

## **4FRI Collaborative Next Steps Meeting**

Wednesday, January 25th, 2023 - 9 AM to 3 PM Arizona Game and Fish Department Conference Room AND Virtual

### **Meeting Objectives**

- Foster shared learning across 4FRI Stakeholder Group (SHG) and the Forest Service (FS)
- Review accomplishments/challenges within the 4FRI SHG
- Determine what 4FRI SHG collaboration will look like moving forward
- Discuss and define roles and responsibilities for the 4FRI SHG in the future
- Discuss administrative next steps for the 4FRI SHG

## Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

- Melanie Colavito, 4FRI SHG Hot Chair, welcomed the group and introduced the meeting goals and objectives
- Southwest Decision Resources (SDR) introduced themselves as the third-party facilitator for the day's meeting and provided an overview of the day's agenda
- The group introduced themselves and their affiliations (see participant list at the end of this meeting summary)

# Overview, Accomplishments, and Lessons Learned

### Stakeholder Engagement Work Group Survey Summary

Melanie Colavito reviewed the results of the Stakeholder Engagement Work Group Survey. The survey was distributed via Basecamp and has a response rate of 48 respondents. See the <u>results</u> of the survey here.

## **Shared History & Strategic Goals Exercise**

The Stakeholder Group completed a shared history activity by completing a timeline of relevant events and accomplishments since 2009. The results of the timeline activity, compiled from inperson and virtual activities, can be reviewed <a href="here.">here.</a> See Appendix A also.

# **Scope of the Collaboration**

## **Forest Service Updates**





### 4FRI Team

- Chris Johansen is coming in as a new Partnership Coordinator for the 4FRI Team
- 4FRI Team is smaller than it used to be
- 24,000 acres of fuel reduction
- On track with average of 35,000 acres offered by FS per year
  - The ultimate goal is 50,000 but with the current capacity and resources, 35,000 is the current goal
  - O Up closer to 50,000 for this year, but this is because took 10,000 acres from the previous year
- A lot of funding is available
  - \$54 million dollars committed each year for five years for the FS
  - O More funding available from RFPT
  - O Funding is becoming available for expensive road and bridge work
  - 4FRI designated a National Priority Landscape (NPL) as part of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy
  - O Attending internal FS Wildfire conference to meet with other NPLs and coordinate; these are good national resources to tap into
  - Money from IIJA will end in 2026; there is a need to spend this money and act now
- Fire modeling is occurring in collaboration with Rocky Mountain Research Station

## Regional Office

- Looking for more true partnership, there may be an opportunity for people in this group to shift from stakeholders to partners
- Last year 4FRI preemptively created the 4FRI Restoration Strategy when the RFP was canceled, and this received the first pulse of funding from the Priority Landscape funding (funding through BIL and IRL)
  - There is high intensity in this region with 4 Priority Landscapes
    - Tonto-Coconino-Apache-Sitegreaves collaboration
    - Greater Prescott Project
    - Enchanted Circle
    - 4FRI
  - The outcomes of these projects will influence Congress's feelings about sustained funding. All eyes are on 4FRI and the FS needs help following through on outcomes
  - The goal of the agency is to obtain sustained funding by 2026 through delivering on outcomes





- There is a 90-day report to Congress in March need help delivering on outcomes
- Disaster recovery is happening throughout the region at the same time as focusing on restoration. We all need to partner in the restoration AND recovery of the landscapes at the same time
- Things the FS needs help with
  - Hiring
    - Staffing and hiring is an issue throughout the region and the nation
    - There are not enough people that want to do this work
    - Need to be creative about how to fill capacity needs
    - There are also hiring challenges in the private sector
  - Housing for employees
  - O New expanded agreements to expedite work
  - How to incorporate the use of prescribed fire robustly into integrated plan
  - Modernization and innovation what is the strategy, are we using tools, are they helpful
  - Expedited contracting how is that being used? what needs to be improved? how to use it?
  - Monitoring- what are we monitoring? what is the outcome of implementation?
    - Monitoring is in direct competition with staff hours for implementation
    - How do we use LIDAR and other data together?
    - Rocky Mountain Research Station is welcome to help
  - Wherever you fit please do! Please stay together as a group and work on 4FRI needs together

