



4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting

Agenda

Wednesday, June 28th, 2023 9 am – Noon

Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office
1824 South Thompson Street, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

MEETING RECORDING

<https://nau.zoom.us/rec/share/GsCCE5GpS8oEpMEyHVue8JJ3UI8xdoOrHZSOOCFMIBGfJ7b8MZ5Xzero9uF3mlBh.wrG0ioxtDfsHT1O3>

Participants:

Melanie Colavito, Jay Smith, Jessica Archibald, Amy Waltz, Niki vonHedemann, Chris Johansen, Dick Fleischman, Carl Nelson, Tabi Bolton, Devan Suarez, Bradley Worsley, Mark Nigrelli, Rob Weaver, Tabi Bolton, Carl Nelson, Lisa Bolton, Cat Edgeley, Anne Mottek, Valarie Bryant, Eli Jensen, Kelly Wolff, Pascal Berlioux, Todd Schulke, Brett Crary, Kevin Ordean, Tom Osterday, Maggie Hardy, Rich Edwards, Matt Lane, Randy Fuller, Tracy Bazelmann, Cerissa Hoglander, Cecilia Clavet, Matthew Lane, Steven Hattenbach, Paul Tetterton, Neil Chapman, Marcos Robles, Patrick Moore

9:00 Approve April minutes, review action items

- Approved

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Determine if Coconino County can be fiscal sponsor for SDR facilitation agreement	Jay Smith	Complete
2. TNC will also explore if they can be fiscal sponsor/ waive overhead	Travis Woolley	Complete
3. Confirm financial agreements from SHG on SDR facilitation agreement	Melanie, Jay	Complete
4. Follow up with RMRS fire modeling groups for presentations	Amy, Maggie	Ongoing

- Jay S.: Coconino County and TNC cannot serve as a fiscal sponsor – SDR will manage funds for facilitation services
- Maggie H.: RMRS fire modeling - The other fire managers are ready to contribute and share information

9:05 Call to the Public –

- None

9:08 USFS updates – Chris J.

- Scot returned from leave yesterday
- Positions to fill have opened, been advertised, and closed. They are in the Forest Service hiring process which can be slow, but they are a priority. Two GS12 positions (project manager, GIS specialist) were

- released. One will likely handle the monitoring coordinator position held by John Souther previously
 - Cerissa H.: What is the timeline?
 - Chris J.: Don't have an exact timeline, but it is closed for ~30 days. Aaron Mayville is the hiring manager for that position
- Working on trying to zero out agreements for FY23, being that the money is BIL and IRA, it will require a new agreement. Trying to see what funds won't be used on old agreements and to reallocate/spend that funding and planning to do new agreements for about 90% of agreements for FY23 with Inflation Reduction Act money and BIL money
- Brett C.: For those that set up meetings for 4FRI, please keep Chris in the loop so he has the information needed as he is filling in for John Souther temporarily
- Mark N.: Working hard on focusing on 5-year plan and plan for FY24 and making sure information is rounded up from Washington Office
- Tabi B.: In the monthly reports, the newer format of reporting when things are closed makes it less clear who is working in the woods. Can we add a column of tons removed especially for commercial contracts. This would provide progress updates during treatment of acres
 - Brett C.: May not be reported for every sale as those are reported in CCF. **Brett will check to see how difficult this would be.** One clarification, not waiting till unit is closed, just waiting until the last tree is cut. This may create a little lag but not as much as waiting until unit is closed
 - Jay S.: In the reports, if it is highlighted in red what does that mean?
 - Brett C.: It highlights where work was done this month (new sales, new unit cuts, etc.)
- Brad W.: At the oil well and exchange tank there was 1500+ acres treated in FY23 that aren't included in the update
 - Brett C.: See harvesting/cutting completed, but not yet closed
 - Mark N.: Active and current sales held for one month and then moved down in the table. They should be shown further down
- Brett C.: Did meet with Christine Garms and went through ladder table that has cut, completed, and closed. Updated it to show which sales are closed out, so this information should be updated

9:30 Summary of a recent social science research in Northern Arizona – Melanie, Cat Edgeley, and Niki vonHedemann. (30 minutes, 5 minutes Q&A)

