

# Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Four-Forest Restoration Initiative

## Coconino and Kaibab National Forests

### Reader's Guide

Thank you for your interest in this four-forest restoration analysis (4FRI) for the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests. The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) was developed in collaboration with many individuals, groups, and agencies. This guide is intended to provide an overview of the analysis and provide you one-stop shopping information for reviewing and commenting on the DEIS.

A preview of the DEIS will be posted on the 4FRI website on February 27, 2013. However, please **do not submit comments** until the formal comment period begins the day after the Notice of Availability is published in the Federal Register. We anticipate (**but cannot guarantee**) the Notice of Availability will be published on or around Friday, March 29, 2013. The reader's guide will be updated when the formal comment period begins.

## DEIS Components

- **Summary.** The summary provides a brief overview of issues, alternatives, and brief conclusions on how alternatives move towards desired conditions. See page iii to page v of the DEIS.
- **Chapter 1. Purpose and Need for Action.** The purpose and need describes why the project is needed by describing the existing and desired conditions as they relate to having a resilient and sustainable forest (see page 8 to page 28). This chapter describes public involvement for the project (see page 34 to page 36), issues that were identified from scoping and collaboration (page 36 to page 39), and the final proposed action (page 40 to page 45).
- **Chapter 2. Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action.** This chapter provides details on alternatives that were considered but eliminated from detailed study (see page 48 to page 61) as well as those alternatives that were analyzed in detail (see page 62 to page 103).
- **Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences.** This chapter describes the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental consequences associated with each alternative (see page 105 to page 332).
- **Chapter 4. Consultation and Coordination.** This section lists all individuals, organizations, local, state and federal government who are involved (or want to be kept informed) with the project. See page 333 to page 339.

- **References.** This section provides a list of scientific literature used to inform the analysis. For easier reading, it is organized by resource, DEIS chapter or DEIS Appendix as applicable. See page 357 to page 435.
- **Glossary.** This section provides definitions for commonly-used terms. See page 341 to page 355.
- **Appendix A (Map Packet).** In addition to having maps that can be viewed on the 4FRI internet website (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/4fri/planning>), a packet of poster-sized maps for alternatives B-D is available upon request. If you would like a map packet, please submit your request via email to: [4fri\\_comments@fs.fed.us](mailto:4fri_comments@fs.fed.us). Please note there is an underscore (“\_”) between the words “4fri” and “comments”.
- **Appendix B (Forest Plan Amendments).** Several forest plan amendments were needed in order to move towards restoration desired conditions. The amendments are a bridge between the dated, current forest plans (in place since 1987 and 1988) to the forest plan revision process that is currently underway on both forests. Each action alternative includes up to 6 non-significant forest plan amendments. Table 91 (page 439) provides a summary of the proposed plan amendments.
- **Appendix C (Design Features, BMPs, and Mitigation).** Appendix C includes design features that would be required to implement alternative B-D. Some features are required in order to be in compliance with law, regulation, policy, and/or the forest plans. Some features were developed by resource specialists to further reduce impacts to their resource. The design features are carried forward into the implementation monitoring section of the monitoring and adaptive management plan (appendix E, page 659) to gauge whether the features were effective. The design features are also carried forward into the implementation plan (appendix D, page 601) to ensure that the project is implemented as designed.
- **Appendix D (Implementation Plan).** The implementation plan (see page 601 to page 657) is designed to ensure compliance with the analysis and decision. It includes checklists and guidance designed to track accomplishments, provide guidance to the implementation team, and utilize adaptive management.

Should a treatment need adapting or modifying to best meet the conditions on the ground, the implementation plan provides the mechanism to evaluate and then document whether the analysis conducted was sufficient or whether new analysis is needed. The implementation plan includes the following:

- **Annual Implementation Checklist.** A checklist (table 112) was developed to track compliance with the NEPA decision and ensure activities are consistent and compliant with the analysis and decision (correct location, appropriate number of acres by treatment type). The checklist is designed to be used by the implementation team leader.
- **Planned Acres by Treatment Type and Restoration Unit (RU).** A checklist (table 113) was developed to facilitate accomplishment reporting. The checklist is

designed to be used (at a minimum) by the implementation team leader and forest program managers.

