

S. 1797, H.R. 3072: Colorado Forest Management Improvement Act of 2007
Introduced in House and Senate July 17, 2007

The purposes of this Act are--

1. to facilitate a more coordinated response by Federal and State agencies and local governments and communities to the effects of insect infestations in forest lands in Colorado so as to reduce the likelihood of loss of life or damage to property or municipal water supplies from severe wildfires and to improve the management of such lands; and
2. to provide a model of legislation that could be considered for application to other States experiencing similar insect infestations or other forest-related problems.

This legislation is still in committees. The current version of the bill would amend the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 by:

- Providing additional planning assistance to communities (\$10,000,000 a year for the next five years) for
- Establish a biomass commercial utilization grant program

The legislation would also establish Healthy Forest Partnership Zones and Partnership Projects (sections 702 & 703), which would be implemented on federal land and adjacent non-federal lands:

1. at risk of uncharacteristically severe damage to at-risk communities or community water supply facilities from a wildland fire or an outbreak of insects or disease; and
2. requires 1 or more management activities to reduce that risk.

Section 201 would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to provide grants for:

1. **research designed to improve the long-term health of forests in the state including grants to:**
 - (A) the Colorado Wood Program of Colorado State University for the conduct of research and development and marketing of non-traditional forest products;
 - (B) the Forest Restoration Institute at Colorado State University, including assistance for the conduct of research in higher elevation forests; and
 - (C) any other entities, including entities conducting research on utilization of wood and other products from high-elevation forests that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be appropriate; and
 - (2) acting through the Rocky Mountain Research Station, collaborate with the Forest Restoration Institute at Colorado State University in the conduct of research on and the development and transfer of broader landscape treatment strategies and ways to integrate best science with community needs.
2. **Assessments and Cooperation-**
 - (1) assess priorities in the State for use of stewardship contracts to initiate revitalization of the forest product industry; and
 - (2) otherwise cooperate with the Colorado State Forest Service and the forest products industry in the State to assist in the development of new markets for non-traditional forest products and marketing of such products.
3. **Financial Assistance for Stewardship Projects and Small Businesses-**
The Secretary concerned shall--

- (1) consider use of authority under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.), stewardship contracts, and other long-term contracts to ensure a sustained supply of raw wood materials in the State;
- (2) provide financial assistance for the upfront costs of long-term stewardship projects in areas in which timber values do not provide for recovery costs; and
- (3) provide grants and low-cost loans to eligible small business concerns in the forest product industry in the State for the costs of start-up activities, converting equipment, and modifying facilities to enable the small business concerns to use wood from forests in the State.

Consultation- The Secretary of Agriculture shall consult with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency regarding possible steps to facilitate use of raw wood materials in combination with other substances as fuels in existing facilities for the generation of electricity or for other purposes.

Arizona Strategy for Forest Restoration: Recommendations (June 2007) includes Five Key strategies:

1. Increase human and financial resources dedicated to restoring Arizona's forests and protecting communities
2. Coordinate and implement actions at a landscape level
3. Increase efficiency of restoration, fire management, and community protection activities
4. Encourage ecologically sustainable, forest-based economic activity
5. Build public support for accomplishing restoration, community protection and fire management across the state.

This document acknowledges the need for local, state, congressional and federal government actions and partnerships to effectively address the forest restoration issue. A listing of the recommendations for the Congress and federal government are listed below

Congress

Recommendation # 1- Congress should increase funding to federal and tribal land management agencies and the state, to furnish the capacity needed to collaboratively design, implement and monitor restoration treatments

Actions:

- Vegetation and fuel treatment funding should be increased to a minimum of \$30 million/year for 3 years for the U.S. Forest Service; and \$10 million/year for 3 years for Department of Interior agencies (Bureau of Land Management - BLM, National Park Service - NPS, Bureau of Indian Affairs - BIA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – U.S. F&WS) Funding should increase by 15% per year for 20 years. (1.1.1.)
- Funding for CWPP implementation should be increased to \$5 million per year, and the dollars should be allocated to local communities through the State Forester. (1.1.2.)
- Program funding should be provided to federal land management agencies to ensure adequate human resources are available to facilitate treatment action. This includes capacity for all facets of developing and applying treatments including: environmental review, contracting, community collaboration and implementation. (1.1.3.)
- Funding should be provided to U.S. Forest Service research stations in cooperation with universities to convene land managers and stakeholders to identify practical monitoring approaches that require the minimum effort and funding needed to produce appropriate information for informing and adapting management at multiple scales. (1.1.4.)
- Congress should maintain funding to complete the White Mountain Stewardship Contract. (1.1.5.)
- Congress should fund recruitment and training programs for forest and wood-products workers in cooperation with forest and wood-products employers and educational institutions. (4.3.4.)

