



Four Forest Restoration Initiative

Quarterly Stakeholder Newsletter



National CFLRP Team Visits 4FRI

The Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) receives a significant portion of its funding through annual congressional appropriations to the national Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). Being a national program funding nearly two dozen collaborative projects, a national leadership team of Forest Service (FS) staff from the Washington Office (WO) regularly evaluates program outcomes by visiting selected project sites every year.

This year, the CFLRP WO team visited 4FRI Oct. 4–6 to validate project implementation, understand project challenges, identify opportunities for support, and to advance collaborative restoration. The team also wanted to hear lessons learned and innovations developed, and in turn use this information to inform future planning, implementation, and monitoring.



Welcome dinner in Pinetop-Lakeside

The team arrived from New Mexico for dinner in Pinetop-Lakeside with FS staff and local stakeholders, enjoying a lively introduction to the variety of stakeholder perspectives. The following day, stakeholders

and FS staff joined the team to travel along the Mogollon Rim, stopping at various 4FRI project sites to discuss the National Environmental Policy Act, implementation planning, community engagement, and the complexities of managing fire in Rim Country (intermixed vegetation types along the Mogollon Rim) for the development of the Rim Country project.

For lunch, the group met with a separate state legislator tour coordinated by the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (ECO; see article p. 3). This provided a unique opportunity for national-level FS staff to converse with nearly 20 Arizona state legislators. After lunch, the team visited sites representing comprehensive restoration activities and ended in Flagstaff for dinner.



CFLRP team, stakeholders, and Forest Service staff meet at Rim Overlook to kick off first field day.

Meetings

Natural Resources Working Group	Dec 5 Jan 16
Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership	Oct 27 Nov 15 Jan 17
4FRI Stakeholders	Nov 15 Jan 24
Multi-Party Monitoring Board Contact Bryce Esch	Nov 8 Dec 13 Jan 10
Comprehensive Implementation Work Group Contact Travis Bruner	Nov 16
Communications Work Group Contact Sue Sitko	Dec 11

Stay Connected

4FRI Stakeholder website:
www.4fri.org

The Forest Service's 4FRI webpage:
www.fs.usda.gov/4fri includes all public documentation of the 4FRI project, including maps, contacts, and public input opportunities.

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National CFLRP Field Trip (continued from page 1)

Friday morning, the stakeholders hosted an open roundtable that was free-flowing, with topics ranging from efficiencies and industry capacity to smoke and communication strategies, with multiple topics in between to provide maximum exposure and discussion.



Roundtable discussions on collaborative forest restoration across northern Arizona

This was followed by the group visiting the Chimney Springs Supplemental Project Area, the site of a mechanical treatment overseen by The Nature Conservancy to learn new efficiencies. Discussion covered mechanical treatments across all of 4FRI, monitoring and citizen science, and a demonstration of digital prescriptions.

Office cadre left filled with information, many new contacts, and a view of “the best collaborative project in the country,” according to Dick Fleishman, 4FRI Operations Coordinator. The end results of the review will be summarized in report format by the WO team, and made available to the FS and stakeholders.

Fleishman is confident these lessons learned will be spread throughout the agency, “because we have so much to offer.” He thanked all who contributed to the field visit and who continue to move the restoration of northern Arizona’s ponderosa pine forests forward.

After two days of presentations and conversations, the Washington



Discussions in the field about implementation, planning, monitoring, and improving business practices. Photos courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service

ECO Hosts Arizona State Legislators on Forest and Watershed Health Tour

For the past three years, the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (ECO) has invited state legislators into the field for a more in-depth discussion about eastern Arizona natural resource issues. From water to wolves, these topics of high interest have attracted more than 20 state legislators and staff, state agency directors and staff, and congressional delegations. The field trips provide a unique opportunity to “dig deep” into often complex natural resource management topics. This year’s field excursion took place Oct. 5–6, attracted more than 60 participants, and coincided with the CFLRP field review (see pages 1–2). In fact, a joint lunch in Rumsey Park in Payson gave both groups a chance to meet each other, swap experiences, and exchange ideas.

This year, ECO organized partners and presenters to share information on four topics: 1) forest, watershed, and grassland restoration; 2) the challenge of managing residual biomass from forest treatments (the “biomass bottleneck”); 3) using innovations in digital and remote sensing technology to reduce time and costs of forest treatments preparation; and 4) the current status and overview of wood product, or restoration, industries in northern Arizona.



Richard Lunt, ECO Board Chair: “Take care of the forest, and the forest will take care of you.”