- **NEPA, NFMA, ESA, CFLR Act Compliance Evaluation.** The checklist (table 114) is designed to ensure resource surveys are completed as required by the forest plan, policy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) biological opinion, Comprehensive Forest Landscape Restoration Act (CFLR), or other requirements. The checklist also ensures that the site-specific treatments are compliant with the NEPA analysis and decision. The checklist is designed to be used by the resource specialists that are part of the implementation team and by the Agency's (delegated) approving official.
- **Supporting Documentation.** This checklist (table 115) is designed to ensure required plans and surveys are tracked annually and are readily accessible to the implementation team and approving official. It will be used in combination with appendix E, the adaptive management strategy.
- **Sections A-E:** This portion of the Implementation Plan provides guidance specific to the vegetation treatments. It is designed to ensure that tree groups, interspaces, and regeneration openings are designed as planned. It incorporates guidance designed to conserve pre-settlement trees and provides guidance (desired conditions) for retaining large, young trees (alternative C only). Guidance on old and large trees was derived from stakeholder products.
- **Appendix E (Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan).** The monitoring and adaptive management plan (see page 675 to page 697) is a collaborative product designed to meet the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) requirements for multiparty monitoring. It provides guidance for measuring physical and biophysical, social, and economic results of restoration activities across the 4FRI analysis area. It provides a feedback mechanism that supports adaptive management. The plan is a work in progress and will likely be refined before the project's decision is issued.
- **Appendix F (Cumulative Effects).** The cumulative effects appendix (see page 675 to page 697) includes the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable information that was used to evaluate cumulative effects. Cumulative effects maps will be available for viewing on the 4FRI website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/4fri/planning>.
- **Appendix G (Bridge Habitat).** The bridge habitat evaluation (see page 699 to page 713) was developed in response to public concerns that wildlife species (including the northern goshawk, the Mexican spotted owl, Abert's squirrel, turkey, mule deer, black bear, and some songbird species) would not have sufficient post-treatment closed canopy habitat. The evaluation clarifies how post-treatment conditions within the 4FRI project area would provide habitat for canopy-dependent wildlife in the short term. We are referring to those areas as "bridge habitat," suggesting that these more densely forested areas would be available to wildlife to bridge the time between treatment and the attainment of desired conditions across the broader landscape.
- **Index.** The index provides a way to search the DEIS for key words or areas of interest by page number. See page 715 to page 716.

## **Preferred Alternative – Alternative C**

- This alternative would mechanically treat 434,001 acres of vegetation and utilize prescribed fire on 593,211 acres.
- It responds to Issue 2 (conservation of large trees) and Issue 4 (increased restoration and research).
- It adds acres of grassland treatments on the Kaibab NF, incorporates wildlife and watershed research on both forests, and mechanically treats and uses prescribed fire within the proposed Garland Prairie Research Natural Area on the Kaibab NF.
- It proposes mechanically treating up to 18-inch d.b.h. in 18 MSO PACs and includes low severity prescribed fire within 72 MSO PACs, including 56 core areas.
- Key components of the stakeholder created Large Tree Retention Strategy are incorporated into the alternative's implementation plan.
- Three nonsignificant forest plan amendments on the Coconino NF and three nonsignificant amendments on the Kaibab NF would be required to be in compliance with the plans.

## **Decision to be Made**

The Coconino and Kaibab NF Supervisors are the Forest Service officials responsible for making the final decision. Earl Stewart is the Coconino NF Forest Supervisor and Mike Williams is the Kaibab NF Forest Supervisor. For more information on the decision to be made, see page 30 of the DEIS.

## **Accessing Documents on the 4FRI Website**

The DEIS will be posted to the 4FRI website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/4fri/planning>. As specialist reports are converted to a web-accessible format, they will be posted on the website. The website currently has an archive section that contains meeting notes and draft planning documents that were made available as the analysis progressed (generally from 2011 and 2012). Archived documents can be found at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/4fri/planning/?cid=stelprdb5361003>.

