



4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting

Agenda

Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 9 am – Noon

ZOOM Audio Meeting

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

MEETING WAS RECORDED

In attendance: Jeremy Kruger, John Pelak, Eli Jensen, John Souther, Steve Rosenstock, Bob Seidler, Devon Suarez, Rob Nelson, Adrian Skabelund, Patrick Moore, Jason Whiting, Melanie Colavito, Mark Nigrelli, Anne Mottek, Skyler Dyer, Kara Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger, Adam Cooley, Neil Chapman, Randy Fuller, Justin Schofer, Greg Smith, Adam Livermore, Ethan Aumack, Cerissa Hoglander, Judy Palmer, Michele Ralston, Steve Reiter, Ian Fox, Kenna Belsky, Brandon Loomis, Tabi Bolton, Brad Worsley, Evan Lautzenheiser, Tracy Bazelman, Tami Conner, Matt McGrath, Jay Smith, Art Babbott, Katherine Sanchez Meador, Rochelle Lacapa, Marcos Roybal, Keith Brekhus, Heather Provencio, Michelle Paduani, Elaine Kohrman, Amy Waltz, Alicyn Gitlin, Keith Watkins, George Stedeford, Erika Luna, Joe Trudeau, Patrice Horstman, Elvy Barton, Wendy Jo Haskins, Paul Chapman, and Carol Covington taking minutes.

Approve minutes from the August 25, 2021 Stakeholder Group meeting — Approved as presented.

Review action items from the August 25, 2021 Stakeholder Group meeting — Pascal Berlioux

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Innovations in fire management briefing – SHG agenda item for fall	Jeremy Kruger	Schedule for October
2. Burnt Corral field trip rescheduled – convey information	Melanie Colavito	See agenda item below

Call to the Public – None

USFS updates (other than RFP) – Jeremy Kruger announced that this would be his last Stakeholder Group meeting and offered thanks for the rich experience working with 4FRI. He and his family will be moving to New Mexico for a new job. Tami Conner will be transitioning into his role and will be spearheading the effort to move the RFP forward.

- **Rim Country FEIS** - Kenna Belsky reported on the status of updates and feedback. This effort is nearing completion with an anticipated release date of December.
- **Monitoring** – John Souther reported that there has been movement out of training-focused missions and on to more active drone utilization.
- **Burnt Corral/Jacob Ryan Update** – Heather Provencio reported that the increasing Covid numbers going up necessitated the delay of the field trip. Tentatively this is pushed to October/November timeline. They are not racing forward on a decision on Burnt Corral, rather, are very interested in hearing concerns and ideas from this group as they craft a strategy. Regarding Jacob Ryan, they are crafting a summary of changes that have been made. Ian Fox interjected that they looked closely at

the awarded active contracts, looked at areas that might be adjusted, worked with Washington office, and were counseled not to adjust the contracts, but to work with contractors to make changes. Six of eight contracts have been modified with contractor collaboration.

Follow-up on RFP Announcement:

1. Jeremy Kruger underscored acknowledgement of the work done thus far, expressing gratitude to everyone who has committed so much time to this effort. Pascal asked for clarification about whether the next step is an RFP or something else. Jeremy explained that a new proposal is the goal but there is not an RFP in mind at this time. Elaine Kohrman explained that the cancellation of the RFP does not mean they are cancelling work on the RFP. They are actively working on a revision as an option. They will make changes to the design to meet the intent of the restoration objectives. Requirement is a term used in procurement but can be confusing. It means what is the end state we are working towards; do we have the right set of acres; do we have the right sites identified; does it meet industry needs; does it meet biomass removal goals; does road maintenance meet the needs of offerors. She explained that some of the concerns they are addressing include; economic price adjustment – projecting financial ramifications 20 years out; cancellation ceiling (maximum cancellation charge that the contractor can receive in the event of contract cancellation) is not optional. She noted that the last RFP was designed in a black box without adequate industry input and input from stakeholders. They realize that this approach was a mistake and are now seeking broad input from all stakeholders to help design a solution the meets the needs of all.

