



4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 28, 2021, 9 am – Noon
ZOOM Audio Meeting

MEETING WAS RECORDED

In attendance: Laura Jo West, Randall Walker, Greg Smith, Melanie Colavito, Bob Seidler, Joe Miller, Eli Jensen, Brad Worsley, Mark Christiano, Tom Mackin, Rob Nelson, Ariel Leonard, Drew Leiendecker, Jeremy Kruger, Evan Hjerpe, Ian Fox, Steve Reiter, Marcos Roybal, Steve Rosenstock, Tim Short, Alexander Spannuth, Andi Rogers, Bryce Esch, Anne Mottek, Jay Smith, Judy Palmer, Patrick Moore, Pascal Berlioux, Rob Nelson, Tabi Bolton, Todd Schulke, Travis Wooley, Mark Nigrelli, Chris Jenks, Tracey Bazelman, Kevin Reidhead, John Souther, Elvy Barton, Cerissa Hoglander, Adam Cooley, Alicyn Gitlin, Art Babbott, Kara Kirkpatrick-Kreitingner, Keith Watkins, Robbin Bundrock, Jake Nuttall, Patrick Moore, John Godfrey, Patrice Horstman, Ericka Luna, Tom Torres, Michele Ralston, Brienne Pettit, Mark Brehl, Mike Torres, Paul Chapman, Alex Seung, Richard Gonzalez, Shaula Hedwall, John Godfrey, Evan Lautzenheiser, Randy Fuller, Tom Holl, and Carol Covington taking minutes.

Approve minutes from the May 26, 2021 Stakeholder Group meeting (June meeting was cancelled) —
Approved as presented.

Review action items from the May 26, 2021 Stakeholder Group meeting — Melanie Colavito

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Small group develops draft letter to Forest Service re Kaibab National Forest	Amy Waltz	Effort concluded without consensus
2. Draft letter vetted through the Steering Committee at June meeting	Anne Mottek	NA
3. Draft letter posted to Basecamp for review and approval by Stakeholder Group	Melanie Colavito	NA
4. Finalize letter signed by co-chairs (Anne and Melanie) send to Kaibab National Forest leadership and copied to Stakeholder Group. Target date mid-June.	Melanie Colavito, Anne Mottek	NA
5. N Kaibab projects update at Stakeholder Group meeting June 23	Mike Hanneman	Agenda item below
6. Schedule early August Burnt Corral field trip	Mike Hanneman	Complete – Aug 17
7. Expanded RFP update from Forest Service – schedule for July SHG	Jeremy Kruger	Ongoing

Call to the Public – Melanie Colavito

USFS Update – Jeremy Kruger

- RFP update – Jeremy Kruger noted that work continues on analysis but the review is unprecedented in nature and is taking longer than expected. A question was posed about the validity of proposals that were set to expire July 31. Industry representatives noted that their businesses are on hold until a determination is made. Jeremy offered that he is authorized to only share that there is no

projected date for the award, however he will pass along these questions. It was suggested that the contract officer or Elaine Korman be on the next call to address questions about the RFP. Jeremy indicated that he would look into this.

- Robbin Bundrock is retiring and offered words of thanks for the partnership and assistance of the 4FRI Stakeholder group and colleagues at the Forest Service. Special thanks to Amy Waltz, Joe Trudeau, Steve Rosenstock, Joe Miller for their work in the Environmental Impact Statement working group.
- Monitoring Update – John Souther offered a brief summary of monitoring work and indicated that additional information will be included in the Working Group update.
- Rim Country FEIS update – Robbin Bundrock provided a brief summary of the status of the FEIS, which may not be completed quite by the target date of early August. Most of the responses are completed with minor updates anticipated to the appendices.

Burnt Corral Project – [Presentation from Forest Service \(1 hour\)](#) – Tim Short, Acting Kaibab Forest Supervisor, and Randall Walker N Kaibab District Ranger

- How did we get here; how do we move forward
- Describe Burnt Corral and surrounding area
- Why did we pick this area (why here, why now)?
- Planning process
- Large/ old tree retention
- Using LiDAR and other tools
- Opportunities for collaborative implementation
- Discuss August field trip

Tim Short provided a brief introduction and turned the presentation over to Randall Walker. He reiterated the mission of the forest service. He stated that he would like to build a bridge across a grand chasm between some of us, and to discuss future collaborations including the August 17 field trip. May 18 Field trip recap – At that time there was agreement to work to find ways to preserve old trees within the Jacob Ryan site. He listed some strategies that can be used to modify existing contracts. Mangum Fire Project Update – Work is being conducted to assess regeneration strategies of the burned area. Burnt Corral – An overview of the management actions proposed as part of the Burnt Corral Vegetative Management Plan was reviewed. He went into detail about planning for large/old growth tree retention. He outlined a number of management challenges including natural fire, crown fire, and drought related mortality. He reviewed important steps to a successful path forward. Possible Field Trip Stops – He outlined some possible stops for the August 17 field trips and acknowledged the need to trim the list down to a manageable tour.