## **Web-based Interactive Map**

An interactive map of the proposed activities by alternative will be available via a link on the 4FRI website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/4fri/planning> when the formal period begins. The intent of this map is to provide additional detail not available on printed maps, a simple way to compare alternatives, and the ability to supply a spatial component that you can use during the formal comment period. Additional instructions on posting and viewing map comments will be available.

While the interactive map does allow for posting comments directly to the map, these comments will not give you standing. You will have to submit comments on the project via email, fax, in writing, or in person (see the "Formal Comment Period" and "Submitting Comments" section below).

## **Formal Comment Period**

In response to public input, the Forest Supervisors have decided to offer a 60-day formal comment period. The formal comment period begins the day after the Notice of Availability is

published in the Federal Register by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We anticipate **(but cannot guarantee)** the NOA will be published on Friday, March 29, 2013.

## **Submitting Comments**

As noted earlier, please **do not submit comments** until the formal comment period begins (with the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register). While we have provided the estimated date when the formal comment is expected to begin, it is not guaranteed. We will send out notification emails when the document has been posted in the Federal Register. In addition, it is possible to check online to search for documents have been posted in the Federal Register at: [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Use the search box and type in the following words: “Environmental Impact Statements, Availability, Forest Service”. Once the formal 60-day comment period begins:

### **Written comments must be submitted to:**

Coconino National Forest – 4FRI  
1824 S. Thompson Street  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
Fax number: (928) 527-3620

The office business hours for hand-delivering written comments are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday – Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided at the Coconino or Kaibab Supervisor’s Office or Coconino and Kaibab Ranger District Offices during normal business hours via telephone or in person.

We encourage you to use our web-based electronic comment option. Electronic comments can be created and posted online via the 4FRI website at: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=34857>. This option will not be activated to accept comments until the formal 60-day comment period has started.

If you prefer not to use the web-based option, electronic comments can also be submitted to: [4fri\\_comments@fs.fed.us](mailto:4fri_comments@fs.fed.us). Please note there is an underscore (“\_”) between the words “4fri” and “comments”.

Comments can be included directly in the body of the e-mail message or as an attachment in word document format (.doc, .docx), portable document format (.pdf), rich text format (.rtf), text (.txt), or hypertext markup language (.html).

Comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer’s concerns and positions. The submission of timely and specific comments can affect a reviewer’s ability to participate in any subsequent administrative review or judicial review. Please note that comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action.

## **Requesting Documents via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**

During your review, you may want to view additional documents such as the specialist reports. Specialist reports will be made available on the 4FRI website as soon as they are converted to a web-accessible format. If documents are not available on the web, a FOIA request will have to be submitted:

- Put “4FRI DEIS FOIA Request” as the subject of your letter or e-mail

- List the documents you would like by name and project record index number (available on the 4FRI website when the formal comment period begins)
- Be sure to include your name, address and telephone number. We may need to contact you to clarify the request.

**Send your FOIA request to:**

Type of Request	Where To Send Request
<b>E-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:4fri_comments@fs.fed.us">4fri_comments@fs.fed.us</a>  Show "4FRI DEIS FOIA Request" in the subject line.
<b>Letter</b>	4FRI DEIS FOIA Request 1824 S. Thompson Street Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  <b>OR</b> Hand-Deliver from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.
<b>Fax</b>	(928) 527-3620

Please note, copying charges may be assessed if hard copies are requested.

**Tentative Upcoming Open Houses (Subject to Change based on publication of the NOA in the Federal Register):**

Date	Town/City	Location	Time
April 3, 2013	Flagstaff, AZ	Coconino NF Supervisor's Office	6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
April 15, 2013	Flagstaff, AZ	Coconino NF Supervisor's Office	6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
April 16, 2013	Williams, AZ	Williams Ranger District	6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
April 20, 2013	Tusayan, AZ	Tusayan Ranger District	10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
April 27, 2013	Flagstaff, AZ	Supervisor's Office	10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
May 15, 2013	Flagstaff, AZ	Coconino NF Supervisor's Office	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**For More Information, Contact A Member of the 4FRI Team:**

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