### **Kaibab National Forest**

- John Day is the new Timber Management Officer
- Andy Stevenson is a new Silviculturalist
- John Souther is a new Forest Planner and Monitoring Specialist
- Two new FSR to help with timber contracting
- Seven new silvicultural students coming to the Forest; the goal is to become a training Forest
- Having hiring complications; there is a need for more training
- Engineering group for Coconino and Kaibab is down to eight people
- Enterprise Team will help with future timber sales
- Completed 7,000 acres of pile burns
- Has leads for potential candidates focused on watershed capacity, looking to fill the position soon





### **Tonto National Forest**

- Commercial timber sale offerings: Two sales planned around Pine (~1,900 acres) and East end of district (~700 acres)
- Working with AZ Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) and FWRP for Pine Project
- Conducting large hazardous fuels program based around mastication in woodland type
- Has Good Neighbor Agreement with Salt River Project (SRP) and State of AZ working on 45,000 acres over 10 years, SRP providing one to one match
  - o 2,600 acres for this year planned
- '23 Greater Payson Hazardous Fuels Project- working on first 2,300 acres
- Dude Fire Project within Dude Fire scar below the rim achieved funding for Phase 1 and
   2
- Has agreements with National Forest Foundation (NFF) who is helping with Pine Canyon
   Project and Dead Man Mesa project West of Strawberry
  - O NFF also helps with a number of other projects related to watershed and trails
- AZ Game and Fish Department have been great contributors to fund archaeological studies which is a huge help
- Prescribed Fire Program haven't done a lot of work due to wet conditions
- Cultural Resource Surveys have been a hang up partner support has been really helpful
- Channel, spring, and watershed work
  - o Early stages of Dude Creek restoration
  - O Working with AZ Game and Fish Department on Hagerman

### Coconino National Forest

- New Forest Supervisor starts next week: Aaron Mayville
  - Coming from Colorado
  - O Will meet with the group soon
- New Partnership Coordinator: Katherine Sanchez Meador
  - Will be reaching out to the group soon
  - O Will put together a program of work for partnerships
- Having capacity challenges. Needing help with:
  - Archaeological studies
  - Engineering (e.g., fixing CC Cragin roads working with SRP, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and DFFM)
  - Contracting
- 10-year Good Neighbor Authority Agreement/ Memorandum of Understanding with SRP and DFFM to get acres completed
- Acres completed





- o 2200 acres with Flagstaff and Mogollon Rim
- 800 acres of pile burning, including those large ones in the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP) which went well
- Wood for Life is going well and partners have been amazing
  - Getting small diameter wood out of the forest 3000 acres
- Hired a Hydrologist Program Manager who is working on water rights for the Forest and looking for projects to implement for 4FRI- bringing the watershed component back into focus of 4FRI
- Flood mitigation and recovery work is ongoing and is a lot of work

## **Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest**

- Currently have 60 vacancies
  - Scrambling to meet capacity needs, but staff are stepping up
  - Worried about outyear planning due to vacancies
- 31 open timber contracts open
- Chipmunk sale: ~1700 acres in the next week
- On track for 2023 offerings
- Did not do as much prescribed burning due to moisture, but doing pile burns as much as possible. The Forest does not have a lot of piles currently
- Having some success in West Espedilla PJ: nearly 4,000 acres in partnership with Mule Deer Foundation and AZ Game and Fish Department with an additional 4,000 acres coming
  - o 11,000 acres cut in the past
  - O Also working with NRCS, County, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation as partners
  - Contributing to Wood for Widows Program
- Thompson Ranch/Creek is part of the Black River Restoration Project South Fork is in early development
  - O BA is in for Black River Restoration Project, working with Fish and Wildlife Service to get biological opinion
- Comment from Industry: Industry expresses a need for more wood options, especially during wet seasons. It would be ideal to have more Pinyon-Juniper acres that could be pulled when Pine is not an option
  - O Apache-Sitgreaves is working on a plan for this on the Lakeside District
  - The Mule Deer Stewardship agreement could expand to Lakeside
  - Trying to help expand for winter operations as well as improve habitats