- Melanie Colavito, Cat Edgeley, and Niki vonHedemann presented recent social science research results from several different research projects. See recording for the presentation and the presentation slides [here](#).
- **Melanie C. will post the presentation slides and relevant reports to Basecamp**
- Key takeaways from the presentation included:
 - There isn't a lot of social science on fire in the Southwest, but findings suggest we are strong in social acceptance for landscape treatment and public support for management (including managed fire)
 - Schultz Fire Cost Accounting:
 - It takes time to understand the total cost of a single event. Costs have continually accrued even through 2019. Now, one could say that Tunnel and Pipeline could be connected to Schultz, leading to even more costs
 - The full cost of fire was 4.5 times the proposed cost of restoration
 - Museum Fire and Flooding Surveys
 - People look at different information sources depending on the hazard (i.e., fire vs flood)
 - High levels of support for future forest management
 - Continued support for future initiatives for implementing forest management
 - Local research collectively demonstrates high support, but a need for greater depth in public communication
 - Smoke adaptation surveys: Parks (2021) and Highlands Fire District (2022)
 - High tolerance for smoke in the Flagstaff area and adjacent rural areas
 - Questions tend not to be about whether forest management is necessary, but instead

- approaches used
 - Shifting population - newcomers have greater trust in USFS and support for forest management
 - Need adaptation strategies that match community identity
 - Widespread interest in learning more about smoke
 - There is high acceptance for 4FRI in this area. The next level is getting the public involved in understanding why we are using certain techniques – tell this story now!
- Discussion about the presentation:
 - Chris J.: Was 4FRI known about in your discussions with communities or in the survey?
 - Cat E.: Did not talk about it since the project wasn't focused on 4FRI. What was interesting was the discussion heard about the Saddle Timber Sale. COVID really impacted that community, and many folks didn't know about this project. COVID nixed public meetings that were planned, so people were a little bristly about it. A lot of people don't have phone signal there, so many communication platforms missed them. That community seems very interested in public meetings
 - Chris J.: Those two communities are so different between Mountaineer vs Parks. There are different education strategies needed
 - Melanie C.: They did ask about FWPP. There was high support. About 70%, said they would vote in support if similar thing was on the ballot
 - Neil C.: Was the smoke tolerance based on number of days in a row or in a certain time period?
 - Cat E.: Probably interpreted as days in a row
 - Randy F.: While this study was specifically Flagstaff-centric, what are your feelings about the validity across 4FRI as a whole?
 - Melanie C.: To that point and to expand, there is a lot of research that characterizes and classifies communities in the west (e.g., Flagstaff as high amenity community), but this isn't a one size fits all. Tailoring communication strategies is important and even tailoring research processes (e.g., going door to door). It is important to understand the audience
 - Cat E.: This is the tip of the iceberg of what we have – there is so much more to share. Efforts in Coronado, Tonto, Prescott, and Payson are in the works
 - Jay S.: Is SWERI in New Mexico going to do anything?
 - Cat E.: This would be great. There are a lot of folks descending on that area now. Need to be cautious ethically about asking questions this close to a fire. Lots to learn there
 - Melanie C.: There are windows of opportunity following catastrophic event, but don't want to over-research people
 - Valerie B.: This type of data is helpful for lobbying
 - Brad W: are you able to quantify stated tolerance vs actual tolerance?
 - Cat E. That is always a challenge when asking about actual events. This would be a great. Complaints to ADEQ or calls coming in could help qualify this. Also would be great to quantify tolerance vs acceptance
 - Melanie C.: We can capture larger average, but a lot of times with getting phone calls, you are hearing calls from people that aren't satisfied. You hear from the vocal minority. That is not always a representation of the broader population. This can help compare those sources of information
 - Anne M.
 - I'm not surprised we are so tolerant. This is because of all the work over the years. There are multiple smoke campaigns, editorials in Daily Sun, etc. GFPP has done a lot of work
 - Cat E.: People are sharing the message with their neighbors (represents good work done)

western United States - Marcos Robles, second author of publication and Lead Scientist for The Nature Conservancy (35 minutes, 10 minutes Q&A)

