



AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN 2022

FOREST HEALTH

ISSUE: Over 80 million acres of our National Forests are overstocked and at risk of insect infestations and disease that contribute to severe fire. These lands need active management, yet currently only a fraction of these acres are treated in any given year. The Forest Service Biennial Report shows that in 2017:

- Approximately 6% of the Forest's growth was harvested for wood products.
- Approximately 26% of the Forest's growth was lost to wildfire.

Over 500-600 million board feet are evaporating from the market every year for the foreseeable future due to lack of proper forest management by the Forest Service and the BLM.

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN REQUEST: The Forest Service and BLM need to utilize the tools that Congress has already given them to do the work necessary on the ground. In order to address this forest health crisis, we request that Congress allocate dollars to work with the private sector to give us a predictable log supply to attract and retain private capital and infrastructure. The Federal government needs the forest sector to be healthy to achieve its conservation goals.

BACKGROUND: A century of wildfire suppression, combined with the reduced levels of active management on federal lands, have led to unnaturally dense and overgrown forests. This intense competition among trees for water, sunlight and nutrients have left many forests weakened and vulnerable to severe catastrophic events.

Overstocking of trees has led to the accumulation of fuels that contribute to high-intensity fires, which burn entire stands, sterilize soils, and increase sedimentation in creeks and rivers.

Proactive management tools-including timber harvesting and thinning can be used to mimic natural disturbances that support a forest's ecological functions while providing timber to support our forest products industry infrastructure and rural economies. Active management tools that the Forest Service and BLM currently have can be used to contain disease and insect infestations before they result in massive tree-die-offs. This mismanagement by the agencies also impacts all forest ownerships. Forest resources-clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, carbon storage – ALL AT RISK!