

## THE POTENTIAL FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY TO ADDRESS FOREST HEALTH

Title presented at workshop:

### OVERVIEW ON THE POTENTIAL FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY TO ADDRESS FOREST HEALTH— BASED ON PENDING NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND MEDICINE REPORT

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The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine is conducting a consensus study on the potential for biotechnology to address forest health. A committee of 13 experts from diverse disciplines have collaborated to examine the potential use of biotechnology to mitigate threats to forest tree health; identify the ecological, ethical, and social implications of deploying biotechnology in forests; and develop a research agenda to address knowledge gaps about its application. In particular, the committee has considered the use of biotechnology to prevent the extirpation of a tree species by an insect or disease that could have negative consequences for forest health. The study includes the committee's definition of forest health, a review of the state of the science for tree biotechnology and other tools for improving forest health, and an overview of the unique challenges and opportunities of using biotechnology to address forest health. To accomplish the goals of the study, the committee has held information-gathering meetings on a wide range of topics, including the ethics of using biotechnology in conservation, Native American perspectives on using biotechnology in forests, and how forest trees modified with biotechnology are handled in the U.S. regulatory system. The study will culminate in a report, *Forest Health and Biotechnology: Possibilities and Considerations*, published in early 2019. The final report can be found at <https://doi.org/10.17226/25221>. Funding for the study was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities. More information can be found at [nas.edu/forest\\_biotech](http://nas.edu/forest_biotech).

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