- Marcos Robles presented the results of two studies relevant to the group including a post-fire recovery study and a carbon risk and opportunity study. See the recording for the presentation and find the slides on Basecamp
- Excellent summary of the study go [here](#). To download the article, go [here](#)
- Main takeaways
 - In Arizona, recovery from future wildfires is unlikely if forest burns at high severity, but likely under low severity
 - Arizona forests are in top 3 most carbon vulnerable to fire
 - Legacy of forest management exacerbates wildlife and climate concerns
 - Ecological thinning and burning effectively reduces severity and can reduce risks to multiple values (e.g., carbon and communities)
- Questions and discussion
 - Brad W.: I have heard that AZ is home to the largest Ponderosa Pine contiguous forest – is that true or not?
 - It is true, we are on plateau which is why we are most contiguous
 - Dick F.: Are the two big holes in the map the Rodeo and Wallow Fires?
 - Yes, likely those
 - Brad W.: Thinning only is a neutral impact?
 - Marcos R.: The issue is that there are many materials left over with thinning, and that is one reason that thinning isn't as effective as thinning and burning
 - Brad W.: Is that thinning commercial wood and removing biomass? These are different (e.g., t6 and t13)
 - Marcos R.: It was a combination of studies across the region with different prescriptions of thinning. This is just general sense of all types of thinning
 - Amy W.: ERI treatment effectiveness study, showed that even when removed there is so many fuels if haven't done prescribed burning
 - Haven't ever parsed out studies to test thinning with biomass left or biomass there. But there are opportunistic studies that show a difference
 - On museum where there was slash is where there was a ton of mortality
 - Jay S.: It would be great to show that we understand that removing biomass reduces burn severity

10:55 Forest Biomass Coalition – Dick Fleishman (10 min)

- Dick F. presented the Forest Biomass Coalition to the group
 - Forest Biomass Coalition is a group of folks, many of which are stakeholders for 4FRI, who started looking at how we can facilitate and inform people of the challenges with retaining biomass and the need to remove it. Initially started out west-side centric (had Brad present to them), and it then became housed under GFPP, that way grant funding could come through if needed. They are now officially a work group under GFFP (signing partner to 4FRI). Includes County, NAU, COF, local non-profits, and interested citizens to be able to get biomass removed off on the west side. We now understand it is 4FRI wide issue. There are opportunities that we will be looking at beyond the west side. Would be willing to come talk with Tonto and Apache-Sitgreaves
 - Goal: solve the economic, ecological, health, and safety challenges created by excess forest biomass in Northern Arizona's Forest
 - Doing a lot of lobbying to move biomass treatments forward
 - Challenges: air quality, Calf Canyon report (slash piles on top of chips potential cause). If we can remove that quality and get it into some type of value-added process (e.g., energy) that is what we are striving for
 - When we get to something where need support, would go through 4FRI to get support

- **Melanie will post the group description to Basecamp and add Dick to Basecamp**
- Questions and discussion
 - Anne M.: If we are writing letters, we will be transparent, but we don't need 4FRI approval. Though may seek letters of approval. Likely going to be in everyone's best interest to speak in common voice
 - Chris J: One of our last meeting was about Purina and their interest in biomass, what is the status?
 - This is in process, continuing to look into it. Interested in converting boiler to biomass in Flagstaff and potentially elsewhere
 - Would it be feasible to transfer to Phoenix? Purina needs to make that decision
 - Anne M.: Powerful to have a group focused on biomass. If Forest Service hears about an opportunity, this group can provide service. We are already finding that this is powerful. So many organizations have been thinking this, but it hasn't happened. Support is there from City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, and Forest Service. Great to have this group field all that is going on in the biomass world. The timing is right
 - Dick F.: There is a lot of new financial opportunities (billion dollar loan for alternative energies with up to 60% forgiven by government potentially), IRA, BIL. Wood utilization opportunities and funding as well
 - Amy W.: What is the full geographic scope? For Burnt Corral, with partners with limited tools for biomass, we are brainstorming on this
 - Dick F.: We haven't discussed that, but we could help

