

**File Code:** 3400; 2400**Date:** AUG 16 2017**Route To:****Subject:** Farm Bill Insect and Disease Treatment Area Designation**To:** Regional Forester, Southern Region

Thank you for your letter of April 28, 2017, requesting the designation of additional landscape-scale areas on the Ouachita National Forest and National Forests of Mississippi 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.

I have determined the areas that you requested to be designated under Section 602 meet the following criteria in Section 602:

- The area is experiencing decline of forest health based on annual forest health surveys;
- The area is at risk of substantial tree mortality over the next 15 years based on the National Insect and Disease Risk Map; or
- The area is one in which hazard trees pose imminent risk to public infrastructure, health, or safety.

Based on this determination, I hereby designate 287,109 acres on the Ouachita National Forest based on 304,550 acres requested and 569,255 acres on the National Forests of Mississippi based on 19 eighth level Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) watersheds provided. Note the difference between the requested acres and the approved designations is from adjusting your request to National Forest System Proclaimed Land areas, removing non-Forest Service inholdings and excluding Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. A map showing the designated areas is enclosed. This letter of designation, the map showing the designated areas as well as other documents pertaining to your request will be posted at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/farbill/>.

Designation under Section 602 will allow us to further evaluate these landscape areas for potential treatments to reduce the risk or extent of, or increase resilience to, insect or disease infestation in accordance with Sections 602(d).

Again, thank you for your request to designate landscape areas that are experiencing declining forest health in your Region. If you have any questions about the designation, please contact Jeanne Higgins, Acting Associate Deputy Chief, at 202-205-0824 or [jmhiggins@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmhiggins@fs.fed.us).

THOMAS L. TIDWELL  
Chief

Enclosures

