



4FRI Stakeholder Group DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 27, 2016, 9AM-1:15PM

Arizona Game and Fish Region 1 Office

2878 E. White Mountain Blvd., Pinetop, AZ 85935

Teleconference line: (712) 775-7031, code: 439290611#

Attendance: Neil Chapman, David Dorum, Dick Fleishman, Annette Fredette, Randy Fuller, Alicyn Gitlin, Richard Gonzales, Aaron Green, Shaula Hedwall, Steve Horner, Cody Hutchinson, Royce Kincanon, Dan Kipervaser, Tom Mackin, Joe Miller, Mark Nigrelli, Keith Pajkos, Henry Provencio, Todd Richardson, Christopher Ruff, Scott Russell, Jennifer Ruyle, Sue Sitko, Paul Summerfelt, Jim Upchurch, Erick Walker, Amy Waltz, Karen Warnick, Paul Watson, Andrew Whetten, Travis Woolley, Tiffany Woods, Bruce Greco, Wendy Jo Haskins, Steve Best, Matt Millar, Andrew Sanchez Meador, David Huffman

On the Phone: Brad Worsley, Michelle Ralston, Stephen Flora, Audrey Owens, Anne Mottek, Katherine Sanchez-Meador, and Diane Vosick

9:05 Approve minutes from the April 27th SHG meeting — Greg Smith

Stephen Flora from SRP requested to change a comment in the April Minutes, the updated minutes will be posted to BASECAMP.

9:10 Review action items from the April 27th SHG meeting — Greg Smith

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Send responses to co-chairs before the next SC call or participate in the next Planning Work Group meeting	All	Complete
2. Have a status update at the May SC call on the responses in advance of the May meeting	SC	Complete
3. SRP presentation at future SHG meeting	Stephen Flora/ SC	July or August
4. Post Paired Watershed and Springs Ecosystem Smartphone Monitoring Application presentations to BASECAMP	Woods/Springer	Complete
5. Dashboard presentation	IWG	Today
6. Future presentation by AZSF and FS concerning Industry Economics	USFS/AZSF	Future SHG Meeting – June Meeting or later SC call

9:15 Call to the Public

9:20 USFS Update – 4FRI Board, Coordinators

Facilitation: The FS had a contract out for three years of facilitation support, but that has been canceled. There will be a steering committee discussion to identify future facilitation needs.

Action Item: Identify items that need facilitation at the June SC Call.

There have been some changes made to the offering schedule so that they can treat 15,000 acres this year. The FS has reviewed that recommendations presented by ECO, but they are unable to implement the suggestions because short-term opportunities aren't materializing. They have identified additional opportunities using categorical exclusions. However, the opportunities identified through the Farm Bill require two years of MSO surveys. Additional things the FS is working on includes developing stewardship agreements with ECO and TNC, looking into good neighbor authority, expanding designation by prescription, and purchasing tablet technology.

Operations: Mechanically thinning is just starting back up so expect more acres in June and managed fire is now on the ground.

2nd EIS: They are still working on the draft purpose and need and the proposed action and will use feedback provided today and the feedback they received at the May Open House. They are working on the notice of intent (NOI) and anticipate to have the scoping meetings in July. The FS would like to co-host the formal scoping meetings with the SHG.

Action Item: SC discussion on co-hosting formal scoping meetings

Monitoring: They awarded vegetation surveys for MSO and they will start next month. They are also looking at perennial springs and will have two more events with the Grand Canyon Trust. First they will describe existing conditions then will discuss specific prescriptions and actions.

9:45 Planning Workgroup Recommendation on Draft Proposed Action – Greco/Sitko

ECO and ERI provided written comments on the draft proposed action and TNC and AZGFD provided verbal comments. As a result, the PWG has concluded that the group does not need to make a formal recommendation today because the comments provided reflected that of the whole group. There will be a more definitive opportunity to give feedback at a future date and the comments that were provided do not need to be approved by the SHG.

10:15 Stakeholder Disclosures and Announcements – all

- **May Open House update** – Joe Miller

35-36 people were in attendance and the facility was comfortable. Sue, Brie, and Joe are working on a lessons learned about how to get information out and how to raise a crowd.

Paul Summerfelt (Flagstaff Fire Department): Matt Millar is the new FWPP specialist.

