

# THE LOOKOUT

## Four Forest Restoration Initiative



Stakeholder Newsletter / Spring 2021

### 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](http://www.GFFP.org)

Natural Resources Working Group  
[Jason Whiting](#)

### Stay Connected

4FRI Stakeholder Group website:  
[www.4FRI.org](http://www.4FRI.org)

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

### National Forest Foundation partnership delivers wood to Navajo and Hopi communities

The National Forest Foundation (NFF), the Forest Service, and other partners develop a sustainable solution for completing restoration projects that help meet tribal community fuelwood needs as part of the Wood for Life (WFL) initiative. It stems from a need to restore northern Arizona forests. Forest thinning and hazardous fuel reduction projects reduce the risk of high severity wildfire and post-fire flooding. In Arizona, the Forest Service often requires that cut trees and other biomass be removed from restoration project sites. The low value of small-diameter trees and challenging markets can make it challenging to complete restoration efforts.

At the same time, Navajo and Hopi communities have been impacted by the closure of the Navajo Generating Station and the Black Mesa Peabody coal mine. This has resulted in a loss of coal as an energy source for heating and cooking in homes without access to electricity and other utilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has further added challenges to firewood gathering due to curfews, stay-at-home orders, and limited transportation resources. “Preparation for the winter is critical as communities continue to deal with


the ongoing pandemic and the need for home heating,” explains Marshall Masayesva, Hopi Office Program Coordinator for the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps.

In response, the NFF works with the Forest Service, Navajo Nation Chapters, the Hopi Tribe, and other partners to connect wood from forest restoration sites with tribal communities in need of firewood through the WFL initiative. In its founding year, the WFL team facilitates the delivery of over 700 cords of wood from the Kaibab and Coconino National Forests to tribal communities by acting as a “matchmaker” between forest management efforts tribal partners who split and distribute the wood.



Photo by Marshall Masayesva, Ancestral Lands Hopi

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*More than 700 cords of wood from the Kaibab and Coconino National Forests have been delivered to tribal communities, who have been impacted by the Navajo Generating Station's closure and the Black Mesa Peabody coal mine.*

As part of the WFL program, NFF has aligned resources to transport more than 240 cords of wood, including from NFF restoration projects, to tribal communities, and has partnered with Navajo Nation Chapter houses and Ancestral Lands Hopi crews to process the wood and get it to those who need it.

“Connecting the dots from restoration projects to woodstoves takes coordination, relationships, and a lot of logistics. Partners have helped leverage Forest Service efforts so we can all make this happen,” says Sasha Stortz, NFF’s Arizona Program Manager. “Our goal is to build on the momentum of this first year and work towards a sustainable, long-term partnership. We’ve all learned a lot and are excited to grow from here.”

One source of fuelwood for these WFL efforts is the steep slopes of Bill Williams mountain, above the city of Williams, where NFF works with the Kaibab National Forest, Coconino County, and other partners to reduce hazardous fuels and man-

age the risk of post-fire flooding, which would impact the water supply and infrastructure of the city. Wood was set aside for the WFL program and transported by Joe Dirt Excavating to Cameron Chapter and Hopi villages. Wood has also come from several other forest management projects on the Kaibab and Coconino National Forests, including Lockett Meadow and the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project.

Once delivered, local groups step in to process the full log lengths into split firewood and distribute it. On the Navajo Nation, Chapter officials and volunteers work together to cut the wood into shorter lengths and get the wood to those who need it. At Hopi, NFF works together with the Hopi Foundation, Red Feather Development Group, the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, and Hopi Village Community Support Administrators. They manage a distribution plan for the firewood. AL crews split the wood and deliver directly to the homes of Hopi elders and community members across 12 Hopi villages.

“By getting wood out to the reservations, we can create a win-win situation where we’re getting our forests restored, and we’re also providing a valuable resource to tribal partners,” said Henry Provencio, Innovations and Efficiencies Coordinator with the Forest Service’s Four Forest Restoration Initiative. ■

— Article Reprinted in full from a National Forest Foundation [press release](#).

