



## 4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 9 am – Noon  
ZOOM Audio Meeting

<https://nau.zoom.us/j/92771192452> password: 341419

MEETING WAS RECORDED

### ZOOM meeting protocols:

- **PLEASE ANNOUNCE YOURSELF IN CHAT BOX OR ON THE PHONE**
- 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:** Evan Lautzenheiser, Anne Mottek, Joe Miller, Bob Seidler, Wade Ward, Tom Mackin, Jeremy Kruger, Jay Smith, Steve Reiter, Pascal Berlioux, Eli Jensen, Floyd Hardin, Greg Smith, Peggy Luensmann, Kara Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger, Rob Nelson, Tom Osterday, Amy Waltz, Patrice Horstman, Tabi Bolton, Patrick Moore, Robin Bundrock, Jake Dahlin, Todd Schulke, Art Babbott, Mark Nigrelli, Chris Jenks, Ethan Aumack, Travis Wooley, Cerissa Hoglander, Jeanne Stevens, Stephen Flora, Sasha Driscoll, Elvy Barton, Joe Trudeau, John Souther, Justin Schofer, Eli Jensen, John Godfrey, D Magna, Rochelle Lacapa, Keith Brekhus, Brad Worsley, Laura Jo West, Dobson Ward, Alicyn Gitlin, Adam Cooley, Tracy Bazelman, Ariel Leonard, Paul Chapman, Neil Chapman, Hannah Griscom, Charles Smith, Shaula Hedwall, Tom Holl, John Richardson, Wendy Jo Haskins, Scott Harger, Tom Sisk, and Carol Covington taking minutes.

**Approve minutes from the January 27, 2021 Stakeholder Group meeting** — Approved as presented.

**Review action items from the January 27, 2021 Stakeholder Group meeting** — Jay Smith

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Update from Stakeholder Engagement Working Group at Feb Stakeholder Mtg	Melanie Colavito, Steve Rosenstock	Moved to March Stakeholder mtg

**Call to the Public** – None

**USFS Update** – Jeremy Kruger

**RFP** – Timeline of RFP has been extended. Ongoing discussion with offerors necessitated the extension to the June, rather than the earlier date of March 31.

**Personnel – Public Affairs officer on a temporary basis for three months.** New 4FRI Operations Coordinator has been hired and will start soon, Bret Crary. Interviewing for a 4FRI Project Manager to oversee the RFP. Kara Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger was introduced as the new NEPA Planner.

**Wood for Life update and plan forward** - Jeremy Kruger Introduced Jeanne Stevens, Sasha Stortz, Jake Dahlin. The goal for the [presentation](#) today is to provide some history and background of the program. The mission of the Southwestern Region Tribal Relations Program is to:

- Provide Tribes equal opportunity and access to Forest Service programs.
- Eliminate barriers to Tribal participation.

- Improve overall knowledge of Tribe and Tribal cultures.
- Develop partnerships and accomplish common goals in accordance with the Forest Service mission, the National Tribal implementation team report, and Regional priorities.

Jeanne Stevens offered a brief summary of the history of the rise of need for heating fuel on tribal lands, and efforts to address this need.

Jake Dahlin then reported on the impact of Covid-19 on the needs of the community. He described the work of many partners including the Ranger District, to address these needs. They collectively explored how forest restoration and the provision of firewood to those in need as a means to address multiple needs.

Sasha Driscoll Stortz summarized the work of the Wood for Life Core Team which oversees the project, and working on partnerships between sources of wood and users. She reported that close to 900 cords of wood have been delivered to partner communities across Navajo and Hopi.

Jake Dahlin described how they are helping to develop partnerships and matching needs with resources.

A question arose regarding the cost of getting the wood to users. Sasha Driscoll Stortz indicated that there are many variables that affect costs. This is being analyzed currently. They are also studying what diameter logs are most appropriate for this use. Lower quality smaller logs have been identified as the optimal match for this purpose. A request was made for contact information (provided below). Distance between harvest and distribution areas was questioned. Jake Dahlin noted that they work to minimize travel, but it remains very variable. The focus of Wood for Life is the higher need users. They acknowledged that there is more need than they are able to address.