### AZ Department of Forestry and Fire Management

Getting a new State Forester: Tom Torres





- 2022 4FRI Acres- treated 2,200 acres and planned 41,000 acres under agreement on the Tonto and Coconino National Forests
- Involved in pre-sale marking through Good Neighbor agreement marked or remarked 18,000 acres
- Planning for 23,000 acres under agreement through the Good Neighbor Authority
   Agreement is working well
  - O Partnerships with Tonto and Coconino are excellent
  - o If Apache-Sitgreaves or Kaibab have interest, bring DFMM in early
- Would like FS input on equipment required for projects they are noticing certain types
  of machines needed for FS projects (e.g., mastication) and DFMM is limited on capacity
  with those machines
- More communication from FS would be valuable

# **Getting Work Done – Existing Working Groups**

Representatives from each active Working Group, except for the Stakeholder Engagement Working Group, presented an overview and update for each Working Group. See the following documents for details:

- Prioritization and Optimization
- Multi-Party Monitoring Board
- <u>Comprehensive Implementation</u>
- Industry
- Communications

Each meeting participant was given a worksheet for each Working Group to fill out. Questions addressed and feedback provided via the worksheet included:

### • What needs to change?

- O Prioritization and Optimization
  - As the group grows, more organization may be need to keep information available and transparent
  - Stop coverting biomass to CCF. Biomass is not timber
  - Let industry prep their own acres
- O Muli-Party Monitoring Board
  - Need to determine if they are going to monitor mechanized treatments
  - Why is there no industry? Monitoring should inform operations to get the best results
  - Industry can monitor outside any sales they work





- Bring in more people
- Understanding that ecological impacts take time (funded through this year)
- Where are the people?
- Shared work across partners but contracting falls to the US Forest Service
- Comprehensive Implementation
  - Needs to grow in capacity
  - Potential need for coordinator position
  - Need industry to help ensure operational concerns are considered and sales are set up for success, not failure (where overlap with timber exists)
  - Designate Forest Service representative to expedite opeartional (decision-making chain)
  - Receive 4FRI funding
  - How to scale up
    - National Forest Foundation and NAF Foundation althought not a stakeholder, NFF is ramping up capacity in Northern Arizona and brings volunteer/crew lead staff

### Industry

- Find a model that allows industry to participate more fully
- Forest Service needs to let industry prep acres
- Being separate from the SHG
- o Communications
  - Why a WG? Fund and bring into the SHG as a position. Attend all WG meetings and report out information
  - Recruit qualified, well-spoken volunteers
  - PIOs
  - Telling good news
  - Change to 2013 Charter Re: Communications (needs 100% consensus)
- What is the WG direction/ vision moving forward?
  - Prioritization and Optimization
    - Need to get more defined direction for Forest Service regarding their needs
    - Continue to prioritize the almost overwhelming number of tasks/projects. Speaks to the old addage of "if everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority"





- Muli-Party Monitoring Board
  - Continue to monitor existing and recently implemented projects
  - Monitoring and sustainment are essential to continuous operation
  - Projects which are not monitored run the risk of "dying on the vine"
- Comprehensive Implementation
  - Put an out-year plan together for Forest Service
  - Identify Rim Country projects then prioritize
  - Seek support from local conservation organizations
  - Selling point to groups: Conservation is critical. Without it, there is no recreation and potential elimination of species
  - Capturing need to participate in Forest Service prioritized
  - Prioritized plan for non-thinning projects
  - Have 5 year pln for springs, channels at Coconino and Kaibab
  - Need A.S.

### Industry

- Need additional meetings in order to get a cohesive plan
- Continue to emphasize collaboration
- Multiple audiences influence
- Not beholden to SHG charter

#### o Communications

- Telling the story of 4FRI
- Monitoring results
- "White hat" stories of fence removal and spring restoration where is contract money for this?