Update on the April CFLR Conference (Multiple): It was a great conference; TNC presented on tablet technology and Amy Waltz presented on monitoring. One thing that was discussed concerned a change in reporting for the FS budget. They will no longer be able to lump funding together and will now need to separate the budget which could decrease their available funding for restoration.

10:45 Mixed Conifer Presentation – Randy Fuller, Dave Huffman, Andrew Sanchez Meador, Shaula Hedwall

Randy Fuller: Mixed conifer is positioned above dryland ponderosa pine and below wet mixed conifer. It is more open than wet mixed conifer and has a stronger association with aspen. Ponderosa pine has a frequent low, low severity fire regime and dry mixed conifer has a less frequent fire regime of around once every 35 years. They plan to use functional restoration to get as close as they can to the historical range of variability (HRV) and will continue to go out into the field to see these transitions to determine how they can or cannot treat these stands. The FS still relies on on-the-ground prescriptions.

Dave Huffman and Andrew Sanchez Meador: GTR-310 lays out the desired conditions and the historical conditions (prior to pre-European settlement) to determine the conditions that will lead to resiliency. A lot of research went into describing the historical conditions and the ranges that were provided.

Mixed conifer ERI completed research projects: The Black Mesa Ranger District study was completed in an area with mixed conifer forests and was the site of high severity frequent fires. They collected data to reconstruct the fire regime and forest structure in 146 plots. Based on core increments and fire scars they found that the trees experienced low severity fire for a number of years and 1879 is when the fires abruptly ended. This is also what they see in ponderosa pine forests.

In regard to forest structure, they found that there was an average of 57 trees per acres in 1879 and now the average is six times that amount. They also found that there has been a change in species composition, specifically there has been an increase of Douglas fir, white fir, and a big increase in Southwestern white pine. Ponderosa pine historically dominated 53% of the landscape, but now it only dominated the landscape in 34% of the plots. Today we have a much more diverse landscape that has shifted from a being dry and fire tolerant to wet and fire intolerant so we need to be careful when discussing the need for adding more heterogeneity to the landscape. These fire intolerant landscapes are also shade and drought intolerant species and they have serious implications in terms of ecological function and resiliency.

GTR-310 was the first time in the Southwest they tried to consolidate prescriptive information with respect to structure and composition, but they took it one step further to talk about fine scale structure (species composition, size distribution and spatial patterns). GTR-310 identified mixed conifer as a research gap and there were two studies that they developed to look at these questions. One study was on the San Francisco Peaks (west) and the other was on the Mogollon Rim. On the peaks they found direct evidence of frequent fire in mixed conifer paired with over story structural characteristics as opposed to frequent fire inferred from over story structural characteristics. The current structure is dense forest with a few large fire tolerant species and lots of smaller fire intolerant species and the historical structure had fewer trees that was dominated by fire tolerant species. They are trying to find multiple lines of evidence and expand HRV to determine if this phenomenon is the true phenomenon that happened on this landscape to inform restoration treatments.

Studies concerned with responses to treatment: 1) Pagosa LEARN site was designed so they could quantitatively and statistically test treatment effects. The three treatment types are burn only, control, and burn with mechanical thinning (restoration treatment). The magnitude of change was large in the restoration treatment, back within the realm of HRV, whereas there was not a noticeable change in the burn only and the control treatments. Question: What kind of burn and was this a single entry burn? Yes it was a single entry burn and there was risk aversion in the burn only site. 2) Wallow fire study, they looked at areas that had received treatment before the Wallow fire and paired them with areas that were untreated. The results were what they expected and there wasn't a lot of difference between the treated units before and the treated units after the Wallow fire, however, dry mixed conifer wasn't as clear of a story as the ponderosa pine story.

The last study goes back to Pagosa site and they projected future conditions with different climate scenarios with the three treatment types (control, burn only, thin and burn). In the control they saw an increase in mortality and by 2063 the projected conditions were well below the HRV and bordering a savannah. With the thin and burn treatments they do see tree mortality, but the projection is still closer to HRV. Essentially, thinning and burning leads to a more resilient forest.

Shaula Hedwall: The main points concerning mixed conifer and MSO 1. Scale matters 2. Mixed conifer transitions quickly it does not go on and elevation gradient 3. There is an overlap between FS desired conditions and the recovery plan desired conditions.

