



4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting
Wednesday, November 15th, 2017 9am-12:08pm
Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office
1824 South Thompson Street
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Teleconference line: (712) 775-7031, code: 439290611#

9:00 Attendance: Brad Worsley, Pascal Berlioux, Travis Bruner, Tom Mackin, John Souther, Jay Smith, Ken Kluvo, Matt Kluvo, Kenneth Cox, Greg Smith, Art Babbott, Steve Horner, Henry Provencio, Annette Fredette, Bruce Greco, Wade Ward, Brad Cooper, Matt O'Neill, Shaula Hedwall, Mary Lata, Scott Russell, Stephanie Coleman, Steve Rosenstock, Rob Nelson, Joe Miller, Matt Cole, Mark Nigrelli, Amy Waltz, Melanie Colavito, Carl Rhegar, Kent Phillips, Keith Pajkos, Jim Parks, Emery Cowen, Allison Jourden

Phone: Bob Seidler, Jamie Clark, Steven Flora, Adam Coolley, Steve Rider, Sharalyn Peterson, Teresa Tanner

9:05 Approve minutes from the September 27th SHG meeting — Berlioux - Approved

9:07 Co-Chair Rotation – Berlioux

The chairing of the SHG is comprised of two co-chairs acting at the same time – a hot chair and a cold chair. The hot chair through January 2018 is Diane Vosick, with Pascal Berlioux serving as cold chair. Starting in February Pascal will take over the hot chair through April. The Steering Committee is currently working on a co-chair schedule for 2018.

9:10 Review action items from the September 27th SHG meeting — Berlioux

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Diane and Sue to revise the SHG SPLYT recommendation to dis-include site classes as a decision criteria	Co-chairs	Complete
2. Updated draft of the Strategic plan will be posted on BC by October 6 th for SH review	SHG	Complete
3. Send notice on BC with updated CFLRP meeting information and signup sheets for dinner participations	Fleishman	Complete
4. Send Dick potential questions for the CFLRP roundtable discussion	SHG	Complete

9:15 Call to the Public

9:20 USFS Update – 4FRI Board, Coordinators

- State Partnership Group Update – Russell

Russell: Organizational changes – Dick Fleishman is on detail to the national team working on forestry practice modernization. For the next few months he will be looking at efficiencies and how the agency can modernize their business practices. Henry Provencio will be taking over Dick's operational tasks.

The CFLRP trip was a success. A draft report is in the works and will be available for the SHG to review and provide comment.

Miller: Will the FS be adding an addendum to the CFLRP report following Stakeholder comments? No, the FS document will remain a solely FS document. Action Item for the Steering Committee is to discuss the SHG developing its own CFLRP report to include stakeholder input.

The FS has had exploratory conversations regarding how state, SRP, and county agencies can become more involved in implementation in order to further assure project success. The FS has made a commitment that they won't engage in any large-scale partnerships with agencies until they've brought that proposal to the 4FRI SHG and received their feedback.

They are engaging with the state fire and forestry management around an agreement where they would help bring capacity to prep activities in terms of layout and marking.

Rosenstock: Is there a timeline for a proposal on this? No.

9:30 Strategic Plan – Souther, Colavito, Bruner, Russell

- Final Review, Discussion, Approval

Work on this document started 8 months ago and it came out of the Vision 17. They've addressed hundreds of comments, including those gathered at the workshop in June, and have done their best to accommodate those as thoroughly as possible. The document has been well vetted.

The document includes an intro/briefing section that can be used as a pull-out document to provide easy information to the public. Then it goes into the program components of the document that break down into specific objectives of the plan. The last section of the document is the appendix, one of which can be used to track progress on particular action items. This will be the area of the document to which people can refer to view progress on particular action items.

The working part of this document, which includes the action items and objectives, is not set in stone; they're intended to be reviewed and revised on an annual basis. The Strategic Plan team did receive a request recently for a language change regarding Objective 3 and regarding public acceptance of prescribed fire. The objective was revised to clarify that intent. This change appears on page 11.

Hedwall: Shaula Hedwall and Mary Lata believe the proposed edit to Objective 3 makes the point of the objective more confusing, because language about fire changes every year and it seems like the objective as written is more in line with national policy. There is consensus that the first version will be better understood by the public.

Berlioux: He can vouch for the fact that Objective 3 as currently written raises concern because there is no distinction made between wildfire managed for suppression and for resource benefit. For the general public who do not have a deep technical knowledge of fire language, the proposed edit makes more sense.

