



File Code: 2400; 3400
Route To:

Date: MAY 04 2018

Subject: Request for Additional Insect & Disease Treatment Areas for the Salmon-Challis National Forest

To: Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief, National Forest System

I am writing to request additional designations of landscape-scale areas within the Intermountain Region on the Salmon-Challis National Forest 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.

In March 2014, the Idaho Governor requested and received initial designation of 50 proposed treatment areas, covering approximately 1,815,864 acres across the Boise, Caribou-Targhee, Idaho Panhandle, Nez Perce-Clearwater, Salmon-Challis and Sawtooth NFs. The Salmon-Challis designated approximately 80,600 acres at that time. These initial areas were proposed for designation because they met the criteria for designation and they covered areas already proposed for restoration activities/projects.

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, 8.84 million acres (70 percent of the suitable land base) is at high risk of mortality and fire as defined by the criteria in the 2014 Farm Bill. The magnitude of the issue in Idaho requires action.

The initial designation of 1.8 million acres represented a modest effort to begin addressing the forest health issues across the entire landscape of the National Forest System in Idaho. Since the initial designations, other forests in Idaho – such as the Idaho Panhandle, Nez Perce-Clearwater and Payette – have taken steps to review and request additional designation opportunities. These follow-up requests resulted in 3 plus million additional acres in Idaho being designated as part of the national insect and disease treatment program. The Salmon-Challis has conducted a more thorough evaluation of the insect and disease issues across the Forest and is requesting additional designations as described.

All additional proposed watersheds/acres meet one or more of the criteria outlined in the 2014 Farm Bill. These watersheds/acres 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. After consultation with Forest staff and local collaborative groups, the Salmon-Challis identified acres where there are additional opportunities for designation. Please see Appendix A for more specifics regarding the designation request, an overview of discussions with and feedback from local collaborative



groups and explanation of how the HFRA/Farm Bill authorities have been used to date.

The Salmon-Challis is committed to active restoration using tools available under the Farm Bill. Initial success with existing projects and commitment moving forward with partners and communities serves as a strong foundation for success in restoring our forested lands. Designation of these additional areas on a landscape-scale will be an integral part of efforts to focus restoration work and add additional capacity to the vegetation restoration actions on the Salmon-Challis. It will also allow the Salmon-Challis to more efficiently and effectively utilize other implementation tools, such as stewardship contracting and Good Neighbor Authority.

For the reasons above, I am requesting these additional areas be included for designation under the 2014 Farm Bill. Please see Appendix A for additional information regarding acres designated as “roadless” under the Idaho Roadless Rule.

For additional/clarifying information please contact Mike Dudley, Director State and Private Forestry at 801-625-5253 or mdudley@fs.fed.us or Bill Baer, Salmon-Challis NF Forestry & Fuels Program lead at 208-756-5132 or williambaer@fs.fed.us.

The shapefiles associated with this request can be found on the T: at the location specified below or [here](#). If you have additional questions about the shapefiles or need additional data, please contact Andy Klimek, Salmon-Challis NF GIS Specialist at 208-756-5143 or aklimek@fs.fed.us


For NORA B. RASURE
Regional Forester

Enclosures

cc: D. Gwaze, L.Chappell, D.Rosenkrance, K.Lee

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The file geodatabase is **FarmBill2018.gdb**

The GIS layer is **SCNF2018FarmBill**