

forestry assistance and the development of water quality and watershed forestry programs, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 113-79, title VIII, §8005, Feb. 7, 2014, 128 Stat. 913.

§ 6543. Watershed Condition Framework

(a) In general

The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”), may establish and maintain a Watershed Condition Framework for National Forest System land—

(1) to evaluate and classify the condition of watersheds, taking into consideration—

- (A) water quality and quantity;
- (B) aquatic habitat and biota;
- (C) riparian and wetland vegetation;
- (D) the presence of roads and trails;
- (E) soil type and condition;
- (F) groundwater-dependent ecosystems;
- (G) relevant terrestrial indicators, such as fire regime, risk of catastrophic fire, forest and rangeland vegetation, invasive species, and insects and disease; and

(H) other significant factors, as determined by the Secretary;

(2) to identify for protection and restoration up to 5 priority watersheds in each National Forest, and up to 2 priority watersheds in each national grassland, taking into consideration the impact of the condition of the watershed condition on—

- (A) wildfire behavior;
- (B) flood risk;
- (C) fish and wildlife;
- (D) drinking water supplies;
- (E) irrigation water supplies;
- (F) forest-dependent communities; and
- (G) other significant impacts, as determined by the Secretary;

(3) to develop a watershed protection and restoration action plan for each priority watershed that—

(A) takes into account existing restoration activities being implemented in the watershed; and

(B) includes, at a minimum—

- (i) the major stressors responsible for the impaired condition of the watershed;
- (ii) a set of essential projects that, once completed, will address the identified stressors and improve watershed conditions;
- (iii) a proposed implementation schedule;
- (iv) potential partners and funding sources; and
- (v) a monitoring and evaluation program;

(4) to prioritize protection and restoration activities for each watershed restoration action plan;

(5) to implement each watershed protection and restoration action plan; and

(6) to monitor the effectiveness of protection and restoration actions and indicators of watershed health.

(b) Coordination

In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) coordinate with interested non-Federal landowners and State, Tribal, and local governments within the relevant watershed; and

(2) provide for an active and ongoing public engagement process.

(c) Emergency designation

Notwithstanding paragraph (2) of subsection (a), the Secretary may identify a watershed as a priority for rehabilitation in the Watershed Condition Framework without using the process described in that subsection if a Forest Supervisor determines that—

(1) a wildfire has significantly diminished the condition of the watershed; and

(2) the emergency stabilization activities of the Burned Area Emergency Response Team are insufficient to return the watershed to proper function.

(Pub. L. 108-148, title III, §304, as added Pub. L. 115-334, title VIII, §8405(a), Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4843.)

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