



**4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting
MINUTES**

Wednesday, July 22, 2020, 9 am – Noon
ZOOM Audio Meeting

<https://nau.zoom.us/j/92771192452>

- ZOOM meeting protocols:**
- Co-chairs will manage participant engagement
 - No video please
 - Keep speaker on MUTE
 - Use chat box to communicate your questions or comments to the group.
 - Please refrain from private messaging as it becomes part of the official transcript.

In attendance: Henry Provencio, Jeremy Kruger, Jaelyn Belcher, Keith Brekhus, Jason Whiting, Floyd Hardin, Tracy Bazelman, Adam Cooley, Tabi Bolton, Anne Mottek, D Magna, JR Murray, John Hamil, Bob Seidler, Art Babbott, Rob Nelson, Mark Nigrelli, Steve Reiter, Joe Miller, Steve Rosenstock, Scott Buffon, Travis Woolley, Patrick Moore, Brad Worsley, Randy Fuller, Dick Fleishman, Melanie Colavito, Joel Jurgens, Damon Vaughan, Todd Schulke, Jay Smith, Lesley Yen, Heather Provencio, Amy Waltz, Pascal Berlioux, Chris Jones, Alicyn Gitlin, D Dolecheck, JM Tarang, Paul Chapman, John Souther, Mark Murdza, John Godfrey, Aaron Green, Justin Schofer, Tom Osterday, Elvy Barton, Terese Greene, Anna Tovar, Shea Stanfield, Han Sup Han, Daniel Schweiebert, Lea Marquez Peterson, Eric Sloan, Mark Bellis, Rob Davis, Carol Covington taking minutes.

Approve minutes from the June 24, 2020 Stakeholder Group meeting — Worsley – approved as presented.

Review action items from the June 24, 2020 Stakeholder Group meeting — Worsley

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Invitations to ACC candidates for July meeting	Worsley, Babbott, Miller	completed
2. Summary of 4FRI work and issues for July meeting	Provencio	completed
3. Updated meeting schedule with Oct being first in person meeting.	Covington	completed
4. Reminder for meeting State Water Infrastructure Finance Authority meeting tomorrow to Basecamp	Provencio	completed

Call to the Public – JR Murray from Snowbowl spoke in support of safety and fuel mitigation near the Snowbowl recreation area and San Francisco Peaks. Snowbowl strategic planning has been taking into consideration evacuation plans and risks of fire to the area. He noted that the highest risk area is Hwy 180 where a cigarette, or loose chain could start a wildfire which could race up the west side of the mountain. He expressed his commitment to the work of 4FRI and fire mitigation efforts.

USFS Update – Jeremy Kruger briefly summarized the MOU between Dept of Agriculture and State of AZ. He

summarized a shared collaboration regarding Mexican Spotted Owl protection agreements. He mentioned that the CFLRP funding was not recommended for renewal. He reminded the group that this is Dick Fleishman's last 4FRI meeting, as he is retiring this week. He offered thanks for his years of service.

Henry Provencio offered an update on Conservation Finance work. 4FRI work to get wood to the reservation is ongoing.

Pascal Berlioux asked who would be taking over the monthly report that Dick Fleishman has been responsible for. Jeremy Kruger interjected that he would be picking up many of the reports etc. until the position is filled again. Dick Fleishman extended thanks for the partnerships of 4FRI over the course of time.

Arizona Corporation Commissioner Candidates Roundtable - Brad Worsley

Shea Stanfield, Anna Tovar, and Lea Marquez Peterson, all candidates for the Arizona Corporation Commission, announced their presence. Eric Sloan, another candidate, joined in short order.

County Supervisor, Art Babbott offered an overview describing the breadth of participation of 4FRI participants. He briefly spoke to the history of the work of 4FRI and underscored the importance of the Arizona Corporation Commission in the management of forest resources as part of protecting the watersheds, public utilities, and solving the biomass bottleneck. He noted life and safety issues that depend on forest restoration. He described how the effort of 4FRI is a proactive approach to forest management, rather than waiting for events to dictate action. He urged ACC to consider the use of biomass as part of the overall picture of power generation.