11:05 Industry Updates – All

- Tabi B.
 - Update on TNC projects
 - Finished Walker Hill demo. Demo part was to show cutting efficiency based on marking. Data coming out soon. Devan and crew great recording when the machine was working, etc. Lot of data there
 - Parks West – ongoing activity there with commercial thinning
 - TNC and Kaibab – developing a biomass demonstration project to record the costs of whole tree chipping and costs of transportation. Under development and moving rapidly. They could have an update for next meeting
- Brad W.
 - Continue to struggle to get enough material to run facility at full capacity
 - Margin is generally at top – losing lots of needed dollars
 - Facility up time has been excellent, but need more material
 - This has been made worse by the general economic realities of high costs. 2024 overhaul cost \$1.5 million – 50% increase in cost
 - Nova is fixed rate for next 10 years – laboring under that burden. Struggling to get suppliers up to load
 - Canyon Creek – brand new processors, trailers, etc.
 - TriStar is a quarter of what they were (down from 20 to 5 vehicles fleet)
 - Nova Power is in a position of not failing, just surviving. We will never thrive under current structure if there isn't more federal money to move this forward
 - Cost structure is just going up. This is the biggest challenge
 - We're going to have to reduce load over the Fourth of July - just right on the margin and need suppliers to step in. Supply base is there, but need to get to capacity or build it
 - Involved in discussion on 700 acres – designated to come to Novo – but now if can't pay for trucking not going to get it. Trucking is a huge cost. By adding 2 trucks that aren't standard forestry trucks – jumped cost from \$50 to \$110
 - Big challenge is the thin margin. Need to get the last megawatt and a half online
 - Dick F.: Is that because not enough contracts, not enough wood?

than expected and are eager to take on new plots. They are waiting on data, and this will help us plan for getting post-treatment plots treated

- Snowtopography and springs monitoring and remote sensing are in the works. This will situate a number of things for FY24
- Comprehensive Implementation WG – Cerissa Hoglander
 - Primarily focused on watershed/riparian restoration
 - GCT and others worked to implement restoration structures in Clark Well Draw – 6 Zuni bowl structures to address major head cuts. Goal was to get done before monsoons. Exciting news is that there is persistent water till early June. Head cut work will help continue to have water persistent even in dry seasons
 - Volunteers helped perform erosion control at Hoxworth spring and more work in the future. Partially funded by GCT grant
 - Additional work on Buck Spring on Mogollon Rim in September to address erosion from elk pressure and other erosion
 - Field visit with number of stakeholders on July 17. Folks can join. They are meeting in Happy Jack at 9, contact Cerissa if interested
 - Shoutout to Kate Day on Coconino. Successful at hiring an additional person starting soon. Building out watershed restoration capacity
 - Looking to ramp up work, internal Forest Service capacity is very exciting
 - Hannah had sent a letter to 4FRI leadership asking for additional support. At Forest Service level or other, haven't heard formal response. No email or additional acknowledgement on that
 - **Rob will pass it on to get an answer**
 - Dick F.: Was Hoxworth at the spillway at the dam?
 - Yes, half of the work was there. Huge head cut on backside on the wildlife pond. If that pond went then that would affect upstream and downstream water availability
 - Dick F.: concern with that dam spilling.
 - Kate is working on comprehensive plan for Hoxworth. Need to have multi-year plan for addressing impacts. Super important perennial stream and rare wet meadow habitat
- Treatment Prioritization and Optimization WG – Amy Waltz
 - Big update –group is working on what we need to do now that we have over a million acres of approved NEPA and where we know fire is reaching acres at two to four times the speed of chainsaws and equipment
 - Are we going to the right places at right time? Industry has big voice in this
 - Perfect timing in line with Wildfire Crisis Strategy. 4FRI is priority landscape, so lots of tools coming down the line. Lot of learning to do
 - Lot of work on 5-year plans and forest level strategic plan
 - Travis and Amy better connected with Washington office tools and regional office tools, not sure if 4FRI and Forest Service is up to speed with what is happening
 - Talking about setting up a day – double check values at risk, work from Washington and RO where there are values at risk that are forest centric (QRA/QWRA), add 4FRI values at risk (updated), and look at spatially where the risks are and when overlaying those 5-year plans, are there any gaps?
 - Stakeholder Group is interested in knowing where 5-year plans are going
 - Need to look at industry constraints
 - Looking to build a workshop – thinking September
 - Question – is there still a 4FRI Executive Board? If so, can Travis and Amy get in front of next agenda?
 - Chris J.: Yes, there is an Executive Board
 - **Amy will email Scot and Chris RE getting on the agenda**

