
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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AGRICULTURE, INTERIOR ANNOUNCE FOREST DAMAGE CONTROL COMPACT

A continuing program of detection and control of destructive forest insects and tree diseases on Federal lands was announced jointly today by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior.

The agreement updates a 1945 memorandum of understanding between the two Departments to include equal consideration for protection of timber, soil and water resources, and the protection of fish and wildlife habitat.

The memorandum notes that forest insects and diseases kill more trees and reduce forest growth potential more severely than all other destructive agents combined. Merchantable timber lost to insects and disease in a recent year would have built more than 700,000 homes.

The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated to the Forest Service responsibility for carrying out Agriculture's role in the agreement. The memorandum affects lands managed by the Federal Government and adjacent non-Federal lands from which forest diseases and insects might spread.

In addition to national forests, administered by the USDA's Forest Service, other Federal lands concerned are in national parks, national wildlife refuges, Indian lands and the national land reserve, administered by agencies of the Department of the Interior.

The agreement calls for close cooperation between the two departments in controlling past outbreaks. The Forest Service is to provide technical advice and financial support, with funds coming from appropriations made for white pine blister rust and for control of forest insects and other tree diseases. The Forest Service will also assist in training Department of the Interior employees in prevention, detection, and suppression techniques.

Interior agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will conduct and finance suppression projects on Interior lands.

The agreement recognizes possible adverse effects of some control methods, such as aerial spraying of pest infested forests. According to the announcement, the Department of the Interior will study control activities from the standpoint of effects on fish, wildlife, and plant life.

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