



Contact: Pascal Berlioux, 4FRI Co-chair, pberlioux@easternarizonacounties.us, (928) 637-3037
Steve Gatewood, 4FRI Co-chair, wildwoodvb@earthlink.net, (928) 600-3858

Flagstaff, AZ - Friday, September 13, 2013

US Forest Service authorizes new contractor - Good Earth Power - to conduct 4FRI forest restoration

Since May 2012, when the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) contract was awarded to Pioneer Forest Products, the anticipated pace of restoration treatments has been delayed by Pioneer's investment challenges. Today, the U.S. Forest Service announced their decision to authorize the transfer of Pioneer's contract for thinning 300,000 acres of northern Arizona's forests over the remaining term of the contract to Good Earth Power. As 4FRI contracting moves forward, the 4FRI Stakeholders Collaborative Group - a diverse group of businesses, conservation interests, agency representatives, academics, scientists, and local and county governments - remains committed to their greatest common interest: the need to restore our forests as soon as possible, in a way that is both economically, ecologically and socially sustainable.

The 4FRI Stakeholders Collaborative Group is committed to the following restoration goals: re-establishing natural surface fire regimes while reducing the risk of catastrophic crown fires; protecting old growth trees; enhancing watershed functions; reducing the threat of invasive plants; and, improving wildlife habitat.

"The 4FRI Stakeholders Collaborative Group acknowledges a decision being made by the U.S. Forest Service on the novation, and looks forward to meeting with Good Earth Power as soon as possible," said Pascal Berlioux, the collaborative group's rotating First Co-Chair. "Working with businesses that can profitably invest in our forest resources is a cornerstone of our vision."

The U.S. Forest Service announcement addresses one of the most challenging aspects of forest restoration: appropriately-scaled industry that can process small-diameter trees into globally competitive wood products and create jobs for northern Arizona's forested communities. For industry and 4FRI to succeed, Good Earth Power, the Forest Service and the 4FRI Stakeholders Collaborative Group will have to work together to plan, implement, monitor, and adapt forest restoration treatments at an unprecedented scale.

"While we sometimes have differing viewpoints over the 'how' of forest restoration, the 'why' is clear," added Berlioux. "We cannot forget that through some challenging moments in our collaboration, we have also produced tremendous successes as well, such as the very existence of 4FRI."

Members of the 4FRI Stakeholders Collaborative Group have invested enormous resources and dedication over the last decade to create 4FRI, and in collaboration with the Forest Service to make it the largest forest restoration program in the nation. Successes include an emphasis on collaboratively-driven forest restoration in the largest forest restoration Environmental Impact Statement in the country, a near-million-acre plan that will guide treatments over the next decade. The stakeholders and the Forest Service are now finalizing a co-authored Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan for inclusion in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, expected in early 2014.

The stakeholders and the Forest Service continue to plan for a second, even larger phase of treatments across the eastern Arizona forests. As work ramps up to meet anticipated targets and timelines, the 4FRI Stakeholders Collaborative Group will continue to advocate for safe, healthy forests while ensuring scientific, social and economic accountability by the Forest Service, Good Earth Power and the stakeholders themselves.

The 4FRI Stakeholders Collaborative Group invites anyone interested in this project to join our effort; more information can be found at www.4FRI.org.