



July 10, 2018

The Honorable Debbie Lesko  
2435 Rayburn House Office Building  
Independence & S. Capitol Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lesko,

The Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) Stakeholder Group (SHG) would like to express our sincere appreciation for your longstanding support to continuously and fully fund the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) since its inception in 2009. The 4FRI is a collaboratively-based forest restoration project spanning 2.4 million acres of four northern Arizona national forests (Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Kaibab, and Tonto) and was among the original pilots selected for funding. Our over 30 stakeholders have worked closely with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service to achieve our collective vision for a restored forest landscape across northern Arizona to fulfill our CFLRP proposal.

Due to the commitment and support of the CFLRP funds, stakeholders, other supporters, and Forest Service appropriated funds, we have leveraged and matched the CFLR contribution significantly every year. As an example, in 2017, funds leveraged for 4FRI projects totaled over \$11 million from various activities such as:

- Conservation organizations such as the Arizona Wildlife Federation, Friends of Northern Arizona Forests, Grand Canyon Trust, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and many others provided both hard dollars and volunteer match contributions to conduct on-the-ground restoration projects across the 4FRI footprint and invest in researching new technology to improve efficiencies in planning, harvest operations, and monitoring.
- Citizen groups focused on forest management issues such as the Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership and the Natural Resources Working Group promoted the project's goals and objectives to the publics they serve to build support of forest restoration treatments by communities, residents, and visitors alike.
- County and city governments spanning six counties in northern Arizona worked diligently to solicit continued awareness and funding across all levels of political administrations from local, county, and state to Capitol Hill, and, like the City of Flagstaff, invested in employing forest managers to support this restoration effort.
- Academic research units such as Northern Arizona University's Ecological Restoration Institute and School of Forestry spearheaded research and economic innovations that help break through bottlenecks and barriers to progress.
- Harvesters, mill owners, and others in the wood product industry have invested their own business capital in upgrading mills, purchasing equipment, and creating new businesses at significant risk to themselves.
- Partners such as the Salt River Project (SRP) invested in direct watershed and forest restoration efforts to protect downstream municipal water supplies, and have initiated testing and research to better understand how to economically utilize biomass, a significant challenge for any forest treatment.
- The City of Flagstaff and many partners initiated and are implementing the voter-approved \$10 million Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project.

The above is only a sampling of the commitment by multiple partners to engage in resolving economic roadblocks, finding agreement on various management issues, assisting with restoration treatments, and building consensus on the urgent need to restore our forests. The value of the CFLRP as a catalyst in bringing forth this level of collaboration cannot be underestimated.

## Request for Future Support

We appreciate your continued support for the CFLRP, and hope to work with you to ensure its reauthorization and future appropriations. We understand there is a bipartisan effort by senators, led by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID) to introduce legislation (S. 2811) that would reauthorize and expand the CFLRP, with co-sponsors from several Western states. This legislation recognizes the critical foundation this program is for multiple collaborative efforts, and how the CFLRP model supports local jobs, improves wildlife habitat, reduces catastrophic fire risk, and helps accelerate restoration on many national forests around the country.

As 4FRI was one of the initial recipients of CFLRP funds, our stakeholder group has witnessed the multiple benefits from this program, and wish to use this opportunity to encourage your support for this, or other, legislation as both houses of Congress debate the merits and value of this program.

Thank you again for supporting this unique and collaboratively-driven program that has assisted multiple landscapes and millions of acres of forested land that is so important to communities, our water and wildlife resources, recreation opportunities and rural economies, and we hope to receive your continued support.

Sincerely,



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