## How are WGs impacting FS decisions?

- Prioritization and Optimization
  - Need to identify what mechanism the Forest Service would like to received the group's findings, recommendations, etc.
  - Small, efficient WG can help shorten the logistical and operational chain
  - Process need to determine product
  - Need to understand scale of of information district, forest, 4 forests, regional?
  - How often is the communication needed?
- Muli-Party Monitoring Board
  - At bigger scales than 4FRI





- CFLRP new projects are 2-6 million acres
- RMRS is engaged in technical support but harder for contracting
- o Comprehensive Implementation
  - Actually doing the work to plan and implement where there is no Forest Service capacity
- Industry
  - The most important WG for Forest Service decision making
  - Industry moves faster, operationally and logistically, than government
  - Not through 4FRI SHG, done individually
  - Members of this group may actively lobby both Forest Service and elected officials at State and Federal level
- Communications
  - Bigger audience than Forest Service, but need PIO/PAO help

### Meeting discussion takeaways included:

- Outcomes of Working Groups (e.g., Prioritization and Optimization) will inform FS decisions - but need the outcomes first to inform decisions
- It would be useful to understand what mechanism of relaying information from Working Groups is most useful to the FS
- From FS perspective, the current Working Groups are valuable and needed
- The monitoring group has generally received enough funding to complete projects, but more FS support and capacity is needed to move monitoring forward
- There is nuance between grants and agreements as well as contracts between the different divisions of the Forest Service (e.g., Forests vs Research Stations) which makes it a challenge for Rocky Mountain Research Station to support monitoring efforts. Additionally, monitoring is not generally conducted by research stations
- Comprehensive Implementation Working Group needs more FS support and funding
  - There is a need to scale up, especially for Rim Country. Six projects are not enough
  - There are hundreds of springs and channels that need restoration
- FS needs multi-year plans to prioritize spring/channel restoration projects across 4FRI
  - A five-year plan exists for springs and channels for the Kaibab and Coconino based on current capacity
  - There is a need to develop of the Tonto and Apache-Sitgreaves
    - This would require more FS support or "hot chair" support
    - The Working Group is submitting a letter regarding this need





- There is a need to track and accomplishments for watershed programs under the 4FRI scope
- From an Industry perspective there are opportunities to increase the scale of restoration and treatment as well as ways to optimize treatments (e.g., what wood type is most appropriate for which partner type)
- For Industry Working Group, there may be value in more regular meetings between Forestry and Industry partners. Right now the Industry partners meet relatively infrequently
  - There are frustrations from Industry partners with communication with the SHG, other Working Groups, and the FS. Work can be done to improve the communication mechanisms
- Communications Working Group is only one person, please join!
  - O Please also share any newsletter items with Tayloe Dubay
  - With more capacity and resources for the Communications Working Group, there could be lots of opportunities to collaborate with the other Working Groups and the SHG broadly
- A breakdown of FS vacancies, positions that need to be filled, and the prioritization of positions would be useful to help fill positions. Elaine and Coral will coordinate on this

# **Framing Future Collaboration and Implementation**

Considering the shift in phases for 4FRI from planning to implementation, the SHG and the FS discussed future opportunities and roles for collaboration and implementation. Discussion takeaways included:

### The Current Value/Role of the SHG

- The SHG provides an opportunity for people to learn more about what is going on with management from the FS perspective, to work with others on like minded opportunities, and to make sure that errors of the past aren't repeated
- The SHG helps keep 4FRI projects socially acceptable, adaptable, and accountable
- 4FRI wouldn't exist without stakeholders stakeholders have been fundamental to getting priority work done
- Being a platform for discussion and recommendation making to the FS
- Supports accountability and adaptive management the FS admits itself that it struggles with adaptive management
- Partners providing institutional knowledge, landscape history, history of collaboration, and more
- Championing collaborative science
- Coproduction