## **Update: 4FRI Phase 2 Request for Proposals**

Based on additional analysis, the Forest Service issued an RFP amendment to update the total project acres in the Phase 2 Request for Proposals (RFP) contract. The analysis relied on new and more accurate data and includes updated predictions of future wildfire risk which resulted in a reduction in the total minimum acres available for the RFP and removal of optional acres.

The RFP amendment does not change the goal of awarding one or more contracts in June 2021. Following discussions with offerors in the competitive range, the Contracting Officer will request final proposal revisions.

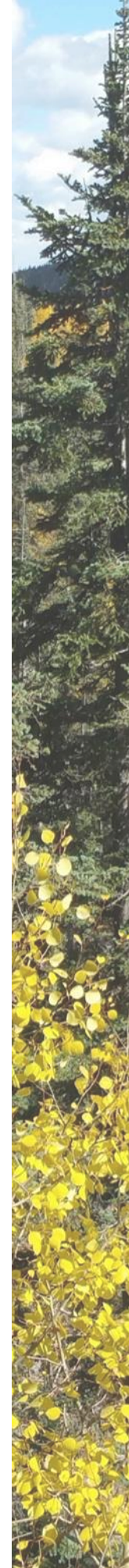
The evaluation process takes time to ensure thorough and careful review of proposals and conduct offeror discussions. Our goal is to ensure the

long-term success of this project and industry to restore our national forests.

We continue to balance the need to work with offerors and our team of experts through all stages of the evaluation process with the efficiency, urgency, and timeliness of award in mind. We want to be diligent, thorough and spend the time necessary to work with the offerors.

We will apprise the public of any other developments in the Four Forest Restoration Initiative Phase 2 Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Media inquiries can be sent to [sm.fs.swpressooffice@udsa.gov](mailto:sm.fs.swpressooffice@udsa.gov). ■

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



## Arizona Forest Industry Production Tax Credit: *Arizona Senate Bill 1177 / Arizona House Bill 2247*

### ***Expanded Forest Industry Means Jobs, Community Safety and a Healthy Environment***

Restoring Arizona forests through strategic thinning and accelerating the pace and scale of forest restoration across Arizona's overgrown forests will require partnerships and forest product industry. The long-term sustainability and viability of the forest product industry will ensure that capacity is available to make it possible to accomplish forest restoration goals. The Salt River Project (SRP) drafted [SB1177/ HB2247](#) with 4FRI stakeholder input to help industry increase forest product capacity to restore more acres every year. These legislative changes will help all of Arizona's forested lands and surrounding communities by growing industry, attracting more forest industry jobs, and protecting communities and the environment as a result of healthier landscapes and reduced risk of catastrophic fires.

### ***Healthy Forest Production Tax Credit Legislation Summary***

SB1177/ HB2247 establish the Healthy Forest Production Tax Credit that would be available to forest product industry processing timber into commercially marketable materials. The new tax credit is a

\$10,000 income tax credit for the first 20,000 tons of processed qualified forest products, and \$5,000 for each additional 10,000 tons processed. The tax credit is capped at \$500,000 per individual taxpayer, with an overall program cap of \$2 million per year. The new tax credit begins in 2022 and expires in 10 years. The bill requires industry to be certified and meet the requirements under the Arizona Commerce Authority Healthy Forest Enterprise Incentive program. The tax credit would provide an incentive to industry to increase their capacity and invest in additional forest processing infrastructure.

The bill is currently moving through the Arizona legislative process. Hearings on the bill have been held in both the Arizona House of Representatives and the Arizona Senate. The bill has strong bipartisan legislative and stakeholder support and is likely to be part of ongoing state budget discussions. SRP is committed to keeping the 4FRI stakeholders updated on the progress of the bill. ■

— *For more information, please contact Elvy Barton with SRP at [Elvy.Barton@srpnet.com](mailto:Elvy.Barton@srpnet.com) or at (602) 236-5104.*

## Virtual seminar brings together hundreds of forest industry experts

A critical barrier to achieving forest restoration goals in the Southwest is a lack of capacity in the forest products industry. Expanding opportunities in the industry sector allows for an increase in acres restored, which improves forest health and reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

On March 2 and 3, 2021, the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) Wood Utilization Team hosted a [virtual seminar](#) on the theme of expanding the forest industry in the southwestern US. More than 300 people from across the US and internationally registered for the event. The participants included federal and state agency employees, academics, forestry contractors, and forest products business employees. The webinar was an open forum for attendees to share innovative ideas, strategies, and best management practices to expand forest industry capacities.

