



4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes DRAFT
 Wednesday, February 24, 2016, 9AM-12:45PM
 Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office
 1824 South Thompson Street, Flagstaff, AZ 86001
 Teleconference line: (712) 775-7031, code: 439290611#

Either of the two current chairs may adjust or shuffle any items on the SHG Agenda to accommodate speakers, address and emerging/critical issue, make better use of the meeting time, or to meet the needs of the stakeholders themselves.

In Attendance: Paul Summerfelt, Royce KinCanon, Brad Worsley, Leslie Wessel, Tom Mackin, Steve Le Falce, Matt Fidler, Hannah Wendel, Steve Gatewood, Annette Fredette, Dick Fleishman, Randy Fuller, Heather Provencio, Neil Chapman, Travis Woolley, Keith Pajkos, Jerry Payne, Anne Mottek, Bruce Greco, Sue Sitko, Diane Vosick, Tiffany Woods, Steve Horner, Mark Nigrelli, Matt Rodig, Dan Kipervaser, Mark Brehl, Brienne Pettit, Debbie Cress, Jill Grams, Tom Torres, Kent Apostol, Steve Best, Michelle Ralston, Sybil Smith, Wendy Jo Haskins, Christopher Ruff, Jay Smith, Wade Ward, Patti Turpin, Laura Jo West, Stephen Flora, Anne De Marco, Alicyn Gitlin, Amy Waltz, Mary Lata, Ethan Aumack, Steve Rosenstock, Bill Noble

On the Phone: Sharon Adams, Audrey Owens, Rob Davis, David Dorum,

Greg Smith (current 4FRI co-chair) is out of town and Brad Worsley will be an acting co-chair at today's meeting.

9:05 Approve minutes from the November 18th and January 27th SHG meeting — Summerfelt
 Minutes Approved

9:10 Review action items from the January 27th SHG meeting — TBD

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Distribute Arizona State Forestry comments for the EPA Clean Energy Plan	Payne/Woods	Complete
2. Planning for public meeting in April that is to be hosted or cohosted by the SHG	Fredette/Steering Committee	In Progress
3. Plan field trip(s) to view LTRS on the ground	Steering Committee	Pending
4. Planning Work Group revisit PLYT/LTRS and announce upcoming meetings on BASECAMP	Planning Work Group	In Progress
5. Post revised complaint talking points to BASECAMP and 4fri.org	Communications Working Group/Woods	Complete
6. Dashboard Presentation at February SHG meeting	Industry Workgroup	March or April SHG Agenda Item
7. Post January Newsletter to 4FRI public site	Woods	Complete
8. MPMB Presentation at February SHG meeting	MPMB	March SHG Agenda Item
9. PLYT/LTRS dataset on web	FS	Complete

Call to the Public: No Comments

9:20 USFS Discussion - Changing Approach and “Ramp Up/5-Year Plan” – Forest Supervisors and others

Today’s presentation discussed the Forest Service’s (FS) 5 year plan and how they plan to “ramp up” their efforts after receiving an additional 10 million dollars annually. The purpose of the presentation is to inform the SHG and to bring clarity to any of the terms or processes that have not yet been well defined or discussed.

As a result of completing the largest EIS in the country, the FS needs to increase their capacity to move forward with getting on the ground and doing the work, this includes increasing internal staffing and external contracting. Even though they have current programs on all forests related to vegetation management and other restoration activities the scale of this project did not allow for the FS to complete the required NEPA prep work for implementation at the time of the analysis as they have done in the past. The handout **From NEPA to Thinning** provides a detailed list of the required steps, it is available for view on BASECAMP.

The size of the effort has dictated the need for a strategic approach to implementation and they are shifting their organization in response to these needs. A major component of this reorganization is to bring consistency across the four forests and their districts, which will result in a more efficient use of the time and funds associated with the project.

Action Item: Post NEPA prep work handout on BASECAMP

Quick 4FRI project overview: this project is intended to analyze and achieve a large landscape scale restoration project on approximately 2.4 million acres. The project aims to improve overall forest health and function (primarily in the ponderosa pine ecosystem) and reduce the severity of fire on these habitats by reducing fuel loads. The goal is to return these ecosystems and habitats to something more similar to their natural/historic range of variability.

