

# THE LOOKOUT

## Four Forest Restoration Initiative



*Stakeholder Newsletter / Summer 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](#), [Amy Waltz](#), [Travis Woolley](#)

Stakeholder Engagement Working Group  
[Melanie Colavito](#)

### **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.

### **East Verde River stream improvement project**

Stream improvement projects are a critical tool to enhance watersheds throughout the 4FRI footprint. Recently, four stream improvement structures were installed on the Upper East Verde River. The work was planned and supervised by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), the US Forest Service–Tonto National Forest, and Natural Channel Design.

Volunteers from Mogollon Sporting Association, Payson Flycasters Club/Gila Trout Chapter of Trout Unlimited (PFC/GTTU), Zane Grey Chapter of Trout Unlimited in the Phoenix metro area, and Old Pueblo Chapter of Trout Unlimited in Tucson participated in the project. This effort was the culmination of a four-site plan that also resulted in improvements at Flowing Springs, 2nd Crossing, and 3rd Crossing farther downstream on the East Verde River.


The Flowing Springs project focused on bank stabilization to help with erosion control and safer stream access. The 2nd and 3rd Crossings improvements included the installation of log and rock barbs angled upstream to protect against bank erosion, and to narrow and deepen the stream, and provide cover for trout. Pools were created at both sites through strategic boulder placement and bank stabilization. These structures provide needed cover for trout and are a great place for anglers.

The Upper East Verde River phase of the East Verde River project improved conditions for wild rainbow trout. A 200-foot section of the creek near a pull-out on the way to Washington Park had eroded down to a smooth rock ledge and provided no cover for trout. Structures were built to create attractive pools for trout, and also to catch sediment, gravel, and cobble during high flows, creating habitat for aquatic insects for trout to eat.

For this project, volunteers dragged previously cut logs into the creek where they were bolted and cabled into the rock shelf in four chevrons spaced throughout the targeted section of the creek. Rocks and leaf debris were added to fill in the spaces, followed by more rocks to lock everything in place.

The results were amazing. Where once a couple inches of water flowed over a bare rock ledge, by the end of the day, there were three new pools each a foot or more in depth, and a greatly improved fourth pool immediately upstream of the first chevron. That increase in depth and eventual access to imported substrate delivered from farther upstream to this targeted section was a huge improvement on a small stream. The work provided immediate cover for fish, and created conditions that will benefit the creek and its inhabitants for years to come.

*(Continued on p. 2)*



There is more work planned by the AZGFD, Forest Service, Natural Channel Design, and Trout Unlimited on Dude Creek and Chase Creek, which are designated as recovery streams for the threatened Gila trout historically found in many of the streams in the 4FRI footprint.

These projects are being implemented to mediate head-cut erosion issues as well as provide more consistent flow for longer stretches of the creek. This will allow greater movement for the protected trout, and like the Upper East Verde project, will be dependent on hand labor due to their remote locations.

Stream improvements are a critical tool in creating healthy watersheds. Hopefully you can check out these improvements on the East Verde River. ■

– Jim Strogen, President, Gila Trout Chapter–Trout Unlimited and member, Arizona Council Trout Unlimited



Volunteers from various organizations provided the muscle to improve stream conditions on the Upper East Verde River. Photo by Jim Strogen

## Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program: 10-year report on lessons learned

The US Forest Service Washington Office released a report on lessons learned over the first 10 years of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). As one of the first national efforts to fund collaborative restoration at the landscape scale, the successes and challenges of the program provide insights that can inform restoration and shared stewardship efforts across the country.

The [report](#) summarizes key lessons for six major themes: the restoration of priority landscapes, wildfire risk reduction, community socio-economic benefits, science-based restoration and multi-party monitoring, the collaborative approach, and leveraging resources. The report also

identifies next steps and opportunities for further learning, including potential CFLRP program improvements that can be found in the “Next Steps” sections of the report.

Forest Service program experts and CFLRP partners worked throughout 2020 to share and compile the key questions and lessons learned at the 10-year mark of the program. This work includes the contributions of several 4FRI Forest Service staff and 4FRI stakeholders.

For more information on the 10-year CFLRP report, or to access the wealth of publications, webinars, outreach materials, success stories, and other resources associated with the CFLRP, visit the Forest Service CFLRP resource library [here](#). ■

## UPDATE: 4FRI Phase 2 Request for Proposals

The US Forest Service has concluded initial discussions with offerors in the competitive range. Although this is an important milestone, the Forest Service will give full consideration to the results of the evaluation process. Therefore, it is not likely that there will be additional significant announcements until mid-September 2021. And, even though this does not necessarily mean a decision on the award will be made at that time, the Forest Service will continue to provide updates.

While a decision date cannot be forecasted at this time, the agency continues in the evaluation phase and is working toward that decision. We appreciate our partners, stakeholders, elected officials, and the public who have continued to be supportive and patient, and we have confidence in the experienced and dedicated staff working on this project. ■

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



## COCOWildfire.org provides timely wildfire information for Coconino County

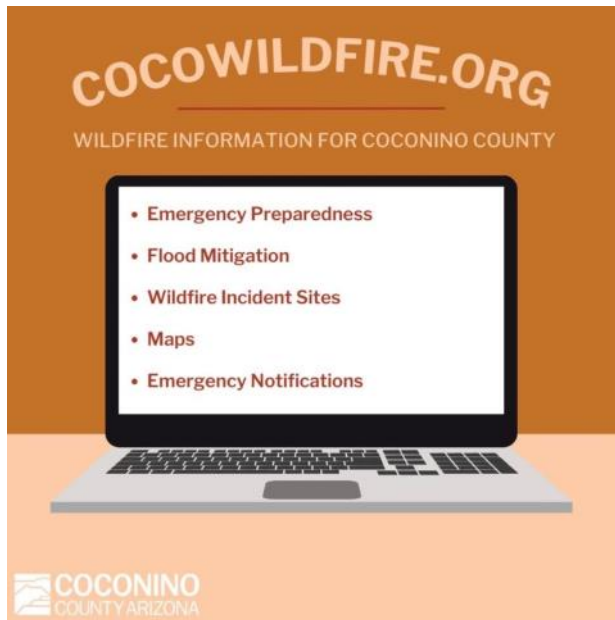
The Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership (GFFP), working closely with Coconino County and other GFFP partners, recently completed a new website, [COCOWildfire.org](http://COCOWildfire.org), that conveys wildfire information for locations across the county. The purpose of this website is to provide centralized information so that Coconino County residents and visitors can make informed decisions regarding their actions when out-of-control wildfires occur near or within their communities.