Brad Worsley then briefly summarized the breadth of participation of organizations that are members of 4FRI, underscoring the diversity of those involved.

- **4FRI Background and Challenges** – Henry Provencio provided an overview of the work of 4FRI over the past ten years. [Presentation Link](#)
- **Roundtable Discussion and Q/A with Candidates** – Brad Worsley asked Jason Whiting to provide additional insights into the work of 4FRI. He spoke about the costs of wildfire, and financial impacts of associated flooding. He noted the increased recreational use of the forests. The Camp Fire in California, is estimated to cost in excess of \$16.5 billion. This is an example of reactive reparations. He noted the importance of increasing the treatment to the target of 50,000 acres/year.
- **Anna Tovar** posted her thanks for being included. She noted that she had an emergency meeting at 10:00 and underscored her full commitment to work together to bring forward positive solutions.
- **Lea Marquez Peterson** spoke in support and offered a [link](#) to a discussion of forest bioenergy in Arizona from her office. She noted that she has been a big supporter of biomass and the work of 4FRI. She agreed that to the importance of anticipatory management efforts. She asked about the status of the Forest Service RFP. Jeremy Kruger reported that they are in the evaluation phase, with an award anticipated in the fall of 2020.
- **Shea Stanfield** indicated that she is often asked about biomass in northern Arizona. She indicated that she is in listening mode and would like to learn more about the work of 4FRI. What do we do to mitigate the carbon release resulting from the burning of the biomass? Brad Worsley addressed the question. Biomass is considered to be carbon neutral. The carbon that is being used is active. He underscored that the process of thinning the forest and leaving the larger trees to continue to absorb carbon increases carbon absorption capacity of the forest. She then asked what happens to the byproduct, ash. Worsley indicated that the ash is buried and is organic. Ms. Stanfield indicated that she is clear that the work of forest restoration is a necessary exercise that has been under addressed in recent years. Worsley reviewed comments offered in the chat including a [link](#) to provide some balance to the description offered. Travis Wooley offered that it's important to understand we aren't "thinning for biomass", we are finding a biomass solution because we

have a need to remove it for restoration. He added that if we leave the biomass in the woods, most of that is decomposed or burned and is a carbon emission. Henry Provencio offered, that forest restoration absolutely helps mitigate climate change. In its simplest form, you can't have carbon sequestration if you don't have trees to sequester carbon. We see significant growth of the remaining trees after restoration treatments which translates into increased carbon sequestration. There are several studies that show the benefits of restoration efforts, even when trees are being removed. Ultimately 4FRI restoration is intended to restore (or at least put us on that trajectory) of the structure and pattern of trees that occurred before the interruption of natural fire. These treatments will reduce the negative effects of fire but most importantly they increase the resilience of the remaining trees, which store the bulk of the forest carbon. Pascal Berlioux indicated that he believes the important part of the conversation is that the restoration efforts are the focus, not the production of energy. The logging slash becomes fuel, but it is a by product of the forest restoration.

- **Eric Sloan** shared his support for the work of the firefighters in the region. He indicated his belief that fire is a life and safety issue, and that safe forest maintenance is key. He underscored the need to continue to have the conversation distinguishing active carbon and neutral carbon. Pascal Berlioux suggested that we are discussing public policy. Tradeoffs would include the cost of supporting biomass power generation as a part of the safety benefits of forest management, mitigating the costs of damage left behind by catastrophic fire. The next tradeoff pertains to the environmental impact of uncontrolled biomass burning, either controlled burns or wildfire. Worsley interjected that his work has been underway for almost 20 years. Particulate matter is controlled by 98% when resulting from controlled burn at the biomass power plant. Sloan asked if there are model of success standards that could be provided to the ACC. The ACC candidates each thanked the group for the time, and for the information.