Recommendation #2- Congress should restore funding to enable communities, stakeholder groups, and the tribes to collaborate and be involved in land management activities including utilization and marketing of small-diameter wood and biomass.

Action:

- Congress should revitalize the Economic Action Program or create a new source of funds dedicated to assisting local communities throughout the West in their efforts to support collaborative approaches to restoration and to develop utilization and marketing opportunities for small-diameter wood and biomass. (1.2.1.)

Recommendation #3- Congress should increase funding for developing and translating best available biophysical, ecological, and social science into forms needed by land managers and stakeholders.

Action:

Congress should fund universities, colleges, research stations and other organizations with applicable expertise for applied biophysical, social science and economic research that informs and improves forest health and the vitality of rural communities. (1.3.2.)

Federal Land Management Agencies

Recommendation #1- Federal land management agencies should collaboratively develop and implement integrated, landscape-scale restoration, community protection, and fire management for forests across the state. (2.1.)

Actions:

- The U.S. Forest Service should support the collaborative planning and implementation of integrated restoration, community protection, and fire management strategies across the state within the Forest Plan revision process. (2.1.1)
- The U.S. Forest Service should develop, revise, and update annual Fire Management Plans using the best available science and in a transparent, collaborative fashion. (2.1.2)
- National forest plans should provide clear performance measures that allow the agency and public to evaluate progress toward meeting restoration, community protection, and fire management objectives. (2.1.3)

Recommendation #2- All federal, state, tribal, and local governments should increase coordination of forest restoration, fire management, and community protection planning and implementation across jurisdictional boundaries. (2.3)

Action:

- Federal land management agencies should provide treatment data to update the Arizona Fire Map. (2.3.3)
- Federal land management agencies should prioritize treatments to protect important infrastructure, e.g., communications installations, power lines, and transportation corridors

Recommendation #3- The federal land management agencies, counties and local governments should use Community Wildfire Protection Plans to inform and prioritize treatments in their jurisdiction. (2.4)

Action:

- Federal agencies should place priority on implementing projects identified within Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). (2.4.2)

Recommendation #4- State and federal land managers should design forest management practices to integrate wildlife habitat and biodiversity conservation protection with restoration, community protection, and fire management. (2.5)

Action:

- The Arizona Game and Fish Department should work with the Arizona Forest Health Council, federal agencies and other stakeholders with applicable expertise to collaboratively develop a set of principles and strategies for integrating wildlife habitat and biodiversity conservation with community protection, restoration and fire management. This should include educating the public about these strategies. (2.5.1)

Recommendation #5- Federal and state land management agencies should collaboratively and strategically place treatments in order to increase efficiency and maximize benefits. (3.1)

Actions:

- Federal land management agencies should develop short-term (2-5 year) and longer-term (10-20 year) treatment plans based on priorities developed at the landscape scale. (3.1.1)
- Federal land management agencies should complete and implement plans for using prescribed fire and Wildland Fire Use where and when appropriate. (3.1.3)

- Federal land management agencies should initiate treatments in places where a collaborative process has preliminarily identified and prioritized landscape attributes at risk. (3.1.4)
- A national forest in Arizona should take a landscape-scale approach that systematically evaluates existing ecological conditions and then identifies, applies and monitors the effectiveness of strategically placed treatments that in theory should modify extreme fire behavior and reduce the probability of large, unnaturally severe catastrophic fire. (3.1.5)
- State and federal authorities should work collaboratively with stakeholders to identify and develop restoration and fire management strategies for watersheds of critical importance across the state. (3.1.6)

Recommendation #6- Land managers should work with stakeholders to clarify the amount, availability, and location of restoration-, community protection-, and fire management-generated wood and biomass across the region. (4.1)

Action:

- The U.S. Forest Service and other federal land management agencies should fund and participate in a collaborative and objective evaluation of the amount and characteristics of wood and biomass available for utilization across Arizona. (4.1.1)

Recommendation #7- Federal, state, and local governments should identify and enhance opportunities for utilizing small-diameter wood and biomass generated from forest treatments. (4.2)

Actions:

- The Forest Products Lab of the Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture should conduct a study to identify utilization and marketing opportunities for products created from pinyon-juniper as well as ponderosa pine. (4.2.1)
- The U.S. Forest Service should continue to use, and other federal land management agencies should initiate, best-value contracts and other tools that ensure continuous wood flow, where such contracts support collaborative and science-based forest management, and promote economic and social stability in rural communities. (4.3.1.)