Bruner: Points out that we should keep in mind the purpose of this document which is to guide the stakeholder group and the Forest Service. The document will also be viewed by the public but the public will mostly interact with the introductory/briefing section of the document. There are a lot of separate efforts out there trying to increase public understanding of the issues around fire so that may demand as careful consideration for this document.

Colavito: Reminds the group that this will be a living document so as definitions change the document will as well. The goal of this objective is safely reintroducing fire and its natural role in the ecosystem.

Lata: There isn't a 'managed fire' category. If we have a category called managed wildfire and then that fire gets away and suppression becomes necessary, it looks like we've dropped the ball. Specifying managed wildfire leaves out suppression.

Steve Rosenstock: Suggests the rewording – "Objective 3: The public is increasingly informed about and accepting of the role of fire in ecosystem restoration and management."

The SHG reaches a consensus on accepting Rosenstock's rewording of Objective 3. John Souther will amend the Strategic Plan with the edit.

Miller: States that there were comments submitted in regards to the Strategic Plan that weren't included into the document. Miller would like to know if those comments will remain on the table for future revisions of the document.

All comments received were reviewed and discussed though it was impossible to accept all. Bruner confirms that yes, the document will be revised in the future and that the comments remaining on the table may still receive further consideration.

Miller: Because this is a living document, Miller proposes that if at any time any member of the SHG wants to propose an addendum it should be a legitimate item for discussion, opposed to having a set schedule for revision.

Provencio: Because the FS is using this as an annual guide to their programs of work, the actions items within the document would need to be solidified by June to affect the following FY. They won't be able to accept continuous edits after they've already started their program of work under a specifically funded path.

Provencio: Reminds folks that this was a truly collaborative document built out of Vision 17. The objective was to develop a shared document that will help guide our various agencies to ensure we're all on the same page throughout the future processes of restoration, and Provencio believes this document will accomplish that. It will be up to us to implement this document and make it work for our objectives.

The Strategic Plan is approved via consensus.

9:45 Rim Country Timeline and Alternatives Update – Russell, Fredette, 4FRI Team

Fredette provides an update on the Rim Country EIS and presents a revised timeline. They've identified the finer individual tasks and the order in which they need to be completed to accomplish all the necessary objectives. This new timeline puts the Draft EIS out in July/Aug of 2018. They continue to look for ways to shorten the timeline for each stage of the process. See the timeline on BaseCamp.

The Forest Service held a meeting with the regional executives in order to have all the players involved to come to a decision on whether the dropped alternative 3 would be put back on the table, but they have no answer to that question at this point. They should have some information on this available by the next Steering Committee call.

Berlioux: Eastern Arizona Counties is concerned that the Apache-Sitgreaves plan for 15,000 acres/year to be fed to the current industry on the east side was originally designed to extend to 2019. That means that there is a need to make sure they provide our partners with the resources they will need to

accomplish this so that we may continue the bridge-the-gap program until treatment begins on the 2nd EIS.

Berlioux: If alternative 3 is put back on the table, will that affect the timeline? Fredette - The board has agreed that if alternative 3 is reinstated soon, it may add 1-2 months to the timeline. If it is added later down the road, it will add 3-4 months to the timeline. Berlioux – The timeline has already been extended the process by a year and Pascal is concerned that they're stretching the timeline to 2021 because the Bridge-the-Gap project on the east side which is currently keeping our needed industry alive, which will be necessary to implement the 2nd EIS. Bridge-the-Gap may wrap up before we're ready to start treatment on the 2nd EIS. We cannot afford to lose industry they've worked so hard to raise throughout the last 10 years.

Rosenstock: Which factors will determine if alternative 3 is brought back to the table? Russell – Timing and the increased workload on the FS, as well as the SHG and industry, that adding the dropped alternative will bring, are considerations into whether it will be reinstated or not. Listening to the public and acknowledging their desires is a core value of the FS, so that is also a consideration.

Waltz: Is concerned that we're positional about alternatives before we actually know what they are. Waltz advocates for understanding the data and which potential treatments will actually get us to desired conditions in the most efficient way possible. Waltz believes this should be the front-running concern regarding alternatives.

Berlioux: Is extremely concerned that discussions are happening that say what 4FRI is doing is not science based restoration. There are comments that 4FRI doesn't include restoration and these comments are very dangerous for the viability of the 4FRI project; these comments can kill the social consensus around the 4FRI project. We need to be careful about how we talk about restoration with regards to 4FRI."