Media coverage of Wood for Life Partnership efforts:

- A Home Heating Crisis. A Devastating Forest Fire Waiting to Happen. One Innovative Solution: Wood for Life aims to bring wood harvested from forests at risk of megafires to Indigenous elders who are in danger of freezing to death. <https://slate.com/technology/2021/01/wood-for-life-native-elders-heat-williams-mountain-wildfire.html>
- National Forest Foundation: ‘COVID-19 Response Effort Provides Crucial Firewood Supply to Hopi and Navajo Homes’ <https://www.nationalforests.org/who-we-are/press-news/covid-19-response-effort-provides-crucial-firewood-supply-to-hopi-and-navajo-homes>
- University of Arizona Arid Lands Program/Tribal Extension Program: ‘COVID-19 Response Effort Provides Crucial Firewood Supply to Hopi and Navajo Homes’ <https://nativewaters-aridlands.com/2020/06/covid-19-response-effort-provides-crucial-firewood-supply-to-hopi-and-navajo-homes> / and <https://news.arizona.edu/story/partnership-provides-crucial-firewood-hopi-and-navajo-homes>

Contact information: [sstortz@nationalforests.org](mailto:sstortz@nationalforests.org), [Jeanne.stevens@usda.gov](mailto:Jeanne.stevens@usda.gov), [Jacob.dahlin@usda.gov](mailto:Jacob.dahlin@usda.gov), [henry.provencio@usda.gov](mailto:henry.provencio@usda.gov)

**Kaibab National Forest discussion on old growth logging presentation and discussion** – Jay Smith indicated that Heather Provencio will present from the USFS N Kaibab National Forest perspective at the March meeting. Joe Trudeau of the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) presented a [powerpoint presentation](#) describing CBD observations at Jacob Ryan management project. Their concern is the abundance of the removal of mature old trees. He discussed the difference between “old trees” and “old growth”. He described observations which seem to contradict USFS reports of patch cuts. The CBD is concerned about the current practices of forest management in

the area which is threatening the old trees, which provide excellent natural habitat. He highlighted four themes of their complaint:

- Project level (and forest plan) desired conditions are inconsistent with local site-specific reference conditions for the Kaibab Plateau, necessitating extensive old tree cutting to meet density (basal area) targets and size class distributions (prescriptions often aiming for 30% in seeding/sapling classes, and reductions in old forest class).
- A “get the cut out” culture on the NKR D, chasing volume in old and large trees (reflected in group selection cuts targeting mature/old patches, inconsistent with USFS commitments to old tree retention elsewhere in the southwest and in 4FRI).
- NKR D justifies cutting “old trees” virtually anywhere because they don’t fit their restrictive definition of “old growth”.
- NKR D underreporting cutting old trees and old growth in FACTS database (Forest Activities Tracking System) and possibly other records.

He proceeded to provide an overview of conditions and activities to underscore these assertions.

Ethan Aumack of Grand Canyon Trust, offered some thoughts. He noted that GCT holds significant grazing permits across this area. They have had many successful partnerships with North Kaibab Ranger District, but have had very little success influencing forest management practices here. His organization has been working on prohibition of old growth logging, and they believe this is overdue. He is concerned that this kind of forest management could adversely impact the face of forest management for all of Arizona.

Alicyn Gitlin emphasized that two major stakeholder processes in the North Kaibab. The Kaibab Forest Health Focus report contains one sentence of direction on managing old growth ponderosa pine forests in the Kaibab National Forest: “Ponderosa pine forest restoration in northern Arizona should be designed to retain and restore old-growth trees.” All trees, not just groups. In 2014, the Forest Service convened a series of three stakeholder workshops to develop a collaborative proposed action to treat the Burnt Corral project area. Old growth protection was a priority for the group, and although the stakeholders did not find consensus on all aspects of treatment techniques, the North Kaibab Ranger District “agreed that, in order to respect the work of the collaborative group, they could live with a large tree retention and old growth protection strategy for the project area,” based upon the work of the Four Forests Restoration Initiative (4FRI) stakeholder group.

The Old Growth Protection & Large Tree Retention Strategy developed by the 4FRI Stakeholder Group recaps a foundational 4FRI document, that “calls for blanket old growth protection, regardless of tree size. It states that, — “No old-growth trees (pre-dating Euro American settlement) shall be cut.” While the Strategy lays out “exceptions” where large trees post-dating Euro-American settlement could be cut, there are no exceptions for pre-settlement trees, regardless of size.

Pascal Berlioux offered that the restoration science should be followed. He suggested that the Forest Service appears not to be following this science. He noted that all of the local industries (sawmills) are NOT milling large diameter/old growth logs. Their focus has been solely on small diameter trees for 20 years. He raised the notion of social license being pursued by the Forest Service – noting that there seems to be an invisible line between the N Kaibab project area and the 4FRI area, which seem to be practicing different strategies for forest management. He suggested that this is counter productive to the larger effort.

Eli Jensen’s company is involved timber marking contracts. He suggested that the average citizen should not need to visit remote sites to view which trees are marked. His company is collecting data when marking trees which could be made available for analysis in advance of the cut, providing advance remote access to documentation on every individual tree noting specific characteristics of each. He offered to present this information to the Stakeholder Group.

