

THE LOOKOUT

Four Forest Restoration Initiative



Stakeholder Newsletter / Fall 2020

4FRI Working Groups

Communications Working Group
[Tayloe Dubay](#)

Comprehensive Implementation Working Group
[Hannah Griscom](#)

Industry Working Group
[Brad Worsley](#)

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

Rim Country Final EIS Working Group
[Pascal Berlioux](#), [Steve Rosenstock](#), [Amy Waltz](#), [Travis Woolley](#)

Stakeholder Engagement Working Group
[Melanie Colavito](#), [Steve Rosenstock](#)

4FRI Partners

Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership
www.GFFP.org

Natural Resources Working Group
[Jason Whiting](#)

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.

USDA and Arizona sign Shared Stewardship Memorandum of Understanding to reduce wildfire risk and increase forest health

In July, US Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and Arizona Governor Doug Ducey agreed to a collaborative new framework to increase coordination and cooperation for work addressing forest health risks and wildfire across the state.

Arizona's Shared Stewardship Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would help accelerate the pace and scale of projects like the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) that protect communities from wildfire and create healthy, resilient landscapes.

"This Memorandum of Understanding strengthens the already strong partnership between the Forest Service and the State of Arizona," said Secretary Perdue. "Through Shared Stewardship, Arizona and the Forest Service are working together to identify landscape-scale priorities and build capacity to improve forest conditions."


"In Arizona we know addressing the threat of wildfire is a team effort that requires constant collaboration across local, state, and federal levels," said Gov. Ducey. "The mutual commitments outlined in today's Memorandum of Understanding will

further these key partnerships — making Arizona communities better protected against catastrophic wildfires. My sincere thanks to Secretary Perdue for his continued partnership with Arizona and dedication to responsible forest management."

The MOU is the latest addition to the collaborative restoration and wildfire risk reduction efforts between the Forest Service and the state of Arizona and it follows the outcome-based investment strategy the Forest Service began implementing in 2018.

Arizona is the 14th state to agree to a [Shared Stewardship](#) framework, which uses a modern and collaborative approach to focus on landscape-scale forest restoration activities that protect at-risk communities and watersheds across all lands. The MOU with Arizona focuses on restoring fire-adapted ecosystems and reducing the risk of wildfire to communities; identifying, managing, and reducing threats to forest and ecosystem health; and fostering economic development strategies that keep working forests productive.

— Adapted from USDA Press Release No. 0313.20



City of Flagstaff introduces Water Resource and Infrastructure Protection (WRIP) fee

Research and reality are well aligned when it comes to economic impacts of undesirable wildfires. With roughly 40 percent of American homes located in the wildland urban interface, communities save money, properties and lives when they invest in the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy goals of resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities and safe and effective wildfire response.

This summer, the City of Flagstaff developed an innovative way to further invest in the prevention of undesirable wildfire impacts. On Aug. 1, 2020, the Water Resource and Infrastructure Protection fee will be included for City of Flagstaff water services customers. Flagstaff's water supply is 100 percent local coming from surface water and wells. Protecting water quality and distribution infrastructure requires investing in the restoration and maintenance of a fire adapted forest. This fee will support the Flagstaff Fire Department's Wildland Fire Management Program's ability

to protect Flagstaff and its priority watersheds from the effects of catastrophic wildfire. A fee of \$0.52 per 1,000 gallons of water used will provide a reliable and stable source of funding for the Wildland Fire Management Program, the only fire management resource in Flagstaff that reports to locally elected leadership. This fee is part of a larger municipal services billing restructure based on consumption that will maintain monthly water costs for average water volume users while raising costs for large volume water users.

For additional info about the Flagstaff Fire Department's Wildland Fire Management Program and the Water Resource and Infrastructure Protection fee, please contact Neil Chapman at neil.chapman@flagstaffaz.gov. The Water Resources and Infrastructure Protection financial plan and fee analysis report is available [here](#).

— Neil Chapman, City of Flagstaff

Update: 4FRI Phase 2 Request for Proposals

The Forest Service has made a competitive range decision and is now preparing for discussions with offerors determined to be in the competitive range. This is an important milestone in the evaluation process. The competitive range is the government's determination of which proposals will be considered further and which offerors the US Forest Service will enter into discussions with. Offerors whose proposals are in the competitive range have received notification from the Contracting Officer (CO). Offerors whose proposals are not in the competitive range have also received notification from the CO.

The evaluation team is preparing to begin a significant and robust discussion period with offerors in the competitive range. Discussions may involve clarification of information in the proposal related to technical, financial, or other components as described in the RFP. The duration of these discussions will be dependent on

how quickly the offerors and the government come to terms. We anticipate awarding one or more contracts during the first half of Fiscal Year 2021 (December 2020 through March 2021). The speed of these discussions will impact the precise award date within the first half of Fiscal Year 2021.

Following the competitive range decision and detailed discussions with offerors in the competitive range, the CO will request final proposal revisions. This request for final proposal revisions from offerors is the next milestone following conclusion of discussions. The evaluation process will continue to take time to ensure we thoroughly and carefully review proposals and conduct offeror discussions. Our goal is to ensure the long-term success of this project and industry to restore our National Forests.

— Jeremy Kruger, 4FRI Chief Executive,
USDA Forest Service

USDA Forest Service Southwestern Region releases Riparian and Aquatic Ecosystem Strategy

The USDA Forest Service Southwestern Region is proud to announce the release of the Southwestern Region Riparian and Aquatic Ecosystem Strategy. This strategy was created to guide actions that conserve and improve riparian and aquatic ecosystems that will result in achieving desired conditions that address ecological, social and economic considerations through collaboration. Visit the [Southwestern Region website](#) to view the strategy.