The recovery plan came out in 2012 and they are working to make restoration treatments and the MSO recovery plan work together. Within the Southwest, there are five ecological management units and the 4FRI boundary is within these units. Even-aged management, forest management, and high-severity fire are concerns when working to maintaining owls on the landscape, however, FWPP has treatments in mixed conifer in multiple PACs and 4FRI phase 1 has treatments in PACs in ponderosa pine. These are important in see how restoration treatments impact owls. This is important because a study that was released a few years ago concerning the California spotted owl and will be revisited in another article that will be released soon found that mechanical treatments did result in MSO declines, but they haven't been able to tie that decline to thinning.

A list of general revised recovery plan recommendations for forest management are listed in the PowerPoint presentation that was provided by Shaula. PACs are management areas and they are managed for habitat owls need to reproduce in a year. The goal is to manage for future nest/roost habitat, but they do realize some of these habitats are not sustainable. They also want to plan for recovery habitat that isn't currently occupied. Shaula provided a list of key habitat components, one of which is canopy cover, and the desired conditions within PACs.

Overall, there are still challenges that that they need to overcome concerning restoration management and managing for owl recovery. Monitoring is going to plan an important role and should be dual-faceted because it can provide us with information on how fire and thinning affects owls.

Joe Miller (TU) complimented Dave, Andrew and Shaula on their presentations and their value for the Rim Country EIS Analysis and Planning. He pointed out that the ESA listed (Threatened) native Apache and Gila trout, with their total original ranges very much in common with the 4FRI footprint, should be considered with the same level of concern as the MSO. He further suggested there might be potentially great synergies in the analysis of the MSO areas and the trout areas, based on Shaula's comments about "Lower Drainages".

The three PowerPoint presentations that were given today are available to view on BASECAMP.

12:15 Working Group Updates – All

- Industry Work Group – Brad Worsley (30 min)
 - Dashboard Presentation

The IWG set out to define important aspects for progress and they gauged the progress for the Phase 1 contract and the progress being made outside of the contract. They assessed the progress of the Phase 1 contract separate from the progress of all other mechanical treatments, they also looked at the prescribed and managed fire. The gauges are a visualization of the monthly report released by the FS and the data used to develop the Utilization Capacity – Mill and Processing gauge was provided by AZSF and sawmills that responded to their request for information. The draft gauges are available on BASECAMP.

The gauges do not account for geography, evenness of distribution, and the markets available for the materials. These are items that the group has already discussed and will continue to discuss, but they would add complexity to the dashboard.

There was a discussion on the acres that is being supplied to industry from tribal lands and if that should be included in the utilization gauge. However, this is not a reliable source of wood supply and it isn't cost effective. Another discussion was had on the how the data is being used to put the GEP contract against all other contracts. The group would like there to be a gauge representing the combined achievement of all contracts.

Action Item: Post Dashboard presentation on Basecamp

Action Item: Revise Dashboard with SHG feedback

- Communications Working Group – Sue Sitko (10 minutes)

Rebecca Davidson will no longer be involved with the CWG, but they need more stakeholder involvement in the working group to assist with activities such as drafting up verbiage for the SHG, producing and distributing the quarterly SHG newsletter, and potentially working on the 4FRI.org website. Please contact Sue Sitko if you are interested in joining.

Ideas for the next newsletter: July Open Houses, write-up on the May Open House, volunteer opportunities (work with Tom Mackin), the May 21st Harvesting Methods Open House, the June 8th field trip, wildfires that the FS is currently managing, and/or a summary of tablet work.

- MPMB – Anne Mottek

They are working on the economic contractor reporting form and should have the final document by sometime in June. They are also working on templates for fact sheets and are looking into a social perceptions survey. Songbird surveys will be starting and they signed an agreement with NAU for ground plot survey protocols that will be integrated by the end of the summer.

1:05 Review Action Items/Adjourn

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Identify items that need facilitation at the June SC Call.		
2. SC discussion on co-hosting formal scoping meetings		
3. Post Dashboard presentation on Basecamp		
4. Revise Dashboard based on SHG feedback and present at a future SHG meeting		
5. Future presentation by AZSF and FS concerning Industry Economics to IWG		