Fredette: The FS is looking at 2 action alternatives at the present time. Alternative 2 is the Modified Proposed Action and Alt 3 is the Focused Alternative. The FS handout on BaseCamp details and provides clarifications, corrections, and modifications to the alternatives. They continue working on modeling the alternatives. Outputs from these models need to be checked to make sure they're working properly. The document on the draft alternatives provides a table comparing the two alternatives concerning mechanical thinning, Rx fire, facilitative ops. and more. There is also a table describing the differences between the two alternatives. Included in both alternatives is the use of the two flexible toolbox approaches: the mechanical thinning toolbox and the aquatics restoration toolbox.

Nigrelli: The intent of the Mechanical Thinning Toolbox is to provide a tool that allows flexibility in how the desired amount of acres will be accomplished. The toolbox provides a range of methods that can be used to determine which is best for the varying conditions that can be faced while thinning.

Cole: Some areas in need of restoration will be outside of the decision matrix. They are required to provide a certain percentage of acres to be managed for nesting-roost habitats and they've done that to abide by the Mexican Spotted Owl PACs. Aspen specific restoration requires specific treatments, primarily conifer removal within aspen habitats that the team plans to abide by as well. Grassland and Savannah treatments also fall outside of consideration for regular restoration treatments, and require their own specified treatments. In addition, specified treatments are being developed for areas that have experienced recent severe disturbances.

Lata: The FS is still trying to determine what exactly will be included in the severe disturbance area definition. Through discussions they've determined that the first things they may need to do is get a fuel structure back in these areas that would support the kinds of fire that the Ponderosa Pine is adapted to.

The intent is to leave a huge amount of flexibility on the ground for specialists to play around with to determine what's tried and true and what doesn't work for these specific areas.

Berlioux: Is curious on how the FS is planning to accomplish an analysis on the effectiveness of an EIS using the flexible toolbox approach, because treatments aren't defined ahead of time and we don't know what we are going to be doing on the ground yet. Fredette – The FS is following the example of the Southwest Jimenez Project which uses the flexible toolbox approach. If you have analyzed the maximum potential effects from the proposed activities, then you are covered under NEPA. We want to make sure we're doing the most appropriate treatment on every acres out there. Berlioux – The Jemez project is a comparatively small project that flies way below the national radar but 4FRI is much larger and will attract stronger scrutiny.

Waltz: The planning group has worked closely with the ID team to develop this toolbox and it came as a request from us as we saw effects of implementation of the initial EIS. Berlioux – They've been talking and supporting the concept of the toolbox but we haven't received a presentation of what is exactly in the toolbox. In order to pass judgement on the toolbox we have to know exactly what's in it.

Miller: Thinks we've made huge progress with the two toolboxes and sees this as a huge opportunity to get involved and help make sure this process will work and achieve desired effects. We need to start trying these processes out so that we can discover if there are things that won't work within the box. There will be problems but until we start trying the methods out we won't discover them.

Nigrelli: There are two decision matrices within the Mechanical Thinning Flexible Toolbox: one is specifically for the A-S and the Coconino NFs and the other is for the Tonto NF. The matrices look at forest density and structure, site potential, and mistletoe infection to come up with a general treatment type and intensity.

Coleman: The aquatics and watershed flexible toolbox approach has evolved from the last presentation the SHG received. Stephanie has incorporated feedback from the aquatics fieldtrip and she received comments from AZGF as well as the regional office that she's inputting into the toolbox approach as well. Under programmatic NEPA areas of the Pacific Northwest have been using tools such as these and Stephanie has been reviewing their processes and successes. Organization of the Aquatics Toolbox includes the development of a decision matrix for implementation per SHG recommendation, existing conditions grouped by resources type, and tools grouped by general treatment types. Coleman went to the literature to determine different ways to prioritize different watershed restoration decision points. She is working on figuring out how to make this matrix applicable for a broad group of users. She is asking for comments, and feedback on the aquatics toolbox decision matrix. Different sources of funding on these projects will allow for the use of different tools.