2008 National Woody Biomass Utilization Grant Program

The USDA Forest Service, State & Private Forestry, Technology Marketing Unit, located at the Forest Products Laboratory, will again be **requesting proposals** for forest products projects **that increase the use of woody biomass from or near national forest lands.**

The National Woody Biomass Utilization Grant Program intends to help improve forest restoration activities by using and creating markets for small-diameter material and low-valued trees removed from hazardous fuel reduction activities. These funds are targeted to help communities, entrepreneurs, and others turn residues from hazardous fuel reduction projects into marketable forest products and/or energy products.

In fiscal year 2007, almost \$6.2 million was available for the Program. The Request for Proposal (RFP) will be similar to the program offered in 2006 and 2007. Individual grants will not be less than \$50,000 or more than \$250,000. The maximum length of the award is 3 years from the date of award. Written, quarterly financial and semiannual performance reports will be required.

Background:

To meet the shared goals of Public Law: 109-190 The Energy Policy Act of 2005 and PL 109-54 Appropriation Act of 2006, the Forest Service will be requesting proposals to address the nationwide challenge in dealing with low-valued material removed from hazardous fuel reduction activities

Goals of the grant program are the following:

- Help reduce management costs by increasing value of biomass and other forest products generated by hazardous fuel treatments.
- Create incentives and/or reduce business risk for increased use of biomass from or near national forestlands (must include National Forest System lands, however, may also include other lands such as, Bureau of Land Management, Tribal, State, local, and private).
- Institute projects that target and help remove economic and market barriers to using small-diameter trees and woody biomass including studies of feasibility and operation of biomass boilers in eligible schools in rural communities.

Require a Forest Service letter of support for the woody biomass grant project on or near National Forest System lands.

Woody Biomass Issue Paper

By

Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition

Working together to find solutions to the ecological and economic challenges of the rural West.

The Woody Biomass Issue Paper presents a vision and recommendations for woody biomass utilization along with the benefits of a community-scale and integration strategy and problems of existing strategies. Finally, it presents six components of a strategy to support the development of a community-scaled and integrated biomass utilization infrastructure.

- The utilization of woody biomass is increasingly creating markets for woody material that is produced as a by-product of forest restoration and fuel reduction.
- Utilization strategies established through community-scale, collaborative efforts focused on integrated approaches can help create markets for woody biomass.
- Using an integrated, community-scaled collaborative strategy will help offset the costs of forest restoration and hazardous fuel reduction activities while contributing to rural economies, energy independence, and carbon emission reductions.
- Businesses, non-profit organizations, and community groups across the United States are developing a range of uses for woody biomass including traditional value-added products, thermal energy production, combined electric and thermal energy generation, bio-fuels, and composites.

Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition: Who We Are

The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition is comprised of western rural and local, regional, and national organizations that have joined together to promote balanced conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing the West. We are committed to finding and promoting solutions through collaborative, place-based work that recognizes the inextricable link between the long-term health of the land and well being of rural communities. We come from California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, Arizona and Colorado.

Watershed Restoration

WATERSHED RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENTS ACT OF 2007 S.232

Introduced January 9, 2007

A bill to make permanent the authorization for watershed restoration and enhancement agreements.

Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Agreements Act of 2007 - Amends the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 to make permanent the authorization for the Secretary of Agriculture to use Forest Service appropriations for the purpose of entering into cooperative agreements with government, private, and nonprofit entities and landowners for the protection, restoration, and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and other resources on public or private land and/or the reduction of risk from natural disaster.

Makes provisions regarding executive agency use of procurement contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements inapplicable to: (1) watershed restoration and enhancement agreements entered into under such Act; and (2) cooperative agreements between the Secretary of Agriculture and public or private entities for Forest Service programs, including for cooperative pollution abatement equipment and facilities, cooperative manpower and job training and development, cooperative environmental education and forest history materials, and forestry protection.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007 H.R. 1495

Passed House & Senate, awaiting approval of President

Section 3061. RED RIVER (J. BENNETT JOHNSTON) WATERWAY, LOUISIANA

The project for mitigation of fish and wildlife losses, Red River Waterway, Louisiana is further modified--

(1) to authorize the Secretary to carry out the project at a total cost of \$33,200,000;

(2) to permit the purchase of marginal farmland for reforestation (in addition to the purchase of bottomland hardwood); and

(3) to incorporate wildlife and forestry management practices to improve species diversity on mitigation lands that meets habitat goals and objectives of the Corps of Engineers and the State of Louisiana.

--Ideas from legislation regarding another state that may help mitigate degraded fisheries and other wildlife habitat. Targeting marginal farmland adjacent to federal forestland will also help mitigate the problem of forest fragmentation and conversion to other uses (agriculture, urban development, etc.)