

Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372).

In accordance with our process for soliciting public input when considering petitions for determinations of nonregulated status for GE organisms, we are publishing this notice to inform the public that APHIS will accept written comments on our draft EA and our preliminary PPRA regarding the petition for a determination of nonregulated status from interested or affected persons for a period of 30 days from the date of this notice. Copies of the draft EA and the preliminary PPRA, as well as the previously published petition, are available as indicated under **ADDRESSES** and **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** above.

After the comment period closes, APHIS will review all written comments received during the comment period and any other relevant information. After reviewing and evaluating the comments on the draft EA and the preliminary PPRA and other information, APHIS will revise the PPRA as necessary and prepare a final EA. Based on the final EA, APHIS will prepare a NEPA decision document (either a FONSI or a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement). If a FONSI is reached, APHIS will furnish a response to the petitioner, either approving or denying the petition. APHIS will also publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the regulatory status of the GE organism and the availability of APHIS' final EA, PPRA, FONSI, and our regulatory determination.

**Authority:** 7 U.S.C. 7701–7772 and 7781–7786; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 15th day of July 2015.

**Kevin Shea,**

*Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.*

[FR Doc. 2015–17845 Filed 7–20–15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410–34–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS–2015–0007]

#### Notice of Affirmation of Addition of a Treatment Schedule for Methyl Bromide Fumigation of Figs

**AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** We are affirming our earlier determination that it was necessary to

immediately add to the Plant Protection and Quarantine Treatment Manual a treatment schedule for methyl bromide fumigation of figs for certain pests, including Chilean false red mite. In a previous notice, we made available to the public for review and comment a treatment evaluation document that described the new treatment schedule and explained why we have determined that it is effective at neutralizing these pests.

**DATES:** Effective July 21, 2015, we are affirming the addition to the Plant Protection and Quarantine Treatment Manual of the treatment described in the notice published at 80 FR 10661–10662 on February 27, 2015.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Inder P.S. Gadh, Senior Risk Manager—Treatments, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737; (301) 851–2018.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The regulations in 7 CFR chapter III are intended, among other things, to prevent the introduction or dissemination of plant pests and noxious weeds into or within the United States. Under the regulations, certain plants, fruits, vegetables, and other articles must be treated before they may be moved into the United States or interstate. The phytosanitary treatments regulations contained in 7 CFR part 305 (referred to below as the regulations) set out standards for treatments required in 7 CFR parts 301, 318, and 319 for fruits, vegetables, and other articles.

In § 305.2, paragraph (b) states that approved treatment schedules are set out in the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Treatment Manual.<sup>1</sup> Section 305.3 sets out a process for adding, revising, or removing treatment schedules in the PPQ Treatment Manual. In that section, paragraph (b) sets out the process for adding, revising, or removing treatment schedules when there is an immediate need to make a change. The circumstances in which an immediate need exists are described in § 305.3(b)(1). They are:

- PPQ has determined that an approved treatment schedule is ineffective at neutralizing the targeted plant pest(s).
- PPQ has determined that, in order to neutralize the targeted plant pest(s), the treatment schedule must be administered using a different process than was previously used.

<sup>1</sup> The Treatment Manual is available on the Internet at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/plants/manuals/ports/downloads/treatment.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/ports/downloads/treatment.pdf) or by contacting the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine, Manuals Unit, 92 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 200, Frederick, MD 21702.

• PPQ has determined that a new treatment schedule is effective, based on efficacy data, and that ongoing trade in a commodity or commodities may be adversely impacted unless the new treatment schedule is approved for use.

• The use of a treatment schedule is no longer authorized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or by any other Federal entity.

In accordance with § 305.3(b), we published a notice<sup>2</sup> in the **Federal Register** on February 27, 2015 (80 FR 10661–10662, Docket No. APHIS–2015–0007), announcing our determination that a new methyl bromide fumigation treatment schedule to control certain pests, including Chilean false red mite (*Brevipalpus chilensis*), on figs (*Ficus carica*) is effective, based on evidence presented in a treatment evaluation document (TED) we made available with the notice. We also determined that ongoing trade in figs would be adversely impacted unless the new treatment is approved for use. The treatment was added to the PPQ Treatment Manual, but was subject to change based on public comment.

We solicited comments on the notice for 60 days ending on April 28, 2015. We received one comment by that date, from a private citizen. The commenter stated that methyl bromide is known to deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, and that authorizing its use for treating figs violates the Montreal Protocol, in which the United States agreed to gradually reduce and ultimately eliminate use of methyl bromide.

The United States Government encourages methods that do not use methyl bromide to meet phytosanitary standards where alternatives are deemed to be technically and economically feasible, practical, and effective. At present, methyl bromide fumigation is the only authorized treatment that meets the above criteria for the treatment of external pests on figs. In addition, in accordance with Montreal Protocol Decision XI/13 (paragraph 7), APHIS is committed to promoting and employing gas recapture technology and other methods whenever possible to minimize harm to the environment caused by methyl bromide emissions.