Todd Schulke: The FS has decided the >20" volume hazard tree volume swap for old trees on Jacob Ryan is off the table. They have proposed using a clause in the CFR's that allows changing contracts by the volume of a 5-acre clear-cut on each contract if the contractor agrees. They want to limit use of this mechanism to trees >24" rather than >20" because they believe removing the 20-24" trees won't allow them to meet the JR objectives. This will be controversial both for JR but even more so moving forward into Burnt Corral. This approach will still mean logging of 28% of trees >24" (324 trees) and 100% of the tree 21-23" trees (1865 trees) totaling 2189 trees >20" (72%) that will still be logged. Numbers are all approximate due to lack of actual on-the-ground data. The "desired future conditions" don't fit with the reference information. There are always opportunities to use forest plan amendments to accomplish objectives. It's been common in recent projects. We do agree with the NK that exact 4FRI prescriptions might not be applicable to the NK Plateau. Science shows there should be many more large, old trees up there along with higher basal areas. That Fire Point photo is misleading. Most of the area has withstood many fires and are dominated by large numbers of large trees. This is true on Powell Plateau as well. We need to look at these places on the ground so everyone gets the real picture. Collaboration is only useful if it's working for all parties. It's not something we do for fun. If the outcomes aren't acceptable then not only did the collaboration fail, one could make the argument that it wasn't truly collaboration in the first place.

Allison Gitlin: I disagree that the proposal was the same as what the collaborative effort agreed on. Even Tom Sisk with LCI who was contracted to lead the collaborative effort wrote in his comments: "While the language and intent of the proposed project is very similar to our 2015 report, several seemingly minor changes to the Proposed Action, and related content of the EA, raise concern because they seem to increase discretion on the part of the agency regarding harvest of large trees, despite detailed deliberation and analysis highlighting the contentious nature of this issue and the need for transparency and continued public dialog as planning moved forward." These "minor changes" included a proposal for commercial thinning in old growth "to offset the costs of small tree thinning" and other similar loopholes. It does not make sense to kill off old growth to create "replacement stands." The collaborative supported the Kaibab Forest Health Focus wording that "'Ponderosa pine forest restoration in northern Arizona should be designed to retain and restore old-growth trees.'" We also wanted adoption of the 4FRI OGLTRS and that did not happen. In addition to the commercial thinning I mentioned above, their loopholes include: removing trees that don't have "desired or healthier genetic traits" or "desirable phenotypic and genotypic traits, especially straight boles, fine or small limbs, and disease-free," the patch cuts mentioned, and fuel breaks of undefined size along unspecified roads.

Randall Walker: Their desire is to protect the forest from fire and insects. At the current density, there is increased risk. Tim Short added that the comments raised need further discussion in a collaborative forum. He is concerned about the perception of "loopholes".

Pascal Berlioux:

1. The North Kaibab District is different. We all agree that 4FRI treatments adapted to the Tonto NF or even the Coconino NF are not necessarily directly applicable.
2. Thank you KNF and R3 for the effort to retain 24"+ trees. This is noted and appreciated and it is yielding positive results.
3. Thank you KNF and R3 for the collaborative effort. There is a process on-going, it is yielding some results, although not as much and not as fast as some would like, but it is worth pursuing.
4. In addition to the biological perspective and the scientific perspective, from a public policy perspective, a perspective definitely not included in the NEPA, although it should be because it is part of the human environment, the fundamental question that seems regularly ignored remains "is the juice worth the squeeze?" Is the objective the Kaibab National Forest is pursuing on the ground on a couple thousand acres worth compromising the social consensus/agreement in Northern Arizona that supports 4FRI1, Rim Country, CC Cragin, Black River, etc.? This, especially in a situation where there seems to be very little support from the science perspective for the logging of old growth as a means to restore, or in the case of the North Rim maintain, crown fire risks mitigation. It seems that the silviculture objective should take second place to the other perspectives, especially in a place where there is plenty of non-controversial volume to support local industry without social or collaborative risk.