- Providing a singluar voice that gives more weight to opinions and recommendations
- From the FS perspective, things that have worked well:
  - Working through planning issues
  - Submitting EIS

## **Future Opportunities for SHG**

- Existing Working Groups are still relevant, but there may be opportunities to add more Working Groups and support to fill gaps and address implementation
- It is likely that new challenges and interested partners will arise as 4FRI moves into implementation; the SHG will be valuable to address challenges and engage partners
- Spending more time in the field would be valuable problem solving works well in the field
- Facilitating learning for stakeholders about implementation
- Supporting adaptive management throughout implementation
- Engaging at different levels of the Forest Service (e.g., at the District level for implementation rather than regional or Forest level)
  - Note: engaging FS at decentralized levels would require report back to central offices
- Continuing to be nimble and responsive to new needs or challenges
- Increasing representation within the SHG (e.g., East side)
  - O There are challenges with travel distances for meetings
- Providing a more clear/direct platform and process for making recommendations to the
   FS and turning consensus ideas into concrete actions
  - O Note: there are some policies that restrict recommendation making (e.g., FACA)
  - O Note: this process sometimes changes depending on changes in FS leadership
- Identifying priority areas for treatments
- Getting on the ground to see treatments and discuss with stakeholders/partners
  - Not at the "micromanage" level, but enough to see change and uphold accountability
- Joining the Comprehensive Implementation Working Group with the Optimization and Prioritization Working Group
- Funding more support for coordination for 4FRI and this group
  - E.g., coordinator for the Comprehensive Implementation Working Group
  - More FS internal support and representation for Working Groups

#### Next Steps

It was noted that this discussion needs to have a follow-up. The nuances still remain to be decided and could include decisions about:





- Tightening up efficiencies
- Review and discussion of foundational documents (e.g., Communications plan, Charter)
  - O Note: these documents may need to change to reflect new scopes
- Reviewing stakeholder lists and re-engaging some stakeholders that may be more interested in implementation discussions
- Discussion about how to improve the process and coordination
  - Coordinator position or other support for the SHG
  - Understanding relevant actors and staff of the FS at different scales for implementation processes (e.g., district level)

# What's next - Administrative steps and other strategies

Considering the discussion regarding the current and future roles/opportunities of the SHG, the group discussed next administrative steps and needs. Discussion takeaways included:

### **Facilitation or Administrative Support**

- The "Hot Seat" position to facilitate the SHG is a lot of work and there has been little internal capacity to fill this seat; some members are having to step into the role multiple times in a row which is not sustainable
- Some noted that securing external facilitation support would be valuable for:
  - Reducing the burden on SHG members to be in the "hot" or "cold seat"
    - This could help maximize brainpower and capacity from members by reducing burden
  - Acting as a neutral party during meetings
  - Providing professional facilitation skills and services for the meeting (not all "hot seat" members have these skills)
- However, others expressed some concerns with securing a facilitator including:
  - Cost: facilitator services would be more expensive than hiring a notetaker and continuing with the "hot seat"
    - Note: shared funding mechanisms or FS funding could help address cost concerns
  - Quality of facilitator: some facilitators have not been effective in the past

### Meeting Schedules

- Less meetings seem to be preferable to most it seems that a meeting every other month would be appropriate
  - O However, some note that these meetings are a valuable communication pathway. There may be a need to fill this communication gap in off months





- O If meetings shift to every other month, members expressed a desire for the FS to continue providing monthly updates
- Some emphasized the desire for more meetings in the field
  - O Maybe for every other meeting?