The FS developed a 5 year plan (available on BASECAMP) to assist with strategic planning and to help them anticipate the needs of the project. This plan needs to be flexible and subject to change as needs change. A more detailed breakdown of the acres and treatment types are available in the corresponding PowerPoint presentation (also available on BASECAMP). Some acres are overlapping in regards to the surveys that are required, meaning more than one survey may be needed for the same acres in the project boundary.

Concerning timber offerings: the FS plans to offer more offerings outside of the phase 1 stewardship contract for FY16. In the past, about 30% of the task orders and contracts were outside of the phase 1 contract, this year they plan to offer about 70% outside of the phase one contract. They are also looking to improve the quality of their timber offers.

Monitoring: monitoring is an important component of the project delivery process and the adaptive management model. It is specific to each and every project and prioritization is at the forefront of their efforts because it requires the completion of surveys that will provide the baseline data and the surveys that will be completed after implementation and used for comparison. In FY15, approximately 10% of the CFLR funds were allocated to monitoring and a similar amount is planned for FY16, however, other forest funds are used to augment that 10%.

5 year plan review: The 5 year plan includes prescribed fire, non-commercial thinning, and mechanical fuels reduction. The FS does not currently have a completed other restoration plan, but it is in the works. As a planning tool the 5 year plan provides information on where and how much work needs to be completed, feeds into a staffing tool and funding tool. It is important to note that treatments are based on the completed NEPA in the area and ground conditions also play a role in prescribed burning.

Organization: There is still a lot of uncertainty when discussing the project and they need to be flexible with their approach. They are bringing in enterprise teams coming in from other forests, youth teams, and contractors. Plus

they plan to hire 18 new employees and may need to add additional positions in the future. Changes are also occurring internally, in reference to the Board of Directors, which includes the forest supervisors and their deputies. They have recently added a chief executive from the 4FRI planning team to the board, Scott Russell currently fills this position. This position is equal to the forest supervisors and will bring efficiency in communication between stakeholders, the 4FRI Core Team, the forests, and regional offices.

Questions:

Ethan Aumack: Can the FS provide insight on how the 5 year plan was developed in regards to issues and needs of the project (from a watershed, fire, community protection, etc. perspective)? Would it be possible to discuss and potentially develop a similar plan for the non-federal dollars resources that are also being in support of the project? The FS agreed to further discuss the development of the 5 year plan at the March meeting.

Tom Mackin: Will there be an update on the 5 year plan, providing information on how they spend the additional funds and the work that is completed? They do meet quarterly to summarize this information into a spreadsheet, but the issue is reporting the information out in a manner so that it can be comprehended by the public. It was suggested that the Newsletter could serve as a venue for distributing this information and that an update be provided to the SHG before the release of the finalized Newsletter.

Diane Vosick: When do you plan on having the other restoration 5 year plan completed? Is this internal reorganization intended to improve the communication between SOs and Regional Offices and how do you intend to deal with turn-over? The FS has been discussing turn-over and recognizes this is an issue, but they don't have an exact plan at the moment. Yes, the reorganization is intended to provide a direct link between the SHG, ID team, the SOs, and the Regional Offices. They do not have an exact time as to when the other restoration 5 year plan will be completed, but they are working on this right now.

Bruce Greco: Do you anticipate any additional NEPA projects coming forward in this 5 year period that are beyond what is currently being planned? If so, are you looking into an expeditious NEPA process being implemented? The Farm Bill allows them some latitude, for example it allows the FS to treat 3000 acres (specific to insect and disease) under a categorical exclusion (CE) and they are looking at some other opportunities.

Jerry Payne: Who will speak on behalf of the group and what happens if there is a disagreement within the group? Regular communication is scheduled and will ensure consistency, Cliff Dills will help with this aspect of the communication. They also have designated "champions" for each resource area that will help bring consistency across the four forests.

Steve Horner: Has any of the leadership teams thought about the structure of the contracts for mechanical thinning in terms of size, location, and duration of those contracts? Under the new Farm Bill they can now do designations by prescription which will make the FS more efficient. While FY16 is nearly set they are gathering additional data to inform them on how to package those contracts. AZSF is also gathering data to know what wood is going to be available short-term, mid-term, long-term and to identify where it is appropriate to put sales (incorporating financial and logistic factors). They are looking at the commercial value of treating woodlands as well. This information will also consider the amount of wood and the amount of biomass and if the contract needs to be subsidized or not. It will also help determine the contract types.

