

ance and the development of water quality and watershed forestry programs.

SUBCHAPTER IV—INSECT INFESTATIONS
AND RELATED DISEASES

§ 6551. Findings and purpose

(a) Findings

Congress finds that—

(1) high levels of tree mortality resulting from insect infestation (including the interaction between insects and diseases) may result in—

- (A) increased fire risk;
- (B) loss of old trees and old growth;
- (C) loss of threatened and endangered species;
- (D) loss of species diversity;
- (E) degraded watershed conditions;
- (F) increased potential for damage from other agents of disturbance, including exotic, invasive species; and
- (G) decreased timber values;

(2)(A) forest-damaging insects destroy hundreds of thousands of acres of trees each year;

(B) in the West, more than 21,000,000 acres are at high risk of forest-damaging insect infestation, and in the South, more than 57,000,000 acres are at risk across all land ownerships; and

(C) severe drought conditions in many areas of the South and West will increase the risk of forest-damaging insect infestations;

(3) the hemlock woolly adelgid is—

- (A) destroying streamside forests throughout the mid-Atlantic and Appalachian regions;
- (B) threatening water quality and sensitive aquatic species; and
- (C) posing a potential threat to valuable commercial timber land in northern New England;

(4)(A) the emerald ash borer is a nonnative, invasive pest that has quickly become a major threat to hardwood forests because an emerald ash borer infestation is almost always fatal to affected trees; and

(B) the emerald ash borer pest threatens to destroy more than 692,000,000 ash trees in forests in Michigan and Ohio alone, and between 5 and 10 percent of urban street trees in the Upper Midwest;

(5)(A) epidemic populations of Southern pine beetles are ravaging forests in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia; and

(B) in 2001, Florida and Kentucky experienced 146 percent and 111 percent increases, respectively, in Southern pine beetle populations;

(6) those epidemic outbreaks of Southern pine beetles have forced private landowners to harvest dead and dying trees, in rural areas and increasingly urbanized settings;

(7) according to the Forest Service, recent outbreaks of the red oak borer in Arkansas and Missouri have been unprecedented, with more than 1,000,000 acres infested at population levels never seen before;

(8) much of the damage from the red oak borer has taken place in national forests, and the Federal response has been inadequate to protect forest ecosystems and other ecological and economic resources;

(9)(A) previous silvicultural assessments, while useful and informative, have been limited in scale and scope of application; and

(B) there have not been sufficient resources available to adequately test a full array of individual and combined applied silvicultural assessments;

(10) only through the full funding, development, and assessment of potential applied silvicultural assessments over specific time frames across an array of environmental and climatic conditions can the most innovative and cost effective management applications be determined that will help reduce the susceptibility of forest ecosystems to attack by forest pests;

(11)(A) often, there are significant interactions between insects and diseases;

(B) many diseases (such as white pine blister rust, beech bark disease, and many other diseases) can weaken trees and forest stands and predispose trees and forest stands to insect attack; and

(C) certain diseases are spread using insects as vectors (including Dutch elm disease and pine pitch canker); and

(12) funding and implementation of an initiative to combat forest pest infestations and associated diseases should not come at the expense of supporting other programs and initiatives of the Secretary.

(b) Purposes

The purposes of this subchapter are—

(1) to require the Secretary to develop an accelerated basic and applied assessment program to combat infestations by forest-damaging insects and associated diseases;

(2) to enlist the assistance of colleges and universities (including forestry schools, land grant colleges and universities, and 1890 Institutions), State agencies, and private landowners to carry out the program; and

(3) to carry out applied silvicultural assessments.

(Pub. L. 108-148, title IV, §401, Dec. 3, 2003, 117 Stat. 1907.)

§ 6552. Definitions

In this subchapter:

(1) Applied silvicultural assessment

(A) In general

The term “applied silvicultural assessment” means any vegetative or other treatment carried out for information gathering and research purposes.

(B) Inclusions

The term “applied silvicultural assessment” includes timber harvesting, thinning, prescribed burning, pruning, and any combination of those activities.

(2) 1890 Institution

(A) In general

The term “1890 Institution” means a college or university that is eligible to receive