Steve Rosenstock: On behalf of Grand Canyon Trust, concur with Pascal's comments. The notion that in order to protect the forest old growth, trees need to be cut is a hard sell.

Travis Wooley: Just to add, the Nature Conservancy analysis also included determination of preponderance of large trees. I'll agree with Todd, specifically in terms of what the forest plan says about old and large trees and what the literature (as presented here) says. Plan Amendments could at least clarify intent of language and its relation to reference conditions.

Joe Miller: concur with what Steve and Pascal just said.

Co-Chair Rotation 2022 — Melanie Colavito asked all stakeholders to consider their willingness and availability to serve in the co-chair rotation. Please contact Melanie with any interest.

Industry Updates

Kevin Reidhead Tri Star, noted that they have come out of bankruptcy reorganization and are ready for the next 30 years.

Adam Cooley New Life, reported that they are working on several sites currently. Fires and weather have been a challenge, but they continue. Heber saw mill is running hand to mouth. Working with Tri Star to process lumber. Williams sawmill was struck by lightning but is back up and running. Bellemont site has an air quality permit in the works, and opening is on track.

Brad Worsley Novo Power, they have high inventory and weather and fire have not disrupted the flow of wood. The delays with the RFP are detrimental to the industry. He asked if the Forest Service could confirm that they will not be able to decide by July 31. Jeremy Kruger indicated that he has no information to offer. Industry needs predictability.

Paul Chapman commented that taking more than a year to review proposals is illustrative of a failure on the part of the Forest Service. He suggested that industry may question the wisdom of doing business with the Forest Service if they have a history of missing deadlines, and seeming to drag their heels.

Tabi Bolton – added that there is a lot of uncertainty in the industry generated by the RFP ambiguity. He offered a brief update and requested that USFS be in better communication about forest closures and openings.

Working Group Updates

- Final Environmental Impact Statement WG – Steve Rosenstock indicated that there is no formal update. He asked Jeremy Kruger about the possibility of release of info before the official release. Jeremy indicated that there is no plan for early release.
- Industry/Biomass WG – Pascal Berlioux confirmed that they are still planning an annual industry roundtable once the RFP decision is announced.
- Communication WG – Melanie Colavito reported that the newsletter is in production and will be shared at the August meeting.
- Multi-Party Monitoring Board WG – John Souther reported on a list of projects that are being monitored and are progressing as anticipated. They are hopeful they can put together a visual tool to track monitoring efforts and will share with the Stakeholder Group when available.
- Stakeholder Engagement WG - Melanie Colavito and Steve Rosenstock reported that the group has been working on putting out an interactive survey. That activity is still in development and pushed back to make way for more pressing discussions.
- Comprehensive Implementation WG – Cerissa Hoglander reported on riparian restoration work underway.

Stakeholder Disclosures – All

Travis Wooley, The Nature Conservancy, was appointed as a region 2 Director to the AZ Wildlife Federation. This will be a volunteer position in addition to his position with the Nature Conservancy.

Steve Rosenstock, Grand Canyon Trust– reported that he is retiring from The Grand Canyon Trust.

Tabi Bolton has been nominated to serve on the Board for the Coconino County Natural Resource Conservation District and awaits final approval.

Review Action Items

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Request Elaine Kohrman or Loren Ebner from USFS to attend the next SHG meeting to address RFP questions.	Jeremy Kruger	
2. All of SHG to review questions posed in Forest Service powerpoint regarding purpose of the	Entire Stakeholder Group - Melanie	

	Aug 17 field trip, and potential sites to visit. Offer comments to the Forest Service.	Colavito to gather comments and relay	
3.	SHG members volunteer to be a part of co-chair rotation. Contact Melanie Colavito.	Melanie Colavito	
4.	RSVP for Burnt Corral field trip sent to whom?	Melanie Colavito will clarify and post on BaseCamp	

Adjourn – 11:30 am

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

- Zoom - 8/25/2021, 9/22/2021, 12/17/2021
- Coconino NF Supervisor's office - 10/27/2021

	2021	
	Hot Chair	Cold Chair
January	Jay Smith	A Mottek
February	Jay Smith	A Mottek
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