Brad Worsley: Concerning economics, the road packages, stumps, and values of biomass are in contradiction with what we are talking about. Within the task orders (TOs) they have to work with stuff that is worthless and difficult to haul, not including additional costs that are added on. Concerning the offerings that are made outside of the contract, it looks like only 70% is going to be offered outside of the contract for 2016, can you please clarify? Yes, for 2016 70% will be offered outside of the contract and it will vary for the following years. Worsley would also like the FS to put pressure on BECAP because they recently passed a law where a contractor cannot be awarded a service for more than 2 years in a row. Worsley would also like confirmation of when the 10 million is funded and the vegetation type of the contracts that will be offered.

Action Item: Email questions to co-chairs to concerning the FS changing approach and 5 year plan.

Action Item: Continue discussion at the March SHG meeting the quarterly

Action Item: Post FS pre-work list on BASECAMP

Agenda Item Added: The SHG recognized Steve Gatewood and the contributions he has made in support of 4FRI.

10:45 Overview of Preponderance of Large Young Tree Data – Fuller

The Forest Service posted a draft dataset on BASECAMP before today's meeting. Draft dataset: It is intended to feed into the SHG discussion on the preponderance of large young trees (PLYT) and it covers existing conditions. They provided files that could be used in ArcGIS and excel spreadsheets.

Overview of FS data: A lot of their data is based on common stand exams, it is more field oriented and generally standard throughout the FS throughout the country. This dataset is housed in a program called FS Veg (Forest Service Vegetation layers) and in recent years they have been updating their data geospatially (FS Veg Spatial) so that stand level data can be populated with FS Veg. In 2013 they started to use FS Veg Spatial Data Analyzer, a different program from what was used for the first EIS.

How it works: Spatial data and FS Veg data is entered in the data analyzer which is then linked to the FS Veg Simulator within a GIS environment. The data is then used to describe stands and populate stands where they have minimal data.

The complete dataset will include: stand density index, basal area, trees per acer (below 5 inches and above 5 inches), canopy heights, and major vegetation types. Then it will expand to diameter ranges by major vegetation types.

If you have any questions concerning the data, do not hesitate to contact the FS for assistance.

Questions:

Jerry Payne: Do you think the analysis will be relatively accurate when using the nearest neighbor analysis? They can try to find the closest fit and use the known to populate unknown. They do have thresholds where it would notify them if it is a go or a no go and if they find that there are areas where they feel uncertain about the data, they will go into the field to confirm or change the data.

Amy Waltz: You are summarizing by stand? The base data for forestry and silviculture is stand level data (fine level) and they can aggregate up from there. When communicating PLYT diameter classes by stand, does it need to be clarified that there is only a probability of finding a large young tree, it does not pop-up like it would with LiDAR data? Yes and no, for example they could identify a cohort of larger trees, but they would not know where it is at spatially. They can't currently link the LiDAR data, but could be ready in about a year.

The problem with the first EIS involved the lack of confidence in the map that told us where the large trees were located. Greater accuracy to see where the large tree retention applies would help unit the SHG on the issue of the PLYT. The algorithm that was used in the first EIS for PLYT will not work for the Rim Country EIS. The FS would like the SHG to provide feedback on what makes sense in regards to the large tree retention program? They ask the group to help them define what makes a PLYT, to help determine where they are and then what to do with them once they are found.

Ethan Aumack: When should they start this discussion? How accurate is the data and do they foresee LiDAR data being available in the near future that could provide a higher level of confidence in the conditions? If LiDAR data will be available, should they wait to start these discussions? The data provided is between 97.3%-97.5% stable,

there are only a few areas where the stands don't match up. Concerning LiDAR data, they do not know how long it will take for this data to be available, but it is something they want to integrate in the future.

The FS believes that the SHG should start the discussion on PYLT now. They want to be able to identify a more refined/appropriate approach to what they intent to look at now so that it can be integrated into the analysis and then they need to determine what they plan to do with the data once they have reached a consensus.

It was suggested that the Planning Work Group (PWG) and the Multi-Party Monitoring Board (MPMB) work together to provide recommendations to the SHG. The PWG meets the 1st Wednesday from 10AM-12PM and they will post upcoming meeting information on BASECAMP.