Pascal Berlioux invited everyone to participate in the feedback session and reminded all to maintain a professional decorum.

2. **4FRI Industry Workgroup and Stakeholder feedback** – Brad Worsley and Adam Cooley announced that they are organizing an Industry Roundtable for October 12, 10-2 in Holbrook County offices. A working lunch will be part of the event. They will have a zoom option. The Forest Service will participate. Adam Cooley indicated that they would put together an agenda and encouraged participation. They underscored that this meeting is intended to identify industry bottlenecks. They hope to reignite collaboration between industry and the Forest Service.

Pascal Berlioux suggested opening the meeting up to a wide audience. Brad Worsley offered that all are welcome, but the focus of the meeting is on industry needs. Discussion ensued about the possible size of the gathering and Covid restrictions mandated by the Federal Government. He suggested assembly of an organizing committee consisting of past, present, future 4FRI co-chairs as well as Forest Service representation. Adam Cooley noted that discussion at this Roundtable would be focused in part, on the five key points offered by the Forest Service:

- o Economic Price Adjustment requirements;
- o Acreage and volume of material to be offered;
- o Biomass treatment requirements;
- o Road maintenance requirements; and
- o Cancellation ceiling.

Brad Worsley added that consideration of how to move industry forward without execution of the RFP is also intended to be a part of the discussion. How can existing resources be leveraged to benefit industry and forest restoration efforts.

Ethan Aumack offered thanks to Federal and non-Federal evaluation team and bidders for the time and effort committed to the RFP. He revealed that he was shocked and dismayed to learn of the cancellation

of the contract. Landscape scale collaborative planning work remains to be done, that can and will translate into restoration many important places across the Mogollon Rim, we have a lot of critical work left to do. It is important to ensure that the ongoing restoration work is ecologically based that the rare old growth that remains is protected across the region. And importantly, that existing industry, especially that which has proven itself, year after year on the east side as a path forward he considers all that to be critical work. He believes it is absolutely critical that we take stock of whether we can meet our original goals established more than a decade ago for 4FRI. One of the critical goals was to accelerate mechanical thinning treatments to 50,000 acres per year over 20 years working with industry partners. He suggested that the cancellation of the most recent RFP combined with the fact that less than 5% of the first contract has been completed, with 9 of the 10 years of the contract passed. There is not enough capacity to address the goals. He suggested that it is clear how far we are from being able to meet the mechanical thinning goals. The Forest Service should lay out with crystal clarity an operationally viable path forward identifying what challenges must be overcome, and how the collaborative can help with overcoming those.

Joe Trudeau indicated that Ethan Aumak's remarks captured very well his sentiments. He noted that the CBD had proposed in 2018 an alternative much like what Ethan suggested. Strategic Treatments for Fire Use Alternative. He suggested that given the limited capacity for mechanical thinning, perhaps a renewed look should be given to the use of prescribed fire. We should not proceed with the same assumptions that have over the past 10-15 years proven to be unattainable.

Travis Wooley echoed his disappointment at the cancellation of the RFP. He reminded the group that Brett Curry had announced at the last meeting that treatment has reached about 20,000 acres/year for the first time, so there is some recognition of this success. He supported an Industry focused meeting. He suggested that all approaches should be on the table, with prioritization at the top of the list.

Amy Waltz spoke to the coordination of industry needs and restoration needs. She expressed gratitude for the spirit of openness, transparency, and inclusion. What is realistic timing that works with industry as well as landscape strategy. She wondered if the original RFP strategy still applies. She asserted that this is the right time for collaboration, pulling different strategies that have been used in different silos together for assessment.

Brad Worsley offered that his perception is that the work of industry has been disrespected. What we have been doing isn't working. He expressed concern about increasing prescribed burns which result in increased particulate matter in the air and the impact on climate change. He noted that the biomass power station can burn 15,000 acres of biomass each year while controlling critical emissions.