10:45 Break

11:00 Spring Restoration and Work w/ Tribes Presentation – MacDonald, Cooper, Lyndon

The USFS Tribal Relations team has been working with the Hopi tribe since 2014, doing work primarily on the north Kaibab to work on Elk Spring. Many of the earth's rivers originate from springs. 20% of the Colorado's base flow originates from springs. Springs are windows to ground water systems and aquifers. They tend to be places that house rare species, plants and animals. They're typically unique in character and are threatened and neglected at all spatial scales. Here in AZ many springs were developed in the interest of supporting livestock production. Arizona is the 2nd driest state but has the highest number of springs in the country.

Springs contain cultural, historic, and prehistoric significance to native tribes. The Tribal Relations team is working with the Hopi Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) to not only do spring restoration but

to introduce tribal youth to an educational component of spring restoration by giving them presentations on items like grazing, watershed management, archeology, etc. They do this with the hope that it will encourage youth to go on to college. Students seem to find a lot of value in this as the group receives a lot of positive feedback.

The Hopi tribe formed a new Southwest Conservation Corp Hopi Ancestral Lands crew in 2017. They recently worked on restoring the Elk Spring. This resulted in more vegetation and an improved riparian zone all around.

Why isn't more proactive work being done with the tribes? It's been a long process but they're working on a master participation agreement that is a collaborative workforce development program which will allow them to work with the tribes to provide training to tribe members. They have two tribes signed on to that at this point and they are the Tonto and Apache tribes. During the next few months the Tribal Relations team will be sitting down with the Zuni and the San Carlos tribes to determine their strengths and where they might be impactful. In the agreement the work for the tribes includes understory reduction, thinning, debris removal, insect and disease control, tree planting, erosion control and much more. As we move forward with Rim Country, Cooper asks that the SHG remain thoughtful on how the tribal workforce can be employed. It won't be cheaper than contracts or other agreements that are possible but the benefits will be long lasting and based on powerful relationships.

12:00 Working Group Updates

- Planning WG (5 min) – Berlioux

The PWG has not met this month because they were waiting for the FS to release documents on the flexible toolbox which came out today. The group will resume discussing a process for the PWG to review the flexible toolbox approach. They will look at the kinds of decisions that need to be made on the ground concerning the tools that will be used in treatments, who will make the decisions, and how these will tie into monitoring requirements. The next meeting will be the first Wednesday of December 2017.

- Industry WG (5 min) – Worsley

The IWG has not met in the last month because it is a busy time for industry.

NOVO Power Update – There was a failure at the Novo Biomass facility on October 18th which caused significant damage. No one was hurt. They are under 24\7 repair and have been for several weeks. They should be back up and running in February. This was a preventable failure and how it happened is being investigated. The first challenge that resulted from this was to make sure everyone was kept working. All employees were put on repair duty. As a disclaimer, Worsley will be presenting at the Dec. 5th ACC workshop. He will be talking about what can be done to expand biomass in the state. APS will be completing their 90-day study shortly which will be discussed at the December 5th workshop.

Cox – They've fulfilled their contract with New Life which has been challenging due to the new kind of environment they're in but overall the progress has been good. The FS has been extremely helpful. They're continuing to work with New Life on strengthening their areas of weakness and industry on the whole. They have 4 active sites in operation and they're averaging around 300 loads a week.

Horner – TNC has gotten started on the Chimney Springs SPA and they have two logging sites in operation that are completing between 10-20 acres per day with the good weather. They've started in the LTM units and will be moving into the DxP units. They're waiting on getting the Clover SPA finalized and they have a contractor standing by on that one as well.

The next IWG meeting is not scheduled yet as they tend to meet on an as needed basis.

Provencio: For industry's information, there is a group that's been put together within the FS to look at doing closure orders for active timber sales. Currently, the public has legal access to active timber sales; they disregard barricades and there have been some reported cases of vandalism, so the FS is looking at putting together closure orders for active timber sale sites.

- Communications WG (5 min) – Berlioux

An updated draft of the brochure was provided today. This is a pamphlet that will be presented in a folded matter for use in portraying to the public what kinds of operations are occurring in their areas. Eastern AZ Counties, GCT, ERI and Coconino County have agreed to finance the design and printing of the brochure. The brochures will be given to crews so that the crews will have it on hand when they receive inquiries from the public. Sue would appreciate feedback on the most recent draft of the document.

- MPMB WG (5 min) – Kippervaser

The monitoring board is actively breaking up into their subgroups arranged by topic. The most activity happening right now has been in the water subgroup. In light of the need to update the monitoring plan of the Rim Country EIS, and knowing that they're moving into a significantly wetter environment, there is a need for developing questions around water resources. The board is taking a stab at shaping some broad topics that they believe to be important and to develop some avenues on how those topics can be explored and monitored. Once they have something with more substance they will bring it back to the SHG for feedback and comment.