Action Item: Post PWG meeting information and send out an invitation to join the PLYT conversation

11:15 Remaining USFS Updates – Fredette/Fleishman

Update on planning for Rim Country EIS: The interdisciplinary team and the natural resource champions are working on existing and desired conditions and are in the process of drafting the proposed action.

Operation update: The operations update is available for view on BASECAMP. Activity is limited on the mechanical side of things, but they are doing prescribed burning when they have the opportunity.

Update on complaint: The plaintiff mentioned that he might file an amended complaint. If he does the FS would have 14 days to respond from the time it is filed. The plaintiff did not indicate why he would file an amendment.

Facilitator update: The FS is still working through selection process.

11:30 Working Group Updates & Reports

- Industry Work Group - Worsley
 - Dashboard Update

The IWG is postponing the dashboard update because they want to ensure that the data they present is accurate. The next meeting is Tuesday, March 8th.

- EIS Planning Group – Worsley

PLYT is going to be the focus of the next meeting and they are still working on developing socioeconomic desired conditions. Meeting information will be posted on BASECAMP as requested earlier.

- Communications Work Group – Davidson/Sitko
 - Brainstorm for April Newsletter

The SHG provided suggestion for the stories that will be covered in the April newsletter. Potential ideas include: 4FRI April Open House, Harvesting Methods Open House, Stakeholder Spotlight on Steve Gatewood, Coconino County Board of Supervisors Grant, infusion of additional funding (10 million), C.C. Cragin, Tonto National Forests prescribed fires, SRP watershed monitoring flowtopography (cameras), Washington D.C Trip updates.

A brief discussion was also had concerning the 4FRI public website. The CWG does plan to look at the website and find ways to improve it. Please provide input, improving the 4FRI site is a joint effort.

- Planning for April Public meeting

The April SHG Open House is not a formal NEPA comment period. It will serve as an opportunity for the FS to present the draft proposed action before hosting an official scoping meeting. The SHG discussed the possibility of hosting two open houses, but dates were not finalized. This will be further discussed at the March SC call and reviewed at the March SHG meeting.

Action Item: Determine dates for SHG Open House at SC call

- Multi-Party Monitoring Board – Woolley

The MPMB is still wrapping up 2015 efforts and planning for next year. They were originally scheduled to give a presentation at this meeting, but it has been postponed until the March SHG meeting.

12:20 Stakeholder Disclosures

Anne Mottek: May 7th there will be the Harvesting Methods Open House at the Aquaplex.

Paul Summerfelt: The SHG co-chairs were contacted by the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG), they requested a 4FRI update for their April 14th meeting. Paul might reach out to various stakeholders for assistance depending on what they request.

Diane Vosick: There will be a Chief’s Review for Region 3 in Albuquerque and there will be a 4FRI panel, which is composed of Diane Vosick, Ethan Aumack, Shaula Hedwall, David Tenney, and Jeff Whitney.

Ethan Aumack: The Grand Canyon Trust will be looking to hire a full-time Progam Associate. The position will focus on Rim Country planning and implementation for the first EIS, including the coordination of volunteer opportunities. The position will be housed at the GCT and funding is being provided by Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (ECO) and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD).

Travis Woolley: TNC was requested by the Nation Forest Foundation (NFF) to present on their tablet technology during the Implementation Session at the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Conference in April.

Action Item: TNC Tablet Technology Presentation

Jerry Payne: Arizona State Forestry will still be hosting the PONSSE Corporation, but they have encountered some delays in getting them to Arizona. Once they arrive and are settled ASF will work to coordinate a stakeholder trip. ASF is also working on a Master Agreement with the FS under the Farm Bill Good Neighbor Authority and are still working to have forest restoration residue classified as biomass under the clean energy plan.

12:30 Review Action Items

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Post FS pre-work list on BASECAMP		
2. Email 5 year plan questions to co-chairs (Paul Summerfelt and Greg Smith)	All	
3. Overview of 5 year plan development	FS	
4. FS provide responses to additional SHG 5 year plan questions	FS	
5. Post PWG meeting information on BASECAMP and send out invitation to join the PYLT conversation	PWG	
6. Determine dates for SHG Open House (April or May)	SC	
7. Schedule TNC Tablet Technology presentation for future SHG meeting	SC	