

THE LOOKOUT

Four Forest Restoration Initiative



Stakeholder Newsletter / Fall 2019

Working Groups and Partners

Natural Resources Working Group
[Jason Whiting](#)

Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership
[Anne Mottek](#)

Multi-Party Monitoring Board
[Bryce Esch](#)

Comprehensive
Implementation Work Group
[Hannah Griscom](#)

Communications Work Group
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Stay Connected

4FRI Stakeholder Group website:
www.4fri.org

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

4FRI Restoration Activities Since 2010

- 63,000 acres of reforestation
- 270,000 acres of watershed improvement
- 18,000 acres of noxious weed control
- 685,000 acres of wildlife habitat improvement
- 94 miles of road decommissioned
- 130,000 acres of mechanical thinning treatments completed (sold/awarded 233,000 ac)
- 650,000 acres of prescribed fire and wild-fire that met land management objectives

⇒ A footprint of ~800,000 acres total

4FRI Phase 2 Request for Proposals is Out for Bid

The Forest Service (FS), has issued the solicitation for 4FRI's Phase 2 Request for Proposals (RFP). The solicitation is intended to result in one or more large-scale, long-term stewardship contracts that will help increase the pace and scale of restoration in northern Arizona.

The RFP Performance Area is a portion of the overall 4FRI area. It includes available acres within six separate Sub-Areas located in portions of the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Kaibab, and Tonto national forests. The solicitation seeks to mechanically thin between 605,000 and 818,000 acres over 20 years.

This is one of the first times the FS is utilizing the 20-year stewardship authority from the 2018 Omnibus bill.

"The intent of the RFP is to support existing industry, attract new sustainable industry and to significantly increase the pace and scale of forest restoration while creating jobs, restoring our forests, protecting communities and downstream water supplies," said Cal Joyner, Regional Forester for the USDA Forest Service Southwestern Region.

The RFP is open to small and large businesses and invites proposals that are sustainable, innovative, feasible and cost-effective. Offerors will be required to provide detailed technical and business proposals that demonstrate an adequate understanding of the available wood supply, slash operations, and physical and economic operating conditions. Contract (s) award is anticipated for May/June 2020.

This RFP was developed in partnership with the Salt River Project (SRP), US Bureau of Reclamation

(BOR), Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), and the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) (partners), all who bring unique perspectives along with defined interests for restoring National Forest Service lands. Water from the 4FRI area flows into SRP's reservoirs; healthy forests ensure long-term and sustainable water supplies. BOR is the agency responsible for oversight of the Federal Reclamation Water Project which SRP operates and healthy forests ensure the continued benefits of that water infrastructure. The ACA is the State of Arizona's economic development arm and oversees a variety of tax credits to facilitate job growth, including the Healthy Forest Tax Credit for forest related employers. DFFM is the agency of the State of Arizona tasked with the prevention, management and suppression of wildfires on state lands and unincorporated private lands.

This unique partnership, to what has traditionally been solely a Forest Service process, ensured the RFP was thoughtfully crafted and well-informed by a wide range of experts. SRP, BOR, and DFFM will assist in the evaluation of proposals and make recommendations to the FS, which retains the sole responsibility to award any contracts.

The only official location for the 4FRI Phase 2 RFP, as well as any formal amendments, is on the [Federal Business Opportunities \(FBO\) website](http://www.fbo.gov) (www.fbo.gov, Solicitation Number 12-8371-19-R-4005).

— USDA Forest Service staff

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

Comment Period for 4FRI Rim Country DEIS Open Until Jan. 16, 2020

Potential restoration activities for over a million acres of ponderosa pine forest in northern Arizona have been identified in the 4FRI Rim Country Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), 4FRI's second landscape scale analysis and the largest forest restoration project in the country. The formal 90-day comment period has begun and will close Jan. 16, 2020.

The Rim Country Project spans 1.24 million acres in portions of the Coconino, Tonto, and Apache-Sitgreaves national forests, and seeks to reestablish and restore forest structure, pattern, and composition to increase forest resiliency and reduce the risks of uncharacteristically severe fire.

The DEIS identifies the full suite of potential restoration activities outlined in two action alternatives, and includes analysis of a "no action" alternative. The Modified Proposed Action would mechanically treat vegetation on up to approximately 890,000 acres and would treat up to approximately 950,000 acres with fire. The Focused Restoration Alternative would mechanically treat vegetation on up to approximately 480,000 acres and treat up to approximately 530,000 acres with fire. Both alternatives in the DEIS also call for restoration of streams and aquatic resources such as springs, wet-

lands, and riparian habitat across the planning area.

Comments can be submitted online at <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=48210>. Comments can also be submitted by email, mail, fax, or in person.

The DEIS, associated documents, and additional information about submitting comments are available at www.fs.usda.gov/goto/4FRIRimCountry.

"Public feedback is crucial. It will help define how we're managing the national forests we all live in and love," says Jeremy Kruger, 4FRI Chief Executive. "We used the comments from the Proposed Action scoping period in 2016, the majority of which were centered on smoke, air quality, and roads, to inform the development of the alternative action and the modification of the Proposed Action in the DEIS. This time around, the public input on the DEIS will be used to hone the alternatives and finalize the Environmental Impact Statement."

The Final EIS will be presented to the approving officials for selection in the fall/winter of 2020 and the Final Record of Decision is expected in the spring/summer of 2021.

