



## QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 8 August 2019  
To: United States Forest Service  
From: Jacob Pries, Policy Intern  
Re: Support for Proposed Categorical Exclusions

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On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), we would like to state our strong support for the proposed changes promulgated by the United States Forest Service (USFS) regarding a categorical exclusion for routine forest management activities. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

With 80 million acres of National Forest System land in jeopardy of wildfire outbreaks, disease, and insect infestation, it is vitally important that the USFS has the flexibility to conduct routine maintenance on these forests to keep them in the healthiest condition possible. Many communities rely on these forests as a source of solitude, recreation, and as an economic driver. The continued existence of these forests and the communities that rely upon them hinges on the ability of the United States Forest Service to conduct science-backed management activities.

We recognize that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a necessary tool to ensure that this nation's natural resources are not adversely affected and that there is a proper scope for this policy that should be considered. However, with that being said, it is to our understanding that NEPA was not intended to be an unnecessary burden on responsible management activities that lead to the increased health of our nation's forests. This consequence arising out of NEPA runs directly contrary to what was intended by the policy.

Forest management as we know it today has vastly changed over the past few decades. No longer is it responsible to simply leave forests unmanaged or unmaintained. The current science supports sound principles of forest management activities to preserve quality habitat, ensure wildfire resilience, and to prevent the spread of diseases. It can take up to three years for the USFS to comply with NEPA regulations, this is more than any other federal agency. By increasing the time it takes to execute routine management activities through unnecessary regulatory burdens, this places the forests, the wildlife within these forests and the communities that rely on them all at risk. With more time and resources dedicated from the USFS to ensuring the vitality of our forests, we can all come to enjoy what they have to offer. It is for these reasons that we support the categorical exclusions proposed by the U.S. Forest Service. On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association, we would like to thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,

Jacob Pries  
Policy Intern  
Quality Deer Management Association