

Four Forest Restoration Initiative

Quarterly Stakeholder Newsletter



Forest Restoration in Action

U.S. Forest Service Kicks Off Second 4FRI EIS

With the dust barely settling after the U.S. Forest Service completed their first EIS under NEPA (see Jargon Jigsaw) for 4FRI, the second large EIS analysis has begun across northern Arizona forests.

This second EIS, covering 1.1 million acres and including portions of the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Tonto National Forests, will be the second major installment of this ambitious initiative, the largest forest restoration initiative in the country.

Many activities go on behind the scenes prior to the first step of officially including the public in the agency's decision-making process. First is compiling the most up-to-date data. What is the current condition of all the timber stands across these acres? What is the status of the road network? Where are the archeological features and sensitive wildlife habitats?

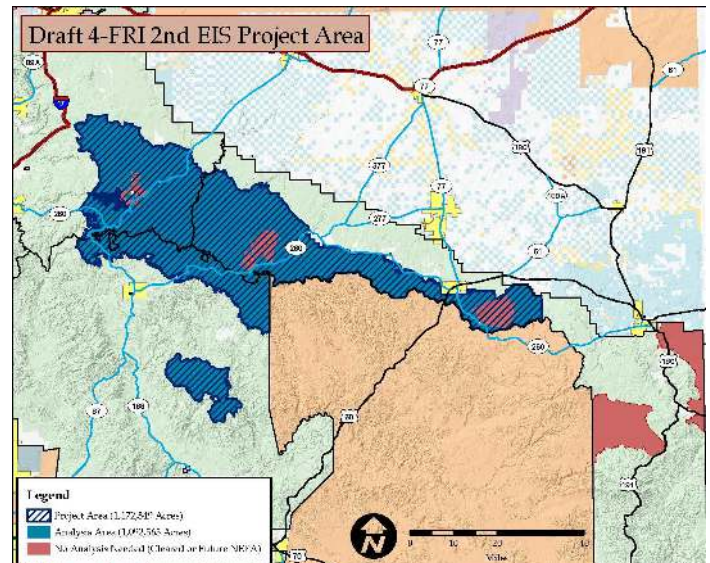
For areas that remain a question mark, inventories must be completed to determine existing conditions.

This effort began last year, actually. The U.S. Forest Service is looking at this fall to begin the next step—that of developing a “vision” or DCs (see Jargon Jigsaw) for this second landscape with help and input from the public.

What do you want to see across this forested landscape? What is important to YOU?

Join the 4FRI Collaborative Stakeholder Group if you want to get involved!

The process to develop a vision, or “DCs,” will be followed by the development of a Proposed Action, the first proposal of what activities should happen on the ground to achieve that vision. Look for more information in the coming months on the progress of this second EIS, which will lay the groundwork for more forest restoration treatments across northern Arizona. For more information, visit this U.S. Forest Service [webpage](#) or contact Annette Fredette, U.S. Forest Service 4FRI Team Leader at 928-226-4684.



Coming Attractions: Collaborator's Corner

The Salt River Project is planning its third annual Healthy Forests, Vibrant Economy conference, to be held on October 7th and 8th in Scottsdale, Arizona. This two-day event will highlight restoration efforts, success stories, ongoing support, and accelerating restoration. Register now [here!](#)

The National Forest Foundation is leading a short-term collaborative process to support an environmental analysis by the Coconino National Forest for fuels reduction in watersheds surrounding C.C. Cragin Reservoir. To become involved, or for more information, contact Marcus Selig at mselig@nationalforests.org.

Upcoming Events:

Natural Resources Working Group	SEPT 15
Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership	SEPT 15
4FRI Stakeholders	SEPT 23
SRP Healthy Forest Conference	OCT 7-8
4FRI Stakeholders	OCT 28
4FRI Stakeholders	NOV 18

Jargon Jigsaw

(acronyms explained!)

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act. National legislation requiring analysis of environmental consequences of proposed actions. Mandates inclusion of public input and the development of alternatives in order to design the most appropriate project.

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement. One of several potential environmental analysis documents created under NEPA.

DCs: Desired Conditions. Key term used by U.S. Forest Service in planning efforts. Describes social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics and the vision for land and resource management. One of the first steps in planning, defining DCs helps determine what actions need to be taken to achieve the desired results.

PAC: Protected Activity Center. Term used to describe the allocated reproductive (nesting, feeding, rearing) area for Mexican spotted owl pairs.

Industry Insider

Highlights from our wood industry and business partners:

* Novo Star Sawmill opened with 22 employees, planning to ramp up cutting from 50K to 100K board-feet per shift. Aug. 25 proved to be a record day with 82K board-feet processed!