Paragraph 5 of Article 2H of the Montreal Protocol does allow for quarantine and pre-shipment uses of methyl bromide, and does not specify a maximum number of such applications. Therefore, the application of this treatment is not in conflict with the

<sup>2</sup> To view the notice, the TED, and the comment we received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=APHIS-2015-0007>.

protocol. Treatment of figs with methyl bromide fumigation is also consistent with the International Plant Protection Convention's standard of requiring the least restrictive phytosanitary measures to mitigate pests of concern.

Therefore, in accordance with the regulations in § 305.3(b)(3), we are affirming our addition of a methyl bromide treatment schedule for figs to control certain pests, as described in the TED made available with the previous notice. The treatment schedule is numbered T101-i-2-2. The treatment schedule will be listed in the PPQ Treatment Manual, which is available as described in footnote 1 of this document.

**Authority:** 7 U.S.C. 7701–7772 and 7781–7786; 21 U.S.C. 136 and 136a; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.3.

Done in Washington, DC, this 15th day of July 2015.

**Kevin Shea,**

*Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.*

[FR Doc. 2015–17841 Filed 7–20–15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410–34–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### **Kootenai National Forest; Lincoln and Sanders Counties; Montana; Kootenai National Forest Young Growth Environmental Impact Statement**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to disclose the environmental effects of commercial and non-commercial vegetation management activities and prescribed burning of activity fuels. Access management changes and other design features are included to protect resources and facilitate management activities. The project is located across the Kootenai National Forest Kootenai National Forest, Lincoln and Sanders Counties, Montana.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received within 30 days from the date of publication in the **Federal Register**.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Chris Savage; Forest Supervisor, Kootenai National Forest, 31374 US Hwy 2, Libby, MT 59923. Comments may also be sent via email to [comments-northern-kootenai@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-kootenai@fs.fed.us); or via facsimile to (406) 283–7709.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Contact Janis Bouma, Project Team Leader, Kootenai National Forest, 31374 US Hwy 2, Libby, MT 59923. Phone: (406) 283–7774.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On May 20, 2014, Department of Agriculture Secretary Vilsack announced the designation of approximately 45.6 million acres of National Forest System lands across 94 national forests in 35 states to address insect and disease threats that weaken forests and increase the risk of forest fire. The Kootenai National Forest is the only forest in Montana that lies completely within these priority landscapes. The Governor of Montana has asked that priority be given to project development within these designated insect and disease areas, and created his Forest in Focus Initiative to accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration in the state of Montana. The Kootenai National Forest Young-Growth Project area is approximately 400,000 acres in size and is located only in second-growth; previously harvested timber stands about across the Kootenai National Forest.

#### **Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose and need for this project is: (1) Improve the resiliency of the timber stands to insects and disease; (2); improve wildlife habitat especially for grizzly bear and lynx; (3) address impacts from climate change and, 4) and to decrease risk of stand-replacing wildfire.

Overall project benefits and the purpose associated with young-growth vegetation management will be to improve stand conditions and increase resistance to insects, disease, and stand-replacement wildfire while also providing for abundance of forage and improved habitat conditions for a variety of wildlife species. Managing these stands is important in order to reach a healthier stocking rate and to increase overall growth and vigor of the stand by reducing competition and stress on remaining conifers. Management of these stands would also increase quantities of grasses, forbs, and shrubs that many wildlife species utilize in the early stage of forest development, thereby improving foraging habitat for grizzly bear, lynx, and other wildlife species. The project would allow for adaptive management over the next 10 to 15 years as stand conditions would

allow and to respond to local environmental conditions and stocking rates. All of these benefits fall within the Governor's criteria.

#### **Proposed Action**

The proposed action includes non-commercial and commercial vegetation management activities that accomplish the following:

Habitat improvement for grizzly bear and lynx; (2) Reduce fuel loading and ladder fuels; (3) Break up the continuity of fuels; (4) Reduce tree densities and tree species susceptible to fire mortality; (5) Increase fire resilient species; (6) Reduce susceptibility to insects and potential disease; (7) Increase tree vigor and resilience to disturbance.

Project NEPA analysis would employ various adaptive management screens across the initial proposed acreage. These “screens” would be used to avoid impacts to Threatened and Endangered wildlife and plant species, and sensitive areas. Treatment boundaries could also be further narrowed depending on localized site conditions including soils conditions, standard wildlife effects mitigations, and Best Management Practices (BMPs). Therefore, the actual, on-the-ground vegetation management would be considerably smaller than the initial 400,000 acres proposed for evaluation. The project would rely on the existing road system to reach the stands with a need for treatment, with no new specified road construction proposed for this analysis. Prior logging systems such as previous skid trails may be used if evidence of them still exists. If site-specific Forest Plan amendments may be needed, then the proposed treatments would be dropped or deferred to another future project analysis.

The acres included in this anticipated decision would provide forest products for an array of markets. A portion of the acreage, predominately the older second growth, would provide a saw log product. Many of the acres would provide non-saw products such as post and pole. These offerings of forest products would be assessed for economic feasibility and may be mixed and matched with other offerings or decisions in order to ensure economic viability. Additionally, in order to anticipate and respond to future timber market opportunities or newly developed markets, the analysis would consider biomass removal in addition to traditional commercial timber harvest activities.

Various silvicultural treatments would be proposed to meet the vegetative objectives for the previously harvested areas and move the landscape