4FRI Rim Country DEIS Open Houses

A series of open houses have been scheduled for members of the public to learn more about the project:

- ⇒ **Payson, AZ**, Nov. 12, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Payson-Pleasant Valley Ranger District office, 1009 E. Highway 260 Payson, AZ 85541
- ⇒ **Heber-Overgaard, AZ**, Dec. 2, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Black Mesa Ranger District office, 2748 E. Highway 260 Overgaard, AZ 85933
- ⇒ **Flagstaff, AZ**, Dec. 3, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Arizona Game and Fish Department Region II office, 3500 S Lake Mary Rd, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Chip-and-Ship Pilot Project at Camp Navajo

A pilot project led by ERI's professor Han-Sup Han and research associate Jeff Halbrook has the potential to unlock a critical bottleneck in forest restoration and wildfire prevention efforts across northern Arizona.

The pilot project tested the logistics and efficacy of chipping and shipping wood products via railway transportation. The goal is to expand forest product markets domestically and internationally. If successful, the project will create markets for restoration by-products, like boards, shavings, sawdust, and wood chips from small-diameter trees, and protect communities from catastrophic wildfire and post-fire flooding by speeding forest restoration efforts in Arizona.

The first phase of the project took place at Camp Navajo over the course of eight days in August 2019. It included chipping 1,150 tons of small-diameter logs ex-



tracted from forest restoration projects like the Four Forest Restoration Initiative, which has

struggled to find markets for the low-value wood removed from its thinning efforts. The wood chips were then loaded onto 58 shipping containers and transported to South Korea via railway and cargo ships.

The ERI research team is analyzing data from the pilot project. A report on findings will be released in December 2019. For more information, contact ERI Director of Forest Operations and Biomass Utilization Dr. Han-Sup Han at Han-Sup.Han@nau.edu.

New Online Restoration Kiosk at GFFP.org



A kiosk developed and installed by the Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP) at Fort Tuthill County Park describes the forest restoration treatments implemented at the park. In an effort to share this information more broadly, GFFP created an online version complete with interactive pop-ups that further explain how restoration treatments lead to a healthier forest.

The kiosk is hosted on the GFFP website (<http://gffp.org/kiosk/#>). Users can click on icons representing fire, historical forest characteristics, biodiversity, wildlife, and mul-

ti-use forests to access scientific facts sheets and reports to learn more about each of these restoration objectives.

The GFFP encourages the use of this online kiosk in classrooms and by the public to learn more about healthy frequent-fire forests and restoration. The electronic kiosk can be used by other organizations by linking the kiosk to their websites and for direct distribution.

Logging Equipment, Cross-Cut Saw Competition, Firefighters, and Smokey Bear Featured at Science in the Park

The Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP) and its many partners presented a “Forest Treatments, Logging Methods and Fire Adapted Communities” exhibit at the Festival of Science, Science in the Park event at Wheeler Park on Sat, Sept. 21.

Science-goers explored logging equipment and spoke with real-woods loggers, firefighters and with forest product industry professionals. Other highlights included photo opportunities with a log loader and logging truck, Smokey Bear, cross-saw demonstrations by Northern Arizona University’s Logging Sports Team, a forest fire demonstration that showed how differently a healthy versus an unhealthy forest burns, and a kids’ corner with hands-on activities and a “put the flame out” squirting contest.

Forestry and fire staff from the US Forest Service, City of Flagstaff, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Coconino County, Campbell Global, RDO Equipment Co.

and many other partners were on-hand to discuss current and planned forest thinning operations and how small-diameter ponderosa pine is used and processed into products. Residents had the opportunity to learn about how to protect their homes, property, and family from wildfire and how they can contribute to increasing their community’s fire-adaptation and Firewise practices.



Forest Service, ADOT Address Road/Bridge Weight Limits

Transportation of forest products is one of the most expensive cost centers plaguing forest restoration efforts. Timber companies now have the opportunity to haul heavier loads of forest products on more routes in northern Arizona. The ability to haul heavier loads will make mechanical thinning activities more economical and accelerate the pace of restoration treatments that help reduce the risk of severe wildfires.

The Forest Service and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) have coordinated these changes to provide consistency across FS routes and state highways. Both the Forest Service and ADOT will comply with the Federal Bridge Formula, which identifies weight limits based on the truck/trailer axel configuration. Eighty thousand pounds is the normal weight limit for commercial tractor-trailer configurations. Weight limits will vary depending on the truck and trailers being used. Certain configurations would allow for weights as high as 97,000 pounds.

As part of this coordinated effort, ADOT is expanding their Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI) project area, which originated with nine state

routes in eastern Arizona, allowing increased weights for timber industry trucks. The HFI will now include routes in the Phoenix, Flagstaff, Williams, and Tusayan areas, spanning the entirety of the 2.4 million-acre 4FRI footprint and markets in the Valley. Haulers may request permits from ADOT for five axle configurations and travel with loads up to 90,800 pounds until June 30, 2020. As of July 1, 2020: the tridem axle configuration will be the only authorized configuration for loads over 80,000 pounds for travel under the HFI.

The Forest Service will allow up to 97,000 pounds on bridges rated as “high capacity”—this is the majority of bridges within the 4FRI footprint. Weight limits will vary based on the vehicle configuration, but the Forest Service will not require annual permits for the high capacity bridges so long as the weight of the vehicle complies with the Federal Bridge Formula for that particular truck trailer configuration. Some Forest Service bridges that are currently structurally deficient would require mitigation to protect them from further damage. Those bridges will be identified in advance.