substantially increased tree mortality over the next fifteen years due to insect or disease information, based on the [National Insect and Disease Risk Map](#) (see Attachment D); and/or contain hazard trees that pose an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health, and safety. These watersheds are experiencing increased bark beetle activity and tree mortality and are subsequently increasing the potential for uncharacteristic wildfires as was experienced in 2007 and 2015 on the Forest.

To date, the PNF has engaged in project development in conjunction with the State utilizing the Good Neighbor Authority in the only insect and disease designated area initially requested by the Forest. Future projects within the designated areas would address insect, disease and/or fire risks. The requirement for collaboration in the Farm Bill would be fulfilled utilizing either the existing [Payette Forest Coalition](#) or other collaborative processes to ensure contributions to the planning, implementation, and/or monitoring of these projects. The Forest has also discussed this proposal with the Payette Forest Coalition and the group was supportive of requesting this additional area for designation as a priority landscape.

The PNF and Intermountain Region are committed to active restoration using tools available under the Farm Bill. Designation of these additional areas on a landscape-scale would be an integral part of our efforts to focus restoration work and add additional capacity to the vegetation restoration actions on the Forest. It would also allow the Forest to more efficiently and effectively utilize the Forests Supplemental Project Agreement to the Good Neighbor Authority Master Agreement for Idaho.

All supporting materials are available at this O: drive location  
O:\NFS\Payette\Program\2400TimberMgmt\2400MiscProjects\Farm Bill IandD designations\2017 additional request\package to Dudley

For the reasons above, I am recommending these additional watersheds for designation as priority landscapes under the 2014 Farm Bill. For additional information regarding this request please contact Mike Dudley, Intermountain Region Director of State and Private Forestry; [mdudley@fs.fed.us](mailto:mdudley@fs.fed.us) or 801-625-5253) or Paul Klasner (PNF Forester; [pklasner@fs.fed.us](mailto:pklasner@fs.fed.us) or 208-634-0774).

  
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Regional Forester

Enclosures

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