

**NASF RESOLUTION NUMBER 2014-1:**

Forest Health Strategic Plan

ORIGIN OF RESOLUTION: NASF Forest Science and Health Committee

ISSUE OF CONCERN: America's healthy forests support our lives and livelihoods by providing water, wood products, jobs, and wildlife. These benefits are at risk from native and non-native insects and diseases that kill trees. In some cases non-native pests have decimated valuable tree species, such as the American chestnut. In the last dozen years the Emerald Ash Borer has spread from three states to twenty-two; the Asian long-horned beetle has been detected at four additional sites; and nearly thirty new tree-killing pests have been detected in the country. Native bark beetles have devastated many conifer forests through the Western United States.

These losses have real direct and indirect costs. For example:

- Nonnative thousand cankers disease threatens \$539 billion worth of black walnut trees¹;
- Municipalities spend more than \$2 billion annually to remove trees killed by non-native pests²;
- Homeowners spend \$1 billion a year removing trees killed by non-native pests, and another \$1.5 billion is lost in property values due to tree mortality³; and
- Western bark beetles have killed trees on over 47.6 million acres over the last 14 years, creating hazardous conditions that have increased costs and impacts from large wildfires.

In addition, recent studies indicate over 81 million acres of the nation's forest lands are at risk from insect and diseases.⁴

While local and regional recognition and implementation of forest health activities are critical, there are many forest health activities such as coordination, survey, technology assistance and development, and biological control that benefit from national level leadership and participation. Two USDA agencies are primarily responsible for protecting our nation's forests. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is responsible for preventing introduction of additional tree-killing pests and containing and eradicating newly introduced species. The USDA Forest Service (USFS) is responsible for managing damage from native pests and longer-established and more widespread invasive pests. Both USFS and

¹ Smith, W.B, P.D. Miles, J.S. Vissage, and S.A. Pugh. 2004. Forest Resources of the United States, 2002. USDA Forest Service, North Central Research Station, St. Paul, MN. General Technical Report NC-241. April.

² Aukema, J.E., B. Leung, K. Kovacs, C. Chivers, K.O. Britton, J. Englin, S.J. Frankel, R. G. Haight, T. P. Holmes, A.M. Liebhold, D.G. McCullough, and B. Von Holle. 2011. Economic impacts of non-native forest insects in the continental United States. *PLoS One* 6(9): e24587. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0024587. Accessed June 17, 2013.

³ Aukema, J.E., B. Leung, K. Kovacs, C. Chivers, K.O. Britton, J. Englin, S.J. Frankel, R. G. Haight, T. P. Holmes, A.M. Liebhold, D.G. McCullough, and B. Von Holle. 2011. Economic impacts of non-native forest insects in the continental United States. *PLoS One* 6(9): e24587. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0024587. Accessed June 17, 2013.

⁴ Krist, F.J. Jr., J.R. Ellenwood, M.E. Woods, A.J. McMahan, J.P. Cowardin, D.E. Ryerson, F.J. Sapio, M.O. Zweifler, S.A. Romero. 2014. FHTET 2013 – 2027 National Insect & and Disease FOREST RISK ASSESSMENT. FHTET-14-01 January 2014. Available at: http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/technology/pdfs/2012_RiskMap_Report_web.

APHIS also conduct important research and technology activities that are critical components of an overall forest health program.

There have been major reductions in federal forest health investments at a time of unprecedented invasive pest and disease occurrences across the country. The APHIS forest health related budget has been reduced by almost one-third since 2011. In addition, there are many stakeholders who are unaware of the increasing forest health impacts (e.g. utility companies, municipalities facing urban tree removal, species specific value groups/walnut, maple, and ash) and not actively engaged in supporting efforts to minimize those impacts. **There is an urgent need to communicate to policy makers and stakeholders a comprehensive request that details the scale and scope of the resources needed to improve and maintain the health of the nation's forests.**

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that members of the National Association of State Foresters:

Urges the USDA to develop a comprehensive Forest Health Strategic Plan every five years, with input from relevant stakeholders, that includes:

- the current state of forest health within the nation;
- a comprehensive summary of the forest benefits at risk;
- the benefits /costs of federal forest health investments; and
- a comprehensive request that details the scale and scope of the resources needed to improve and maintain the health of the nation's forests.

The five-year strategic plan should outline a comprehensive Forest Health program that addresses at a minimum:

- (1) specific needs and opportunities for both public and private program investments;
- (2) identification of program outputs, results anticipated, and benefits associated with investments;
- (3) a discussion of priorities for accomplishment of program opportunities; and
- (4) personnel requirements as needed to implement and monitor requested program outputs with an emphasis cost sharing and partnerships.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that NASF urges the USDA to prepare annual evaluation reports that set forth progress in implementing the comprehensive Forest Health Strategic Plan. These reports should include but not be limited to:

- accomplishments in both qualitative and quantitative terms;
- appropriate measurements of expenditures with related costs and benefits;
- plans for implementing corrective actions and recommendations for new legislation where warranted.

This resolution will be posted on the NASF website and sent to Secretary of Agriculture, Chief of the USDA Forest Service, and Director of the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service.

NASF ACTION:

Approved

Disapproved

Tabled

DATE OF ACTION: September 23, 2014