### **Next Steps**

- The SHG recognized that there was not enough discussion time to make decisions about securing facilitation services or changing meeting schedules
- The SHG supported the Steering Committee getting a quote for facilitation services for review at the next SHG meeting
- There may be a need to adjust the charter; the group supported discussing a new Working Group that could revise the charter once more decisions are made about the scope of the group under the implementation phase

# Wrap Up

## How did this meeting go?

- Like that evolving and adapting to a new environment
- Nice to meet everyone and to see how the collaborative works
- Thumbs up (x9)
- Really appreciate the meeting and looking at how to support funding for more support for the collaborative
- Didn't cover as much as anticipated, but still very fruitful
- This was a great primer, will sign up for a Working Group
- A wonderful meeting, got a lot done, and almost don't want to move meetings to every other month
- Appreciate hearing everyone's thoughts and opinions
- Love it
- From the industry perspective, it was good to see the incredible amount of work that it takes to get timber out of the Forest. Will sign up for the industry Working Group
- Excellent meeting, implementation should be our next step getting help to get there and to have brainpower/assistance with capacity needs is valuable
- In-person meetings are better (x3)
- Appreciate everyone's input and explanations
- Great to hear from everyone, lots of learning
- Thanks for the commitment and expertise
- This meeting gave me a better understanding of the group





- Lots of great ideas shared
- Went very well, no fights despite the large group
- Really pleased to participate in an extremely important meeting
- Thanks to the facilitators, well prepared. Very capable
- Especially enjoyed listening to what the FS needs, looking forward to the list of needs from FS
- Great job, lots of work ahead
- Thanks for the conversation, it takes everyone in the room and over the phone. Lots more to work through

## **Participant List**

Adam Cooley, Restoration Forest Products

Alan Davis, AZ Council Trout Unlimited

Ali San Gil, Forest Service Region 3???

Alicia's IPhone???

Amber Dorsch, Coconino National Forest???

Amy Waltz, Ecological Restoration Institute

Anne Mottek, Mottek Consulting

Bradley Worsley, Novo Power

Brett Crary, US Forest Service

Carl Welson, APS

Casey Simpson, Northern Arizona Fly Casters

Cerissa Hoglander, Grand Canyon Trust

Chris Johansen, US Forest Service 4FRI

Christine Mares, DFFM

Curt Gill, AZ Game and Fish Department

David Dorum, AZ Game and Fish Department

Devon Suarez, Suarez Forestry

Elaine Kohrman, US Forest Service Regional Office

Elvy Barton, Salt River Project

Evan Lautzenheiser, AZ Game and Fish Department

Floyd Hardin, Salt River Project

George Stedeford, Restoration Forest Products

Greg Smith, Empire Machinery

Hannah Griscom, AZ Game and Fish Department

Jay Smith, Coconino County

Joel Jurgens, *The Nature Conservancy* 

John Richardson, AZ Department of Forestry and Fire Management

Judy Palmer, US Forest Service Apache-Sitgreaves





Kevin Ordean, RFOR

Lisa Bolton, Salt River Project

Marcia Karasek, Industry Opportunity Wood Products

Mark Nigrelli, US Forest Service

Matt Paciorek, US Forest Service Tonto National Forest

Melanie Colavito, Ecological Restoration Institute

Michele Ralston, Senator Mark Kelly's Office

Michelle Paduari, US Forest Service Coconino National Forest

Nate Rees, Trout Unlimited

Niki vonHedemann, Ecological Restoration Institute

Pascal Berlioux, Eastern Arizona Counties

Patrice Horstman, Coconino County

Patrick Moore, US Forest Service

Radek Glebocki, Coconino National Forest

Randy Fuller, US Forest Service

Robert Lever, US Forest Service Apache-Sitgreaves

Sasha Stortz, National Forest Foundation

Scott Rogers, AZ Game and Fish Department

Shaula Hedwall, US Fish and Wildlife

Steve Reiter, AZ Trout Unlimited

Tabi Bolton, Campbell Global

Tami Conner, US Forest Service

Tayloe Dubay, Ecological Restoration Institute

Todd Schulke, Center for Biological Diversity

Tom Mackin, Coconino Sportsmen

Tom Osterday, AZ Council Trout Unlimited

Tracy Bazelman, AZ Game and Fish Department

Travis Woolley, The Nature Conservancy

Facilitation: Andi Rogers, Carrie Eberly, and Jessica Archibald, Southwest Decision Resources





# **Appendix A. Shared History Timeline Figure**