Jay Smith expressed concern about comments endorsing more fire. He indicated that controlled burns and thinning in advance is helpful. He underscored the need to look at treating the right acres, not just a target number. Consider downstream impacts as part of the equation. It is critical that we support industry so that they can successfully continue their important work. He expressed appreciation to industry for their attempts to make a difference on the landscape.

Steve Rosenstock added "Just a comment that I offer as an individual who has been involved in this endeavor for going on 20 years. I think Ethan and Joe hit it spot on. It's clear to me that the original aspirational goals for mechanical thinning are likely not attainable in the near term (or perhaps at all) and we must focus on the realm of the possible. Time is not on our side; Mother Nature will continue resetting the clock. I would encourage the group to be mindful of how it spends its time going forward.

I personally feel that the only viable immediate path is for the FS to step back and reincorporate the Fire Use Alternative into the Rim Country EIS.”

Adam Cooley noted that the biomass plant on the east side is supported by every industry player. Industry collaboration is important. There were a number of timber sales that were reserved for the RFP. With the cancellation of the RFP industry still needs to be able to harvest timber and there is a dearth of supply at the moment. He would like to understand what timber sales are planned for the coming years for each forest. Five-year plans for all of the forests would be appreciated.

Neil Chapman expressed doubt that the cost of overcoming the five roadblocks identified in RFP cancellation outweigh the cost of catastrophic wildfire. He suggested that we should be treating this process as a liability to be managed to reduce risk, rather than an asset to negotiate over. What financial risks are we talking about reducing for the Forest Service that doesn't already exist in our catastrophic fire that are happening on the landscape. He expressed concern is in regards how to interpret "volume per acre". Elaine Kohrman noted that it is clear to her that there is an array of assumptions that need to be clarified including defining what "volume per acre" means. Neil suggested a broader look at opportunities to expand the use of biomass. He wondered how far out of alignment bids were based on the five bullet points of concern cited by the Forest Service in the cancellation announcement. Were there too many acres, not enough, wrong acres, wrong place? If we don't know what did not work, how do we fix it? He hopes this can be a topic of conversation on Oct 12.

Brad Worsley reflected on his experience as part of the bid process that his impression was that the primary bidders were not expressing concern that there were any unsurmountable obstacles.

Adam Cooley noted that their industry facility in Bellemont is installing 2.5 miles of rail to get biomass out of the area as there is no facility in the region that can handle it.

Brad Worsley "I agree with Adam; all industry members are critical! I would emphasize that my point is that "restoration" vs "logging" is made possible because of a biomass solution and the ramping of forest restoration is highly correlated to the biomass plant being built."

Amy Waltz "Thanks for the comments. Just as an additional thought. I optimistically feel there are areas on the landscape that are available for fire management, as Ethan and Joe state. I feel we can better quantify the impacts, tradeoffs, or opportunities for industry. And, I also feel that industry is needed, to broaden those areas for fire management through treatments, that allow fire to better meet our desired conditions, in a strategic way. The industry engagement in landscape strategy development is needed to balance and even grow these opportunities for fire. I appreciate that a key "elephant" in the room is being talked about today!"

Pascal Berlioux reminded the group that the USFS announced a change to the RFP in March of this year. There was a reduction of acreage offered. He noted that the first 4FRI analysis included roughly 1 million acres. The second 4FRI analysis also includes roughly 2 million acres. The recently cancelled RFP included roughly 500,000 acres for the next 20 years. It seems that we are planning to treat only 25% of the analyzed acreage. Are we already in the construct of limited mechanical treatment and require additional prescription fire.

Travis Wooley underscored the urgency of moving forward.