Worsley invited each to summarize their positions regarding biomass in writing, for the Stakeholder Group to assist in forming voting positions.

Updates

- **Shared Stewardship Memorandum of Understanding** – Pascal Berlioux, Jeremy Kruger, Aaron Green
Aaron Green reviewed the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) signed by the Governor and US Secretary of Agriculture toward a more formal shared stewardship agreement to care for the forests. Collaboration will continue to ensure that 4FRI will continue as a national priority with the same funding. He underscored the importance of stakeholders in shared stewardship process.
- **Mexican Spotted Owl** – Shaula Hedwall, Aaron Green, Todd Schulke, Pascal Berlioux
Berlioux noted that there is a renewed interest and concern about the protection of the MSO. He noted that there are multiple goals including forest preservation, fire safety, habitat protection. There were two recent notifications from different groups of their intent to file suit for the protection of the MSO. The Center for Ecological Biodiversity has indicated that they are satisfied with the actions being taken, and are no longer considering filing suit. He indicated that everyone participating in a recent workshop to discuss the problem, agreed that the work in the field and monitoring can be improved and be more transparent. Aaron Green noted that public transparency is key to the effort. Steps are being integrated into Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife processes to ensure such transparency in dealing with the MSO habitat restoration effort.
- **Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program**– Melanie Colavito and working team
Melanie Colavito summarized the trajectory of the CFLRP request for renewed funding through the FACA review committee, which did not recommend funding. Feedback from the FACA review committee has not yet been received, but should be available by the end of the month. Amy Waltz addressed the question of the cost of not getting renewed CFLRP funding. She noted that the funding is not a part of the CFLRP approval of 4FRI work. In summary, NOT receiving the funding will likely have minimal impact on the efficacy of the 4FRI group and work.

Industry Updates

- Brad Worsley offered that **Novo Power** is still in search of contracts. The facility is running very well and producing a great quantity of power by burning biomass.
- Tabi Bolton offered that **Campbell Global** is continuing to work on three TNC SPAs. Lots of learning opportunities as we implement USFS modernizations on the ground! Markets remain stable for the moment.
- Rob Davis of **Forest Energy**, indicated that loggers have been stepping up production. It was a good year. As always, they are concerned for the long-term trajectory of the industry.
- Adam Cooley of **NewLife**, reported that they are getting product moving. They are gearing up to haul product out of the forest, and hiring drivers. No projected volumes are available at the moment. They have upgraded two sawmills which returned online last week. The production went up by 3 times the previous volume.

Working Group Updates

- Final Environmental Impact Statement WG – Amy Waltz reported that the group continues to meet to make sure that the values of the group are accurately represented in the EIS.
- Industry/Biomass WG – Worsley reported none
- Communication WG – Joe Miller noted that items for the fall newsletter are being gathered. He suggested that a write up on the ACC candidate workshop held today.
- Multi-Party Monitoring Board WG – Travis Woolley reported that the group is working hard to coordinate efforts with the EIS. He noted that they would like to develop a letter of support for some monitoring activity and will run it by the Stakeholder Group in advance via BaseCamp in search of comment.
- Comprehensive Implementation WG – Griscom

Stakeholder Disclosures – Aaron Green offered an update on State contract for timber marking, designed to increase capacity and innovation to timber sales and clearing. Melanie Colavito noted the retirement of Diane Vosick and Andrew Sanchez Meador’s hiring as Executive Director. Jay Smith announced a collective grant request to clear the area surrounding the interferometer. This was not granted, but they will work on a subsequent application.

Review Action Items

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Standards of good biomass disposal information to ACC candidates	Berlioux, Worsley Provencio, Fleishman	
2. Thank you to ACC candidates and Michele Ralston at Supervisor Babbott’s office.	Babbott, Ralston	

Adjourned at 11:17 am

2020 Meeting Schedule – these dates are posted on the 4FRI website.

- Zoom - 8/26, 9/23, 11/18
- Coconino NF Supervisor’s office - 10/28