* Novo Star is shipping lumber on Apache Railway, with plans to increase volume; will be only the second paid freight on this rail line.

* Canyon Creek Logging recently purchased a grinder to help with biomass from restoration treatments.

* Good Earth Power AZ (GEPAZ) took delivery of a new CAT forest processor on August 28 which will begin work at the Pomeroy task order. Two de-limbers were also returned to work in the forest this month to feed logs to GEPAZ's Williams mill. A heavy-duty pole peeler was added at the Lumberjack mill in Heber. The mill also converted to a 5/4 lumber program.

Stakeholder Perspective

"We all ride for the 4FRI brand!"



Greg Smith, current Mayor of Pinetop-Lakeside, representative of Empire Machinery (Caterpillar), and 4FRI Stakeholder, at our July 2015 meeting.

Across our Forest: Managed Wildfire in June a Success

Accelerating the reintroduction of natural fire in the ecosystem is a crucial component of 4FRI, and this year's early summer precipitation has provided ample opportunity for the Forest Service to do so. The largest wildfire in Coconino National Forest history, the Camillo, was managed for multiple forest health objectives... in the middle of June.

Camillo was started by lightning on June 13. Fire managers decided to take advantage of this low-intensity wildfire by allowing it to burn through large piles of logs underneath a high voltage power line supplying the Phoenix area (a more severe wildfire would have caused extensive damage). Coordinating with the Fish and Wildlife Service, fire managers reintroduced low severity fire in two Mexican spotted owl PACs (see Jargon Jigsaw). The fire benefitted owls by reducing woody material on the ground and dense pockets of small young pines in the PACs while limiting impacts to the large trees and high canopy cover preferred by owls. This decreased the potential for future crown fires and improved conditions for owl prey by creating openings in the understory where grasses and other plants can grow.

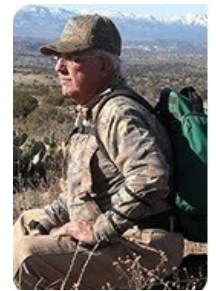
When it finally had run its course, the Camillo Fire had fulfilled multiple forest restoration goals over 24,000 acres. Since this past October, the four forests have managed wildfire on 38,000 acres and have conducted prescribed burns on about 32,600 acres, allowing over 70,000 acres of low severity fire within the 4FRI footprint.



Stakeholder Spotlight: Arizona Wildlife Federation



The Arizona Wildlife Federation has been a 4FRI Stakeholder since 2013. This non-profit organization, formed in 1923, is one of the longest active wildlife advocacy groups in Arizona, dedicated to educating and inspiring the value, conservation, enhancement, management, and protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat. An all-volunteer group, AWF has long and strong ties to the way wildlife is managed today, including being a champion for removing politics from wildlife management through the establishment of a Game & Fish Commission (versus it being at the whimsy of the political winds). AWF helped change Arizona's water code to establish wildlife as a beneficial use of water, making possible the development of several fishing lakes enjoyed by many of us today, including several in Arizona's Rim country. As Tom Mackin, the AWF representative on the 4FRI Stakeholder Group says, "we support 4FRI because of its long-term vision of sustainable, healthy forests—which means vibrant wildlife resources for current and future generations." Visit www.azwildlife.org for more information.



Tom Mackin

Forest Facts: Economic Challenges to Thinning Forests

Today, forest management is focused on ecological restoration of our forests. Our forests are dominated now by smaller-diameter, younger trees, a significant change from historical conditions. The density of these small trees must be reduced, sometimes even before we can allow natural fires to be used for resource objectives. Smaller trees are not as economically marketable as large sawtimber once was, and moving these small trees off the forest takes time, money, and labor—all primarily by private businesses.

Harvesters have to recover the costs with moving every piece of a tree, which means some business has to buy the various parts: its pole or stem where the wood is or its branches, needles, and bark (known as slash). The wider pole or base of a tree can be used for manufacturing into posts, poles, small-diameter lumber, pallets, guardrails, and other products. The smaller (upper) part of the tree stem can be used for laminated or oriented strand boards or ground into clean pellets. The slash is the most challenging; use for power generation is limited due to its overall costs, including costs to transport it off the forest floor. More efficient uses (conversion to heating fuels for example) are economical, but too few facilities exist to use the volume generated. Research for new biomass uses is ongoing, but could be years away before becoming viable.

Lesson learned: if there is no market for every part of the tree, harvesting businesses won't survive. Successful forest restoration today needs a robust variety of businesses to maximize all parts of the trees being harvested.

Contact our current 4FRI Stakeholder Group Co-Chairs:

[Pascal Berlioux](#)

[Steve Gatewood](#)

[Sue Sitko](#)

[Paul Summerfelt](#)

[Diane Vosick](#)