

Four Forest Restoration Initiative To Receive Collaborative Forest Restoration Funding

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced yesterday that the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) of northern Arizona was one of several projects nationwide that would receive Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration funding to promote healthier, safer and more productive public lands.

The various restoration projects were selected and began receiving funding in 2010. For its second year of funding, 4FRI will receive \$3.5 million. The intent of the funding is to support partnership efforts that will reduce wildfire risk, enhance fish and wildlife habitats, and maintain and improve water quality.

“This funding is absolutely necessary to ensure our ability to implement restoration activities,” said Henry Provencio, 4FRI team leader for the Forest Service. “This funding is used for such things as cultural and biological surveys, weed treatments, road maintenance, and a number of other important steps in preparing the forest for thinning and burning treatments. We are grateful to receive this funding and will make sure it is used to benefit our forests.”

4FRI is a collaborative, landscape-scale initiative designed to restore fire-adapted ecosystems in northern Arizona. Together with a diverse group of stakeholders, the Kaibab, Coconino, Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto national forests are working toward landscape-scale restoration of ponderosa pine forests across the vast Mogollon Rim. The first phase of 4FRI is expected to restore about 350,000 acres of ponderosa pines forests within the Kaibab and Coconino national forests.

“The best way to improve the health of our nation's forests is to work across boundaries with an all-lands approach,” said Vilsack, in a news release from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. “We’re pleased to support projects that are actively encouraging the restoration of our priority forest landscapes while creating green jobs and economic opportunity in rural communities.”

The overall goal of 4FRI is to create landscape-scale restoration approaches that will provide for fuels reduction, forest health, and wildlife and plant diversity, at no cost to the government. A key objective is doing this while creating sustainable ecosystems and industries in the long term. Appropriately-scaled businesses will likely play a key role in the effort by harvesting, processing and selling wood products. The restoration-based work opportunities are expected to create good jobs across northern Arizona.

Information on 4FRI is available at www.fs.usda.gov/4fri. Information on the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration funding is available at www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLR/index.shtml.