



## Communications Working Group charter (June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014)

### **MISSION**

The 4FRI Communications Working Group's (CWG) purpose is to provide objective, factually accurate and timely information on the Initiative and its progress to the 4FRI Stakeholder Group (SHG); the general public; local, state and federal government; media; state and federal agencies, as well as business and industry.

### **REPRESENTATION**

The CWG will strive to maintain broad SHG representation; but will require participation from members of the Steering Committee (SC), Forest Service, and 4FRI primary contractors. Any member of the SHG is welcome to participate in the CWG.

### **STRUCTURE**

The CWG will operate under a distributed leadership model. Two co-authors will lead the development of all communication products. The selection of specific CWG co-authors will be determined by their subject matter expertise and availability.

### **PROCESS**

The CWG will avoid personal opinion or organizational bias in its messaging, and will base communication products on data that are determined to be accurate by the Stakeholder Group, US Forest Service (USFS), and 4FRI primary contractors. The CWG's products may include press releases, information for the [www.4fri.org](http://www.4fri.org) website, talking points, newsletters, emails, responses to inquiries, media materials for public events or other content that the Stakeholder Group deems necessary. The SHG website will also serve as a communication portal for any interested party to contact the Stakeholder Group with an information request. The website will be systematically reviewed on a quarterly basis by the CWG and SC co-chairs.

### **The CWG will work to fulfill its mission through a strategy which includes these key elements:**

- Development of an annual work plan with major communication goals and strategies, to be reviewed each month by the CWG and the SC co-chairs.
- The initiative to undertake a particular communication project may originate from the CWG or the SHG, or it may originate from a request/inquiry outside of the SHG. The CWG must receive approval from the 4FRI SC (see below) in order to initiate any communications project.
- The CWG will provide regular communication updates at the SHG monthly meetings.

- As a working group within the SHG, all CWG products must be approved by the SHG prior to release. To do this the CWG will submit initial drafts of press releases and communications to the 4FRI SHG using the following protocols:

**Protocols A, B and C outline ways that the CWG can produce communication pieces, based on three different deadline scenarios:**

**A. (NOT TIME SENSITIVE)**

*If the CWG determines that communications are not time sensitive and can wait until the next Stakeholder Group meeting, the CWG will develop materials for review by the entire Stakeholder Group.*

1. All communication materials will be posted on BASECAMP for SHG review at least one week prior to the SHG meeting and revisions (based on SHG input) will be completed no later than 2 business days prior to that SHG meeting.

**B. (SOMEWHAT TIME SENSITIVE)**

*When there are more than 72 hours to work with the media, but communications need to occur before the next Stakeholder Group meeting:*

1. The CWG will develop a rough draft using 4FRI documents already approved by the Stakeholder Group and will submit it for review to the SC, USFS 4FRI team lead, and 4FRI primary contractors at least four full business days prior to the time that materials are due.
2. SC members will provide the project leads of the CWG with any suggested revisions within two business days of receiving the rough draft. All comments and quotes from SC members shall be consistent with the overarching goals of 4FRI.
3. (a) The project leads of the CWG will work directly with SC members to (i) incorporate comments and quotes into the materials; (ii) achieve consensus support from all interested SC members for the messages conveyed by the materials and (iii) distribute the materials to appropriate media outlets and the stakeholder group.  
  
(b) If individual comments or quotes are inconsistent with the overarching goals of 4FRI, or if such comments or quotes prevent the project leads of the CWG from achieving consensus support from SC members, the chair and co-chair of the SC shall take responsibility for exercising due diligence in working with the SC to revise the communication piece in order to achieve the highest possible level of consensus on press materials.

**Guidance for protocols A and B**

1. **Information management:** the CWG will maintain a concise, up to date “library” of 4FRI facts (e.g. timeline, project definition, implementation progress, etc.) utilizing USFS and SHG information

2. **Identifying priorities:** the CWG, SC or SHG may propose when to initiate a communication project, and those will be tiered to key issues identified in the CWG charter. Before initiating a project the CWG will develop consensus on the key messages that need to be conveyed. Key issues identified by the CWG to date include:
  - Industry and implementation updates
  - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration accomplishments
  - The SHG responses to the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record Of Decision and lessons learned from the 1<sup>st</sup> analysis area Environmental Impact Statement
3. **Rough Draft:** two CWG members will volunteer to be the lead authors (see “project leads” above). They will assemble facts and quotes to support the key message(s) and draft an outline. The outline will be vetted with the entire CWG, then provided to the USFS 4FRI team lead and 4FRI primary contractors, before proceeding to a final draft.
4. **SC review:** the CWG will then produce a revised final draft, which will be submitted to the SC for initial approval (two business days provided for SC review), after which the SC will return the draft with all comments in track changes format to the entire CWG (who will have two business days to respond to revisions).
5. **Final draft:** the CWG co-authors will address comments/edits and then submit a final draft to the entire SHG (to be approved at the SHG meeting in option A or via BASECAMP for option B). The SHG will have two business days to review and comment on the final draft.

**C. (VERY TIME SENSITIVE)**

***When there is a time sensitive need to respond to the news media, such as when a response to media query is necessary within less than 72 hours, the CWG, or any 4FRI member, will:***

1. Represent him/herself and/or organization, making it clear he/she is not speaking on behalf of the SHG.
2. Respond in a supportive manner of 4FRI, using 4FRI documents developed by the collaborative group as reference materials.
3. Immediately provide the media representative with contact information for every member of the 4FRI CWG, as well as 4FRI SC co-chairs.
4. Immediately email all members on the 4FRI CWG and SC co-chairs to inform them that a media representative has expressed interest in 4FRI and has been given the contact list.