In the arid Southwest, the vulnerability of our water supplies, the likelihood of drought, wildfire and flooding from infrequent but intense post-fire rainfall events are increasing. The uncertainty of our water supplies is highlighted by ongoing litigation over the delivery of water from New Mexico to Texas on the Rio Grande, as well as by the interstate Drought Contingency Plan to deal with the urgent impact of water delivery shortfalls from the Colorado River. Greater scarcity and unre-

liability of supplies is the new normal, which means that greater cooperation is critical to the future capability of our watersheds to meet our needs.

Healthy riparian and aquatic systems are linchpins connecting land and water — and are integral to future water availability. Many Southwestern Region employees worked hard to develop this strategy and build relationships with partners that can help with its implementation.



Stream at Huckaby Trail, Coconino National Forest in Sedona, Arizona. USDA Forest Service photo by Justin Straquadine

The Ecological Restoration Institute to lead new center aimed at building a skilled workforce to help with forest management

A new program from Northern Arizona University aims to increase forest health and contribute to a growing resilient economy in Coconino County in one fell swoop.

Han-Sup Han, a professor of forestry and director of forest operations and biomass utilization at the [Ecological Restoration Institute](#) (ERI) at NAU, is the principal investigator on a \$350,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration to create the Forest Operations Training Center in Coconino County.

The purpose of the proposed Forest Operations Training Center is to provide career development opportunities with programs for forest equipment operators, log truck drivers and heavy equipment maintenance and repair mechanics. New forestry workforce with these skills are critically needed in Coconino County in order to supply and support the county's forest products manufacturing base. Building a

skilled workforce has been a bottleneck to expanding the pace and scale of forest restoration in northern Arizona.

Forest operations training will offer stable, well-paid jobs to local residents, particularly those who lost such jobs in 2019 when the Navajo Generating Station closed and the Kayenta Coal Mine Complex cut 265 jobs from its workforce. Both of these provided significant economic opportunity for the Navajo and Hopi tribes; Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez estimated that the Navajo Nation's annual revenue has declined by at least \$30 million after the closures. This training opportunity is also extended to veterans transitioning to civilian work and high school graduates with a goal of increasing the capacity of forest management in northern Arizona.

— Adapted from an NAU News article. To read the full story, click [here](#).

4FRI Stakeholder Group hosts Arizona Corporation Commission candidate roundtable

The 4FRI Stakeholder Group hosted a roundtable for the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) candidates at the July 22, 2020 meeting. Each candidate was invited individually prior to the meeting. Joining the discussion were candidates Shea Stanfield, Anna Tovar, Lea Marquez Peterson, and Eric Sloan.

Coconino County Supervisor Art Babbott gave a brief introduction about the history of 4FRI and underscored the importance of the ACC in relation to managing forest resources by protecting watersheds, public utilities, and solving the biomass bottleneck, noting the life and safety issues that depend on forest restoration. He described 4FRI as a proactive approach to forest management, rather than waiting for events to dictate action. He urged the ACC candidates to consider the use of biomass as part of the overall picture of power generation.

4FRI Background and Challenges

4FRI Efficiencies Coordinator Henry Provencio provided an overview of 4FRI over the past 10 years. Click [here](#) to view the presentation.

Summary of Roundtable Discussion and Candidate Q&A

- Novo Power President Brad Worsley and Navajo County Supervisor Jason Whiting provided additional insights into the work of 4FRI. They spoke about the costs of wildfire, financial impacts of associated flooding, and 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. They noted the importance of increasing the 4FRI treatments to the target of 50,000 acres/year.
- Anna Tovar posted her thanks for being included and underscored her full commitment to work together to bring forward positive solutions.
- Lea Marquez Peterson spoke in support and offered a [link](#) for more discussion of forest bioenergy in Arizona. She said she has been a big supporter of biomass and the work of 4FRI. She agreed to the importance of anticipatory management efforts and asked about the status of the 4FRI Request for Proposals.
- Shea Stanfield indicated that she is often asked about biomass in northern Arizona. She said she is in listening mode and would like to learn more about the work of 4FRI and asked what is done to mitigate the carbon release resulting from the burning of the biomass. Worsley addressed the question and said biomass is considered to be carbon neutral. The carbon being used is active. He said the process forest thinning leaves larger trees to continue to absorb carbon and increases the forest's carbon absorption capacity. Stanfield then asked what happens to the by-product, ash. Worsley indicated that the ash is buried and is organic. Stanfield indicated she is clear that the work of forest restoration is a necessary exercise that has been under-addressed in recent years.
- Travis Wooley, forest ecologist with The Nature Conservancy, said it's important to understand we aren't "thinning for biomass," we are seeking a biomass solution because it needs to be removed 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. It was offered that forest restoration absolutely helps mitigate climate change. In its simplest form, there can't be carbon sequestration if there aren't trees to sequester carbon. There is significant growth of the remaining trees after restoration treatments, which translates into increased carbon sequestration. Several studies show the benefits of restoration, even when trees are removed.
- Eric Sloan shared his support for the work of firefighters in the region. He said he believes fire is a life and safety issue and that safe forest maintenance is key. He emphasized a need to continue the conversation about distinguishing active and neutral carbon. Pascal Berlioux, executive director of Eastern Counties Organization, suggested that the discussion is about 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 through prescribed burns or wildfire. When biomass is burned at a power plant, 98 percent of particulate matter is controlled.
- Each ACC candidate thanked the group for their time and for the information. The candidates were invited to summarize their positions regarding biomass in writing for the Stakeholder Group to assist in forming voting positions.

— Article adapted from the June 2020 4FRI
Stakeholder Group meeting minutes