The keynote sessions included discussions on the past, present, and future of the forest products

industry in the western US, especially economic development opportunities for forest businesses in the Southwest. Four different panels, each consisting of three speakers, touched on topics including steep slope logging, innovative ideas in forest products, business assistance and financing to forest enterprises, and success stories of forest business operations. A unique component of the webinar was virtual field trips, where pre-recorded videos allowed the audience to view several active harvesting operations, wood products processing facilities and biomass energy conversion technologies.

In addition to successful business-to-business connections, some of the tangible outcomes from the event are video recordings and presentation documents, which are posted on the event's [website](#). This was the first in a series of events by the SWERI Wood Utilization Team. The next seminar or workshop will be hosted in fall 2021. ■

## Good Earth Power AZ acquires industrial facility for new sawmill plant near Flagstaff

Good Earth Power AZ and its operating entity, NewLife Forest Products, Arizona's leading forest products company, has acquired a large-scale industrial manufacturing facility located at 14005 West Old Highway 66 in Bellemont, Ariz. near Flagstaff to bolster the regional industry's efforts to reduce the incidence of catastrophic wildfires.

The 425,000-square-foot facility will house a new high-production sawmill on a 35-acre property and plans to employ approximately 200 people from the local area including Flagstaff and Williams. The property was originally built in 1996 as a tissue paper manufacturing facility and owned by global manufacturer Essity AB. Operations of the Bellemont sawmill facility began in late March.

The new facility will produce 120 million board feet per year of lumber in addition to engineered wood products, substantially increasing the regional log processing capacity necessary to restore the health of 2.4 million acres of Arizona forest land in collaboration with the US Forest Service under the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI).

The forests of Arizona are overgrown with upwards of 20 times more wood fiber per acre than normal. The resulting conditions have led to catastrophic wildfires in the state, including two devastating fires in recent years that each destroyed a half million acres. 4FRI is an initiative by which the Forest Service and local stakeholders seek to restore Arizona's forest to a more healthy and natural state, thereby reducing wildfire risk. Good Earth Power AZ is managing the Phase 1 4FRI contract with the Forest Service.

"This facility allows us to leapfrog in our scale as a company and as a vital local industry," said NewLife Forest Products CEO Ted Dergousof. "We have invested millions of dollars to retool the existing plant which will allow us to work with our partners to process the mixed inventory of diameter trees and log sizes that the forest gives us. The Bellemont sawmill will play a key role for keeping Coconino County protected from a catastrophic wildfire event."



*Front exterior of the 425,000-square-foot Bellemont facility. Photo courtesy of Good Earth Power AZ*

The sawmill will run multiple lines for processing timber, capable of handling any size logs efficiently and will produce a wide range of products ranging from lumber to engineered wood products and bagged residuals. The new facility will also allow NewLife to process profitably smaller fiber and ramp up to forest thinning and harvesting 30,000 acres per year.

"This facility helps Good Earth Power AZ to deliver on its vision for a sustainable model for forest management, without government subsidy," said Jason Rosamond, Chairman and Founder of NewLife Forest Products.

The Bellemont facility will house the sawmill, planer mill, kilns and engineered wood product lines with space allowing for storage and movement of high-value products. Good Earth Power AZ will build a rail spur, allowing the high-value products to be distributed cost effectively throughout North America and the world.

Good Earth Power AZ has formed a consortium of local partners across Arizona to help build out the regional forest products industry. This consortium includes TriStar Logging and Novo Star Wood Products in preparation for expanding the scope of the forest restoration efforts under Phase 2 of 4FRI.

"Arizona's loggers have a rich history of taking care of our forests," said Allen Reidhead of Tristar Logging, "and we are united in working together with NewLife Forest Products to get the job done." ■

*— Article adapted from a March 8, 2021 NewLife Forest Products, LLC press release*