Pascal Berlioux, Executive Director of ECO, coordinated and led this tour. It included helicopter flights over the C.C. Cragin and Mogollon Rim-area forest restoration projects, courtesy of the Salt River Project (SRP; a 4FRI stakeholder), and narrated by SRP’s Charlie Ester; an in-depth discussion on the 4FRI project by Scott Russell (CEO of the 4FRI Executive Board) and Wendy Jo Haskins (Deputy Forest Supervisor from the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests); and the importance of forest restoration for northern Arizona through the perspective of Richard Lunt (ECO Board Director), Tommie Martin (Gila County Supervisor and ECO Board Vice Chair), and Jason Whiting (Navajo County Supervisor and ECO Board Vice Chair). After a joint lunch with the CFLRP tour, legislators traveled to the Angel Rim treatment area to see NAU’s Temuulen Sankey discuss drone flights that can capture 3-D aerial imagery (Light Detection and Ranging, or LiDAR, and multispectral) and The Nature Conservancy’s Neil Chapman and Sue Sitko, who elaborated on their work to develop tablet technology for both FS and harvesters to digitize harvesting prescriptions and treatments, while saving costs and creating a more economical way of restoring our forests.

The group was shuttled up to Show Low for dinner with local elected officials and industry representatives, hosted by Arizona Public Service, followed by a social gathering hosted by Grand Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association.

Friday’s tour concentrated on both the biomass bottleneck and other restoration-based industry presentations across the White Mountains. Visiting ponderosa pine and grassland restoration sites, legislators learned about the economics of small-diameter wood and the residue leftover (biomass), particularly the economic challenges of removing biomass from the forest. A visit to Novo BioPower to see biomass power generation and the NovoStar sawmill brought home the complex challenges of scaling up restoration treatments.

The event was capped off by a facilitated discussion on options to scale up biomass disposal, i.e., breaking the biomass bottleneck, and a social hour and dinner. Legislators and staff returned home with a greater understanding of how to ensure successful forest restoration, and how they can play a role within their legislative responsibilities to support our efforts. For further information, please contact ECO’s [Pascal Berlioux](#).



Joint lunch with CFLRP Washington Office team and Arizona state legislators

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ECO State Legislator Tour (continued from page 3)



Charlie Ester, Salt River Project, (left) hosted state legislators and staff on flights over Arizona's Rim Country forest, noting "Restoration of our forests is a forever commitment."



NAU's Temuulen Sankey summarizes current drone and remote sensing technology and research projects occurring to aid forest restoration efforts



Jason Whiting (left) and Brad Worsley (right) present information on forest restoration challenges and opportunities



Group shot in front of treatment residue, subject of "biomass bottleneck" discussions



CC Cragin Reservoir, water source for Payson, is site of a priority restoration effort with multiple stakeholders, Forest Service, and Salt River Project

Photos courtesy of Pascal Berlioux, Paul Watson, and Sue Sitko

Contact our 4FRI Stakeholder Group Co-Chairs: [Pascal Berlioux](#) [Travis Bruner](#) [Steve Gatewood](#) [Tommie Martin](#) [Allen Reidhead](#)
[Steve Reidhead](#) [Sue Sitko](#) [Greg Smith](#) [Paul Summerfelt](#) [Diane Vosick](#) [Paul Watson](#) [Jason Whiting](#) [Brad Worsley](#)

4FRI Strategic Plan Guides Activities for Stakeholders, Forest Service

Industry Insider

Recently, as implementation of forest restoration activities across 4FRI's first Environmental Impact Statement area increased, 4FRI stakeholders and the FS 4FRI team felt the time was right to develop a joint strategic plan. The plan would lay out a shared vision of the overall goals of forest restoration across the 4FRI footprint, as well as specific activities each entity could take in order to increase the pace and scale of forest treatments and address key challenges to meeting those goals.



Cover of the 4FRI Strategic Plan

First drafted by the 4FRI Industry Working Group (IWG), a strategic plan outlining specific, short-term, immediate actions to take was presented to the stakeholders in spring of 2017. The stakeholder group took this draft and held a full-day workshop in June to flesh out and refine strategies and objectives. This created a more comprehensive plan with eight categories of activities, or program components, each with its own desired outcome, objectives, and detailed action items.

A core group of 4FRI stakeholders and FS staff worked throughout the summer and fall to edit this plan, clarifying outcomes, objectives, and actions; ensuring the correct placement of all within their appropriate category; and identifying points of contact for each action item. FS staff and all stakeholders had multiple opportunities to review and edit iterations of the plan during this process.

