

forest health and reduce the susceptibility of forest ecosystems to severe infestations of forest-damaging insects and associated diseases on Federal land and State and private land; and

(3) to disseminate the results of the information gathering, treatments, and strategies.

(b) Cooperation and assistance

The Secretary shall—

(1) establish and carry out the program in cooperation with—

(A) scientists from colleges and universities (including forestry schools, land grant colleges and universities, and 1890 Institutions);

(B) Federal, State, and local agencies; and

(C) private and industrial landowners; and

(2) designate such colleges and universities to assist in carrying out the program.

(Pub. L. 108–148, title IV, §403, Dec. 3, 2003, 117 Stat. 1909.)

§ 6554. Applied silvicultural assessments

(a) Assessment efforts

For information gathering and research purposes, the Secretary may conduct applied silvicultural assessments on Federal land that the Secretary determines is at risk of infestation by, or is infested with, forest-damaging insects.

(b) Limitations

(1) Exclusion of certain areas

Subsection (a) does not apply to—

(A) a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System;

(B) any Federal land on which, by Act of Congress or Presidential proclamation, the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited;

(C) a congressionally-designated wilderness study area; or

(D) an area in which activities under subsection (a) would be inconsistent with the applicable land and resource management plan.

(2) Certain treatment prohibited

Nothing in subsection (a) authorizes the application of insecticides in municipal watersheds or associated riparian areas.

(3) Peer review

(A) In general

Before being carried out, each applied silvicultural assessment under this subchapter shall be peer reviewed by scientific experts selected by the Secretary, which shall include non-Federal experts.

(B) Existing peer review processes

The Secretary may use existing peer review processes to the extent the processes comply with subparagraph (A).

(c) Public notice and comment

(1) Public notice

The Secretary shall provide notice of each applied silvicultural assessment proposed to be carried out under this section.

(2) Public comment

The Secretary shall provide an opportunity for public comment before carrying out an applied silviculture assessment under this section.

(d) Categorical exclusion

(1) In general

Applied silvicultural assessment and research treatments carried out under this section on not more than 1,000 acres for an assessment or treatment may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement and environmental assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(2) Administration

Applied silvicultural assessments and research treatments categorically excluded under paragraph (1)—

(A) shall not be carried out in an area that is adjacent to another area that is categorically excluded under paragraph (1) that is being treated with similar methods; and

(B) shall be subject to the extraordinary circumstances procedures established by the Secretary pursuant to section 1508.4 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations.

(3) Maximum categorical exclusion

The total number of acres categorically excluded under paragraph (1) shall not exceed 250,000 acres.

(4) No additional findings required

In accordance with paragraph (1), the Secretary shall not be required to make any findings as to whether an applied silvicultural assessment project, either individually or cumulatively, has a significant effect on the environment.

(Pub. L. 108–148, title IV, §404, Dec. 3, 2003, 117 Stat. 1910.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, referred to in subsec. (d)(1), is Pub. L. 91–190, Jan. 1, 1970, 83 Stat. 852, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 55 (§4321 et seq.) of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 4321 of Title 42 and Tables.

§ 6555. Relation to other laws

The authority provided to each Secretary under this subchapter is supplemental to, and not in lieu of, any authority provided to the Secretaries under any other law.

(Pub. L. 108–148, title IV, §405, Dec. 3, 2003, 117 Stat. 1911.)

§ 6556. Termination of effectiveness

The authority provided by this subchapter terminates effective October 1, 2023.

(Pub. L. 108–148, title IV, §406, Dec. 3, 2003, 117 Stat. 1911; Pub. L. 115–334, title VIII, §8406(a), Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4845.)

AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115–334 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “There are author-

ized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this subchapter for each of fiscal years 2004 through 2008.’’

SUBCHAPTER V—HEALTHY FORESTS
RESERVE PROGRAM

§ 6571. Establishment of healthy forests reserve program

(a) Establishment

The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish the healthy forests reserve program for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems—

- (1) to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species;
- (2) to improve biodiversity;
- (3) to conserve forest land that provides habitat for species described in section 6572(b) of this title; and
- (4) to enhance carbon sequestration.

(b) Coordination

The Secretary of Agriculture shall carry out the healthy forests reserve program in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce.

(Pub. L. 108-148, title V, § 501, Dec. 3, 2003, 117 Stat. 1911; Pub. L. 115-334, title VIII, § 8407(a)(1), Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4845.)

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (a)(3), (4). Pub. L. 115-334 added par. (3) and redesignated former par. (3) as (4).

§ 6572. Eligibility and enrollment of lands in program

(a) In general

The Secretary of Agriculture, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, shall describe and define forest ecosystems that are eligible for enrollment in the healthy forests reserve program.

(b) Eligibility

To be eligible for enrollment in the healthy forests reserve program, land shall be private forest land, or private land being restored to forest land, the enrollment of which will maintain, restore, enhance, or otherwise measurably—

- (1) increase the likelihood of recovery of a species that is listed as endangered or threatened under section 1533 of this title; or
- (2) improve the well-being of a species that—
 - (A) is—
 - (i) not listed as endangered or threatened under such section; and
 - (ii) a candidate for such listing, a State-listed species, or a special concern species; or
 - (B) is deemed a species of greatest conservation need by a State wildlife action plan.

(c) Other considerations

In enrolling land that satisfies the criteria under subsection (b), the Secretary of Agriculture shall give additional consideration to land the enrollment of which will—

- (1) improve biological diversity;
- (2) conserve forest land that provides habitat for species described in subsection (b); and

- (3) increase carbon sequestration.

(d) Enrollment by willing owners

The Secretary of Agriculture shall enroll land in the healthy forests reserve program only with the consent of the owner of the land.

(e) Methods of enrollment

(1) Authorized methods

Land may be enrolled in the healthy forests reserve program in accordance with—

- (A) a 10-year cost-share agreement;
- (B) a 30-year easement; or
- (C)(i) a permanent easement; or
- (ii) in a State that imposes a maximum duration for easements, an easement for the maximum duration allowed under State law.

(2) Acreage owned by Indian tribes

(A) Definition of acreage owned by Indian tribes

In this paragraph, the term “acreage owned by Indian tribes” includes—

- (i) land that is held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes or individual Indians;
- (ii) land, the title to which is held by Indian tribes or individual Indians subject to Federal restrictions against alienation or encumbrance;
- (iii) land that is subject to rights of use, occupancy, and benefit of certain Indian tribes;
- (iv) land that is held in fee title by an Indian tribe; or
- (v) land that is owned by a native corporation formed under section 5124 of title 25 or section 1607 of title 43; or
- (vi) a combination of 1 or more types of land described in clauses (i) through (v).

(B) Enrollment of acreage

In the case of acreage owned by an Indian tribe, the Secretary may enroll acreage into the healthy forests reserve program through the use of—

- (i) a 30-year contract (the value of which shall be equivalent to the value of a 30-year easement);
- (ii) a 10-year cost-share agreement;
- (iii) a permanent easement; or
- (iv) any combination of the options described in clauses (i) through (iii).

(f) Enrollment priority

(1) Species

The Secretary of Agriculture shall give priority to the enrollment of land that provides the greatest conservation benefit to—

- (A) primarily, species listed as endangered or threatened under section 1533 of this title; and
- (B) secondarily, species that—
 - (i) are not listed as endangered or threatened under section 1533 of this title; but
 - (ii)(I) are candidates for such listing, State-listed species, or special concern species; or
 - (II) are deemed a species of greatest conservation need under a State wildlife action plan.