3. **What are the next steps** – Pascal Berlioux summarized his understand that there is a need for a non-industry roundtable as well as an industry round table to capture concerns raised as part of this conversation. Amy Waltz suggested that the group tapped to help with the industry roundtable help design a non-industry roundtable as well. The two need to be integrated. Adam Cooley asked if this could be incorporated into a future Stakeholder meeting or if it needs to be a separate meeting. Pascal observed that he perceives that there seems to be a great deal of detail that needs to be addressed, and perhaps more than that which could be addressed at a Stakeholder meeting. Melanie Colavito added that she would be happy to participate in the planning for this and underscored the need to be reminded of the need to remain cognizant of the larger picture of forest restoration.

Travis Wooley suggested that the outcomes from the industry meeting would be important to inform the non-industry meeting. October 18 was offered as a possible date for such a meeting.

Apache-Sitgreaves Black River Forest EA – Erika Luna reported that this project is a priority for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. She reported on three new personnel who have been welcomed into the A-S Forest Service office. They anticipate completion by spring or early of 2022. She reported on some new staff for the A-S Forest Service.

Industry Updates

Adam Cooley, New Life, reported that their industry is running well. The intent is to move the Williams sawmill to the Bellemont facility once the air quality permit is finalized. Equipment is arriving for construction of the rail spur. The engineered wood products facility in Bellemont is up and running. This takes the low-grade product, chops it up, removes impurities, and reassembles at a higher grade/value. The first load was shipped last week. Pascal asked whether the cancellation of the RFP would impact the Bellemont facility. Adam confirmed that New Life is here to stay and to move forward on the forest restoration effort.

Brad Worsley, Novo Power shared that they are running exceptionally well. They are urging utilities to extend their contract to afford partners certainty that they will still be available to work with.

Tabi Bolton, Campbell Global reported that there is a serious need for more acres to be available to contractors to harvest. Contractors would prefer to have multiple years of work on the horizon, but at this time see just months given the available acres.

Heather Provencio assured the group that as they ponder ways to repackage the RFP that they are keeping industry needs in mind, specifically the release of more acres for harvest.

Working Group Updates

- Final Environmental Impact Statement WG – Amy Waltz indicated that they are looking forward to wrapping up the FEIS. Rob Nelson has offered to co-chair this group with the departure of Steve Rosenstock.
- Industry/Biomass WG – No updates
- Communication WG – No updates
- Multi-Party Monitoring Board WG – John Souther reported that they have submitted their FY22 request for funding of \$134,000 to support four projects, and \$11,000 from the Forest Service to support those related studies. They are expecting the analysis of pre-treatment data within the next two months and are excited to be able to see how treatments are affecting the forest structure vegetation understory etc.
- Stakeholder Engagement WG - Melanie Colavito, Pascal Berlioux – Melanie reported that there are

meetings scheduled soon and more detail will be forthcoming.

- Comprehensive Implementation WG – Cerissa Hoglander offered that there is an upcoming meeting where they will discuss upscaling their efforts.

Stakeholder Disclosures – None

Review Action Items

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Innovations in fire management briefing – SHG agenda item for October	Jeremy Kruger, Tami Connor	
2. Organize Industry Roundtable meeting for Oct 12. Determine zoom integration, location etc.	Brad Worsley, Adam Cooley, Neil Chapman, Pascal Berlioux, Melanie Colavito, Tami Connor	
3. Secure participants in the Pre-bid RFP meeting and Staff for AZ delegation for invitation to Industry Roundtable	Tami Connor	
4. Organize Non-Industry Roundtable meeting as separate from and following the Industry meeting. Oct 18?	Brad Worsley, Adam Cooley, Neil Chapman, Pascal Berlioux, Melanie Colavito, Tami Connor	

Adjourn – Pascal thanked all participants for a good meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:02

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

- Zoom - 10/27/2021, 11/17/2021, 1/26/2022, 2/23/2022, 3/23/2022, 4/27/2022, 5/25/2022, 6/22/2022, 7/27/2022, 8/24/2022, 9/28/2022, 10/26/2022, 11/16/2022
- Coconino NF Supervisor’s office – none until further notice

	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
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