This plan will be the framework for our collaborative efforts moving forward. It is intended to be a "living" document reviewed annually, used to set action priorities, and modified accordingly. The plan's goals are summarized as follows:

- Accelerate the pace and scale of restoration treatments.
- Collaborate and engage stakeholders and the public.
- Support sustainable forest restoration industries.
- Pursue innovations in technology and partnerships.
- Improve Forest Service business practices.
- Learn and adapt treatments and economic strategies based on monitoring and experience.
- Apply an all-lands approach.

Stakeholders will be voting on their approval of this plan at the November 15 stakeholder group meeting.

AZ Corporation Commission Directs Biomass Assessment

Reproduced courtesy of Anna Simet, Biomass Magazine (www.biomassmagazine.com; full article [here](#).)

The Arizona Corporation Commission has ordered Arizona Public Service (APS) to evaluate forest bioenergy as part of its resource portfolio. A May memorandum from Commissioner Boyd Dunn instructed the opening of a docket to explore forest bioenergy, and its current role and impact in Arizona. The memo emphasized the important role forest bioenergy serves in maintaining Arizona's forests, woodlands, and watersheds while creating energy for the grid. "Our history is riddled with examples of the devastating economic, cultural, and ecological impact of Arizona wildfires," it stated.

The topic was formally introduced by Boyd at APS rate application proceedings on Aug. 15. APS will conduct a 90-day study on forest bioenergy, and then report findings back to the commission and staff. The study will include an examination of at least three scenarios for bioenergy that look at low, medium, and high use.

Commissioner Andy Tobin and Chairman Tom Forese both issued statements in support of Dunn's efforts. "APS's service territory covers the heart of the forests and grasslands most vulnerable to wildfires, and has faced significant costs over the years in infrastructure repairs alone." A separate docket on the topic has been opened to continue to explore market development opportunities.

Update: Due to APS's November 16 deadline to file a report, an October public workshop by the ACC on the role of forest bioenergy in Arizona has been postponed until December 5, 2017. Visit the ACC docket [here](#) for more information.

Grand Canyon Trust Spring Assessment Inspires Flagstaff High School Students

Article provided by Gabrielle Neilson, sophomore at Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy

At the end of September, I embarked on a trip that changed the way I see myself and gave me a greater appreciation for the Colorado Plateau. I traveled to the Mogollon Rim on a volunteer trip with a few classmates from Flagstaff Arts & Leadership Academy, one of our teachers, and the Grand Canyon Trust (GCT). We camped in the forest for three days, searching for and assessing springs.

Some of the springs we surveyed had not been evaluated in years, and sometimes the GPS coordinates from the previous assessment would lead us to the wrong spot. Using only a photograph and general directions from the last assessment, we managed to find the springs that were marked incorrectly.

Of the springs we located, some were fenced off from elk, some were boxed with cement, and some were dry. Some were a few beautiful springs that remained pristine. One spring we found was located at the bottom of a steep valley surrounded by lush, green native plants. It's the best feeling to wander down a valley, look down at the old image of the spring, look up, and - suddenly - it's right in front of you.

As the data recorder, I strived to include all the important information such as ungulate effects, the amount of visible surface water, and strength of flow. We were careful and precise with our writings because we knew the Forest Service would use our data to decide which springs to restore as a part of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI).

After three days in the forest with the GCT, I learned more than I would in a week of school, including: ungulates are hooved animals, elk fencing is usually four feet or higher, and the 4FRI is the largest restoration initiative of its kind and aims to be an example for future large-scale restorations.

On this trip, I encountered many challenges that pushed me to reevaluate my perception of my own capabilities. Looking for springs and camping in the woods expanded my passion for the outdoors, and inspired me to take the initiative to protect the environment. I hope to continue working with the Trust to protect and restore the Colorado Plateau. ~ Gabrielle Neilson



Gabrielle documenting spring data

From the 4FRI Stakeholder Group: Thank you, Gabrielle, for your help and your passion. You and future generations are our inspiration!



Gabrielle and classmates Etienne MacCormack and Christopher Clark (L to R) document and gather spring data

Julia Sullivan, CGT project coordinator, sums up this project: "For these high school students, the opportunity to contribute to science that will ultimately help inform policy decisions is a tremendously empowering experience and will stay with them as they continue to delve into the politics of conservation both inside and outside the classroom."

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