There have been some updates to the living document of the monitoring board which were edits that occurred since the first EIS monitoring plan. The rest of the work happening is around budgets and prioritizing for FY18 and figuring out what will be taken off the plate and what stays on.

- Comprehensive Implementation WG (5 min) – Bruner

The next meeting will be Dec. 21st which will be good timing in order to meet funding deadlines. Despite having not met recently there are a number of projects being planned for 2018. Three in particular are Rosilda Spring, Mineral Spring, and Barber Shop Spring.

Mackin – The first step that was outlined for the T-Six Spring Restoration Project was to remove existing infrastructure that had collapsed. Friends of N. AZ Forests assisted in removing nearly 2000 ft. of fence wire from the site.

- Fiesta Working Group (5 min) – Jourden

The celebration of the first cuts on the first EIS is delayed until the spring.

12:30 Stakeholder Disclosures – All

Waltz – Members of the ERI recently attended the CFLRP Writing Workshop. There will be a book coming out on lessons learned across the 23 CFLR sites throughout the country, that Bryce, Amy and Melanie are authors on it. The book crosses the spectrum of governance of collaborative groups. These projects were funded by the passage of the Omnibus bill of 2009. It has a 10-year lifespan which means the project closes in 2019. Courtney Shultz will develop some policy recommendations based on the book.

Colavito – ERI is administering a workshop at the end of November, working closely with the FS and TNC, to look at all the steps post-ROD through tree thinning in order to identify potential increases in efficiency on these processes. The workshop is November 29th-Nov 30th. We will report back on the outcomes from the workshop when they're available. This is an internal FS workshop facilitated by ERI so Stakeholders are not invited.

Hedwall – Kudos to the Coconino Fire staff as they've gotten the 5 experimental burn only PACs burned. October was the driest October since 1917. In September the hand-thinning portion of the treatments started in the mechanical thinning burn PACs. The mechanical contract fell through but will be picked

back up next fall hopefully. Things are progressing and data continues to be collected. Flagstaff and Mogollon Rim Fire staff deserve kudos for burning at night because it has been so dry.

Provencio –They've receive seven (7) official responses to the RFI and are pulling together a summary that they can share with the SHG. Nothing earth-shattering was gained there but some cool concepts on how we can move forward with the new contract have arisen from it. Stay tuned for an update on the RFP timeline.

Babbott- Several pieces of legislation have been introduced to the house and senate on restoration activities. One bill relates to creating a series of categorical exemptions to restoration activity. Those will likely be reconciled so Babbott is interested in SHG perspectives on these bills.

Greco – Individuals at Colorado State University have been looking at the success of burning across 4FRI and are getting into depth on why the different accomplishments have been so successful here compared to other parts of the country. Greco was interviewed by this group and there will be some research reports coming out on the successes of prescribed fire.

Arizona Prescribed Council is having their annual meeting on January 11th in PHX.

Cox – Operators are asking that the active sites their contractors are in are made inaccessible to the public in order to adhere to safety concerns and the FS has been helpful in accomplishing this. If there are private groups that would like to tour an active logging site that can be arranged.

Berlioux – We've been talking about bridging the gap with the tribal authority and getting them involved with 4FRI and it's been a difficult task. Berlioux announced that two weeks ago the White MT Apache Tribe voted unanimously to execute an MOU with the Eastern AZ Counties to which they are going to invite state forestry and the FS, so that they can collectively work together on some of these projects. The ultimate objective here is to start thinking about restorative ecological issues and impact as well as economic constraint and impact across administrative boundaries.

Provencio – This is a big step in support of an All-Lands Approach and could assuredly attract potential investors.

12:35 Review Action Items

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Discuss the possibility of producing comments on the CFLRP FS report	SC	
2. Provide Stephanie Coleman with comments/suggestions on the decision matrix for the revised Aquatics and Watershed Flexible Toolbox	SHG	
3. Provide feedback to Sue Sitko on the recent draft of the communications public information brochure	SHG	
4. Consider organizing a field trip with industry where interested parties and the public can tour an active logging site	CWG	

12:08 Adjourn

01/24/18 SHG meeting information:

Wednesday, January 24th, 2018 9am-TBD

Arizona Game & Fish Region 1 Office (Pinetop)

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