



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Brent Keith, Policy Director

[bkeith@stateforesters.org](mailto:bkeith@stateforesters.org); 202-624-5977

## **State foresters encouraged by strong state response to Insect & Disease Designation requests**

*NASF urges substantial increases in the pace and scale of active forest management to restore our National Forests, and applaud bi-partisan effort to highlight the scope and scale of the insect and disease epidemic.*

**Washington DC, April 23, 2014** – The Agriculture Act of 2014 (“Farm Bill”) provided states with an opportunity to request designation of landscape-scale insect & disease infestation areas on National Forest System lands managed by the USDA Forest Service under section 8204 of the Farm Bill. To date, 36 states have submitted requests to the Forest Service for such designations under the Farm Bill authority. NASF is encouraged by the strong state response to this opportunity. As outlined in [NASF Resolution 2013-4](#), state foresters remain concerned that the current level of active management is insufficient to address the magnitude of forest health problems on National Forest System lands. The pace and scale of active forest management must increase substantially to restore our National Forests to a more sustainable, resilient condition, in order to continue to derive the benefits of a viable forest products business sector, clean air, clean water, recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and commodities for our nation’s economy.

**“The lack of active management on federal lands is threatening the continued flow of social, economic, and ecological values from our federal forests as millions of acres continue to be altered by insects, diseases, and uncharacteristic wildfires” said Chris Maisch, Alaska State Forester and President of NASF. “State foresters applaud the bi-partisan effort of Congress to provide states with this opportunity to highlight the scope and scale of the insect and disease epidemic on the National Forest System.”**

Following the designation of these landscape-scale areas under the Farm Bill authority, state foresters look forward to working with our federal partners and the public to craft and implement projects within the designated areas. We hope that utilization of the categorical exclusion – which recognizes the importance of collaboration in project development and implementation – provided under the Farm Bill will lead to project efficiencies and ultimately enable the Forest Service to complete more active management in these prioritized areas. We applaud the Forest Service for undertaking an expeditious review and approval process for all qualifying requests. We hope the Agency can proceed quickly to implementing active forest management projects to ensure the balanced and continued delivery of social, economic, and ecological benefits from our National Forest System.

*The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of state and territorial forestry agencies and the District of Columbia. NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forest lands and their associated resources. <http://www.stateforesters.org>*

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