



The Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act Interim Field Guide

USDA Forest Service

DOI Bureau of Land Management

FS-799

February 2004

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Contents

Introduction	1
Purpose of This Field Guide	1
Increased Risk of Catastrophic Fire	2
Delays Caused by Procedural and Administrative Processes	3
Healthy Forests Initiative	4
NEPA Categorical Exclusions	4
Guidance for Environmental Assessments of Forest Health Projects	4
USDA Forest Service Appeals Rule Amendments	5
DOI BLM Full Force and Effect Regulations	5
DOI Appeals Rules Amendments	6
New Endangered Species Act Procedures	6
Stewardship Contracting	6
DOI Administrative NEPA Improvements	6
Healthy Forests Restoration Act	7
Environmental Analysis Requirements for HFI and HFRA Projects	8
Healthy Forests Initiative	8
Categorically Excluding Hazardous-Fuel-Reduction Actions	8
Environmental Assessments	9
Healthy Forests Restoration Act	9
Developing the Proposed Action and Alternatives	9
Decision Diagrams	10
Title I of the HFRA – Hazardous-Fuel Reduction on NFS and BLM Land	15
Wildland-Urban Interfaces Within or Adjacent to At-Risk Communities	15
At-Risk Municipal Watersheds	15
Determination of Significant Risk	16
Documentation	19
Threats to Ecosystem Components or Forest or Rangeland Resources	20
Determination of Significant Threat to an Ecosystem Component or Forest or Rangeland Resources	20
Determining Whether Blowdown or Ice-Storm Damage Increases Risk to an Ecosystem Component or Forest Resources	20
Determining the Existence of an Insect or Disease Epidemic	22
Evaluating the Threats Posed to Ecosystem Components or Forest or Rangeland Resources	23
Documentation	23
Threatened and Endangered Species	23
Determining the Threat of Fire and the Need for Enhanced Protection	24
Documentation	25
Old-Growth and Large-Tree Retention	25
Old Growth	25
Large-Tree Retention	27
Administrative Review	29
Judicial Review	30
Documentation	30
Setting Priorities and Collaborating	32
Identifying At-Risk Communities	34
Developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans	34
Setting Priorities Collaboratively	36
Providing Financial Assistance for Projects on Non-Federal Lands	36

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act _____	36
Monitoring _____	38
Multiparty Monitoring _____	38
Monitoring Maintenance of Treated Areas _____	38
Reporting Accomplishments _____	38
Tracking Acres Burned _____	38
Title II – Biomass _____	40
Research to Improve Biomass Use _____	40
Rural Revitalization Through Forestry _____	40
Biomass Commercial Utilization Grant Program _____	41
Title III – Watershed Forestry Assistance _____	42
Watershed Forestry Assistance _____	42
Tribal Watershed Forestry Assistance _____	42
Developing Program Guidelines _____	43
Title IV – Insect Infestations and Related Diseases _____	44
Accelerated Information Gathering _____	44
Applied Silvicultural Assessments _____	44
Title V – Healthy Forests Reserve Program _____	46
Title VI – Miscellaneous _____	47
North American Exotic Forest Pest Information System _____	47
Forest Health Protection _____	47
Rapid Pest Detection Program _____	47
Pest Suppression _____	48
Forest Health Monitoring _____	48
Forest Inventory and Analysis _____	48
Glossary _____	49
References _____	52
At-Risk Municipal Watersheds _____	52
Publications _____	52
Threats of Insect or Disease Epidemics _____	52
Threatened and Endangered Species _____	52
Web Sites _____	52
Publications _____	53
Old-Growth and Large-Tree Retention _____	54
General Information _____	54
Ecological Definitions of Old Growth _____	54
Publications _____	55
Assessment-Level Information _____	57
Regional Planning Direction _____	57
Project-Level Guidance _____	57
General _____	57

Contents