Todd Schulke reported that the Center for Biological Diversity has been battling to save old growth trees along the north rim for decades. He reported that there has been a massive response to the reporting on these forest management practices by stakeholders and the Forest Service.

John Richardson stated that it is the position of Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management that the Old Growth Protection and Large Tree Retention Strategy developed by the 4FRI Stakeholders Group be adhered to.

**Discussion on Stakeholder Group's role in KNF old growth logging** – Jay Smith introduced that the conversation is intended to examine what the Stakeholder Group's role is or should be within this discussion. He urged the group to continue to utilize the science of forest restoration to manage our forests.

Joe Miller offered that this is really a regional issue, and there needs to be regional clarity about how to handle forest management. He echoed concern that the public perception of forestry in AZ is influenced by such practices. He suggested that the 4FRI boundary was somewhat ambiguously determined. He reported a proposal by Trout Unlimited of taking the approach of protecting 50% of forests by 2030 instead of 30% by 2030.

Pascal Berlioux shared that from the perspective of the 4FRI group, he is concerned that the delineation between projects is fuzzy. He noted that there should be a clear collaborative process rim wide, regardless of the mapped borders of different forests. 4FRI is a wholistic effort. The Kaibab district is part of the Kaibab National Forest which is part of the 4FRI forest group. The science of restoration should apply to the entire four forest area.

Brad Worsley offered that he agrees with Pascal's comments. He noted that larger trees are exponentially more effective in sequestering carbon. Their preservation is critical.

Jay Smith indicated that there is a desire to organize a field trip to the area for a first-hand view of what is going on. This is an ongoing conversation and he looks forward to hearing from Heather Provencio next month.

Adam Cooley interjected that their business is entirely focused on small diameter trees. They have been very cautious to avoid old growth or old trees. This has been the case for all industry across northern Arizona.

#### **Industry Updates** – Jay Smith

Adam Cooley New Life reported that they are setting up new equipment and working through county permitting processes to get operations started in Belmont at their new facility. Finishing touches on sawmill and planer are ongoing. Heber sawmill is running smoothly. He mentioned the new video on BaseCamp providing an overview of the company work.

Brad Worsley Novo Power reported that the facility is running very well. They are looking forward to the outcome of the RFP from the Forest Service.

Tabi Bolton Campbell Global, reported that they are actively moving logs. Demand for saw logs remains strong.

#### **Working Group Updates** – Jay Smith

- Final Environmental Impact Statement WG – Amy Waltz indicated that the group is in a holding pattern as the final EIS is finishing up.
- Industry/Biomass WG - No update
- Communication WG - Joe Miller reminded all to share with Tayloe Dubay ideas and articles for the spring newsletter with a deadline of this Friday to send them to her.
- Multi-Party Monitoring Board WG – Stephen Flora reported that they have been working on the budget for various projects. There was a discussion about watershed study in the Lake Mary area. They have been looking at snowpack issues.

- Stakeholder Engagement WG – Joe Miller reported that there is an upcoming meeting to discuss next steps.
- Comprehensive Implementation WG – Hannah Griscom reported that they are focused on spring restoration acknowledging the work of the Grand Canyon Trust as a lead on this. Work is schedule for late July at this time. Robert Ballard is the new soil scientist on the Kaibab National Forest and has been very helpful.

**Stakeholder Disclosures – All**

Jay Smith reported that Coconino County has developed a Forest Industry Parcel Analysis map to identify zoning, highways, opportunity zones, for ID potential industry placement. It will be up on the county website soon. Joe Miller offered that he has been working on behalf of the town of Payson on the Craigin Watershed and reported on the status of that project.

**Review Action Items**

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. N Kaibab National Forest management project presentation March Stakeholder Group meeting (45 min?) (Heather Provencio)	Heather Provencio, Anne Mottek	
2. Consideration to convene a Stakeholder Group meeting to discuss Kaibab National Forest management practices.	Anne Mottek	Refer to Steering Committee

**Adjourn – 11:30 am**

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

- Zoom - 3/24/2021, 4/28/2021, 5/26/2021, 6/23/2021
- Coconino NF Supervisor’s office - 7/28/2021

	2021	
	Hot Chair	Cold Chair
March	A Mottek	M Colavito
April	A Mottek	M Colavito
May	A Mottek	M Colavito
June	M Colavito	P Berlioux
July	M Colavito	P Berlioux
August	M Colavito	P Berlioux
September	P Berlioux	N Chapman
October	P Berlioux	N Chapman
November	P Berlioux	N Chapman
December	NO SHG MTG	NO SHG MTG

