

Path Forward document
Agreement characterization and written reservations

Agreement characterization (from 3.24.10 meeting minutes)¹

The full group reached agreement with reservation/acquiescence on the entire Path Forward document. The agreement level reached is specified below.

Without Reservation– 9
Reservations = 13
Acquiescence = 1

Written reservations regarding organizations' approval of the Path Forward document:

Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership:

1 - Mixed vote of Partners, SO NO CLEAR #1: 6 w/o reservations @ #1; 2 w reservations @ #2; 1 abstain & 1 opposed @ #3; 0 @ #4

2 - Functional concerns

- * Sideboards too restrictive to accomplish ecological restoration across the landscape
- * Functional if not "strict" diameter cap fixed @ 16", especially since exceptions (other than CPMZ's) can be opposed/blocked
- * Post-treatment conditions from WSS still too limited/simple/constrained
- * Approved CWPP's not emphasized enough

GFFP looks forward to the 1st meeting when the Path Forward is not on the agenda.

Coconino Natural Resources Conservation District:

"CNRCD agrees with reservation to the subject Path Forward, subsection V.9., with the reservation being that to harness our future analysis and research, NEPA and otherwise, to the arbitrary definition of large trees, is contrary to efficient and effective management and contrary to accelerated treatment. Despite this, I believe we can work with this and succeed

We do not see significant socio-political consensus for making 16" dbh a unique or fundamental decision point for NEPA or other analysis. We know of no science based reason to do so. Including this in the Collaborative charter, or by reference, goes against Path Forward section IV, "...mechanisms that support highly efficient and effective program implementation.", and against Path Forward section V subsection 10 in its entirety."

Arizona Game and Fish Department:

¹ A more complete description of the discussion surrounding the group's approval of the Path Forward document can be found in meeting minutes from the March 24, 2010 stakeholder meeting.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department welcomes completion of the *Path Forward* document, dated March 24th, 2010. We appreciate the commitment and time invested by all stakeholders, setting the stage for successful implementation of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI). The Department supports the *Path Forward* at Level 2, “Agreement with Reservations.” In accordance with decision rules adopted by the 4FRI collaborative, we present the following documentation of our reservations.

1. Section V.7. We remain concerned by over-extension of results of the *Analysis of Small Diameter Wood Supply in Northern Arizona*. Like other participants in that effort, the Department understood the objective to be estimating the amount of wood fiber that could be harvested under various treatment scenarios. Analyses for the *Wood Supply Study* were relatively coarse, i.e., they were not spatially explicit and did not incorporate the full range of information available to inform ecologically-based restoration (e.g., site-specific reference conditions, range of natural variability in forest stand structure, etc.). Wildlife habitat objectives were not a formal part of the analysis, other than excluding treatments from some areas (e.g., Mexican Spotted Owl PACs). Desired post-treatment conditions articulated in the *Wood Supply Study* are general, hypothesized outcomes insufficient for developing site-specific prescriptions.
2. Section V.9. The 16” diameter limit on tree harvest is an arbitrary, socially-derived number. The available science does not indicate that trees >16” must be retained to restore the structure and function of Southwestern ponderosa pine forests or meet wildlife habitat needs within those ecosystems. In fact, there are many areas (including those identified in the *Path Forward*) where removal of large, post-settlement trees will be necessary to meet wildlife habitat and restoration objectives. The *Path Forward* contains a clause allowing removal of large, non old-growth trees. However, this exception process has yet to be defined and should not compromise attainment of wildlife habitat and other restoration objectives.
3. Section V.10. The same concerns articulated above apply to recommended application of initial sideboards across the 4FRI area.
4. The Department strongly supports a stakeholder-driven, collaborative approach to the 4FRI Initiative. The *Path Forward* document reflects significant efforts by a small and dedicated group of stakeholders. However, we are concerned that the document may not reflect the full range of stakeholder perspectives and could be construed as exclusionary by those who have yet to engage in the 4FRI effort.

The Ecological Restoration Institute

The ERI is in agreement at Agreement level 2, Agreement with Reservations, with regard to the *Path Forward* document presented on March 24th, 2010. Just to clarify, we agree in general but have some reservations. We recognize that those with reservations must

express their reasons and have them recorded. The following articulates those reservations:

- Ecological restoration treatments should be based on a sound understanding of reference conditions, vegetation dynamics, natural variability, and the body of knowledge that exists about the effects of restoration experiments in Arizona and the SW. We feel that some of the language in number 7 and 9 under "Sideboards" does not meet those standards and seems to embrace a "one size fits all" approach.
- Number 7 under sideboards: We object to using the consensus scenario and elements of the Wood Supply Study as sideboards. We feel that this misinterprets what most members of the Wood Supply Study group thought they were agreeing to. The second paragraph attempts to clarify and interpret the side boards but is not sufficient to fully reverse the misrepresentation of the study findings. The study was not designed to place limits on ecological restoration, but instead was just a method for calculating wood volume using different assumptions. Specifically, we disagree that the statements referred to in number 7 under "Sideboards" should be construed as technically/scientifically sound sideboards for area designations, post-treatment conditions, percentage of landscape management areas to be thinned, etc. Much more information and analysis is needed to develop specific and rigorous suggestions for appropriate ecological approaches.
- Number 9 under sideboards: We have the same general concerns noted above, plus the definition of large trees using a static diameter of 16 inches. Despite the statement that there is no strict diameter cap, the result of the large tree retention strategy could be interpreted by some as a 16 inch diameter cap. Such a static diameter definition ignores the fact that trees grow, and therefore that at the very least diameter definitions must change over time. The 16 inch diameter definition has been advocated for at least the past 20 years. Assuming a modest growth rate of 1.5 inches in diameter per decade, the diameter definition should currently be around 19 inches. Putting a 16 inch definition into place now would be an effective diameter retention limit for year 10 of 14.5 inches and for year 20 of 13 inches, a potentially severe constraint on achieving restoration objectives over the 20 yr life of the 4FRI agreement. Further a one size fits all diameter definition ignores the high site to site variability that characterizes the 4FRI landscape. We believe that a scientifically rigorous and technically sound analysis could produce some tree retention guides that would stand up to technical and scientific scrutiny. Absent that, we feel that such a large tree retention strategy could well be ignored entirely.