[COCOWildfire.org](http://COCOWildfire.org) contains a brief description and associated links to maintained and moni-

tored websites and social media platforms that provide reliable information for emergency wildfire events. The homepage highlights county, state, and national wildfire incident sites, and it includes links to land management agencies and relevant maps. The subpages on the site cover five broad areas: 1) Emergency Preparedness and Notifications, 2) Flood Potential and Mitigation, 3) Other Wildfire Incident Sites, 4) Smoke is in the Air, and 5) Feeds. The feeds page includes Twitter and Facebook posts from Coconino County, City of Flagstaff, and various land management agencies. The resources included on the site provide a wealth of information like how to sign up for emergency notifications, understanding the stages of Ready Set Go, ADEQ's smoke forecasting, Arizona Region's American Red Cross, and Flagstaff Equine Emergency Response Network.

This website is an important step in assuring that citizen living in the county are prepared for an emergency wildfire situation, and they can find the information needed to make informed decisions. GFFP encourages other organizations to promote this website and to create a direct link on your entity's website.

Listen [here](#) for a recent KAFF Morning Café interview with GFFP Board members, Jay Smith and Andrew Sánchez Meador, who talk about the value of [COCOWildfire.org](http://COCOWildfire.org). ■



## Upcoming seminar: “Innovations in Forest Operations and Biomass Utilization in the Southwest”

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) Wood Utilization Team is excited to announce an upcoming in-person seminar, “Innovations in Forest Operations and Biomass Utilization in the Southwest.” The event will take place **November 17–18** at the Hotel Andaluz in downtown Albuquerque, New Mexico. Over 20 presentations will cover topics including value-added products from small-diameter wood, innovations in forest operations, railroad transportation of forest products, US Forest Service and state agency timber contracting, and issues facing Southwest forestry contractors.



Additionally, there will be two virtual workshops in November: an 8-hour short course on kiln-drying lumber, and a 2-hour workshop on grants and economic assistance for the forest industry in the Southwest. More information on these events can be found [here](#). We hope to see you in November! ■

## Salt River Project donation program

Do you enjoy fishing, hunting, hiking, and camping in the forests in Rim Country? Did you know that much of the water that you use in and around your home originates in those same Rim Country forests? What would happen to those recreational opportunities and the water supply to the Valley if there was a catastrophic forest fire in Rim Country?

Payson and surrounding communities live with the reality that their homes and businesses are a careless campfire away from destruction. Many Arizona residents who come to Rim Country to enjoy the forests, or are unaware where the water in their homes comes from, don't understand the dire conditions of the forests in Rim Country. Nor do they realize how it will impact their lives for years to come if these forests are not protected against devastating wildfires.

The forests surrounding the C.C. Cragin Reservoir are particularly critical to the water supply for Payson and surrounding communities, as well as being the source for a portion of the water used by Valley residents. This watershed is heavily forested. The tree density is estimated to be 1,000 trees per acre rather than the desired 100 trees per acre. The density of these smaller trees and the accumulated forest debris pose the greatest risks to forests in the West. These are the conditions that led to the deadly and destructive fires around Paradise, California and are a real threat to Rim Country here in Arizona.

Thinning small trees is an expensive proposition. While the US Forest Service does not have difficulty selling rights to harvest larger trees, they have struggled to find contractors willing to clear the forest of the smaller trees and the limbing and debarking by-product of timber operations.

The Salt River Project (SRP), one of Arizona's largest utility companies, has a vested interest in protecting the forest around the C.C. Cragin Reservoir, as that watershed is critical for supplying water to state residents. SRP has created a voluntary program that allows customers to donate \$3 per month toward efforts to strategically thin the forest in this critical watershed. They intend to match those donations up to \$200,000 each year.

There are approximately 37,000 acres in the Cragin watershed in need of strategic thinning. These thinning costs sometimes range from \$1,000-\$1,500 per acre depending on various forest conditions and clean-up needs.



*Top photo: Dense forest, 1,000 trees per acre.  
Bottom photo: Thinned forest, 100 trees per acre.*

Past fires in California and Arizona have taught us that, in addition to the tragic loss of life often associated with these fires, the investment in prevention is a fraction of the cost of fighting the fires, restoration efforts, and rebuilding homes and business lost to the fires.

You can help protect the forest, Rim Country recreation opportunities and communities, as well ensure adequate, safe drinking water for Rim Country and Valley homes by making contributions to this effort via SRP's watershed management [page](#). ■

### **Learn more:**

- [The Collaborative Road to Restoring Arizona's Forests](#)
- [Fire and Water: Restoring Arizona's Forests](#)
- [Payson Roundup - SRP Announces Fund](#)

*This article was written by Jim Stroger for Payson Fly Casters/Gila Trout TU and shared in the April 2021 newsletters of Desert Fly Casters Club and Zane Grey Trout Unlimited Chapters to inform Valley SRP users about an opportunity to help make a difference in Rim Country and improve watershed health.*