- Who to CC on emails to the Forest Service– all of them! Brett, Mark, Scot, and Chris. Too much is better than not enough
- Small group – Brian, Cerissa H.– all should put heads together and put a date. Amy contacted them
- Who is the audience for the workshop?
 - Amy – not enough people at this particular meeting
 - Proposal for agenda for August – use Stakeholder Group meeting to do stakeholder update and mini assessment of values at risk
 - Melanie C.: SDR doing mini check in on governance. Could align
 - Key audience: 4FRI Stakeholder Group, four forests including their implementers (need fire and timber implementers)
 - We want to stay engaged through implementation and have a voice in how put it on the landscape
 - Need to build new relationships
 - Entire fuel shop at Coconino has changed. **Chris J. will email Amy W. with new contacts**
 - Also, now a regional and national interest now due to reporting considerations. Why here? Why now? Stakeholders can help articulate and communicate that and lobby (e.g., Forest Biomass groups)
 - When people feel left out, we get problems!

11:47 Stakeholder Disclosures – All

- Dick F: there has been completed project on first 4FRI EIS – has SHG gone and look at them? Why wouldn't you want to go to the field?
 - Jay S.: We haven't gone in years
 - Melanie C.: This can be a conversation with SDR. It has been a capacity issue
 - Amy W.: Does meeting every other month allow field time between?
 - Melanie C.: Also in the works is a full-day workshops coming forward potentially (similar to January)
- Jay S.: Governor Hobbs here on Friday. County and City met with her. Lot of discussion with forest restoration, wildfire, post-fire flooding. Tom Torres was there. She and the legislature did not extend the budget to DFFM for post-fire flooding (~\$65 million cut from budget). If we have any fires next year before next budget, we are in trouble for flooding
- Melanie C.: Was invited by Wildland Fire Leadership Council which is a collection of all agency leadership (USD, DOI, EPA, CDC) working on forestry and fire issues. I was invited to give a presentation on managed wildfire (natural ignitions allowed to burn. There is a briefing paper associated with that

11:50 Review Action Items – Jay Smith

Action Item	Lead	Status
See if reporting tons removed as a progress update metric to see what is happening on the landscape before units are done cutting	Brett C.	
Follow up about the Comprehensive Implementation Working Group letter to the Forest Service	Rob W.	
Pri-opt team will present to 4FRI exec board about workshop idea and continue to flesh out workshop plan	Amy, Chris, Scot, Aaron	
Share Coconino Fuels contact with Amy W.	Chris J.	
Post presentations to Basecamp, add Dick F. to Basecamp	Melanie C., Jay S.	

Adjourn –

UPDATE AS APPROPRIATE

Steering Committee Meetings (second Tuesday of each month)

- 1/10/2023, 2/14/2023, 3/14/2023, 4/11/2023, 5/9/2023, 6/13/2023, 7/11/2023, 8/8/2023, 9/12/2023, 10/10/2023, 11/14/2023, December no meeting

Stakeholder Group Meetings (fourth Wednesday of each month, except November)

- 1/25/2023, 2/22/2023, 3/22/2023, 4/26/2023, 5/24/2023, 6/28/2023, 8/23/2023, 10/25/2023, 11/29/2023, December no meeting

	2023	
	Hot Chair	Cold Chair
January	Melanie Colavito	Neil Chapman
February	Neil Chapman	Jay Smith
March	Neil Chapman	Jay Smith
April	Neil Chapman	Jay Smith
May	Jay Smith	Anne Mottek
June	Jay Smith	Anne Mottek
July	Jay Smith	Anne Mottek
August	Jay Smith	Anne Mottek
September	Jay Smith	Anne Mottek
October	Jay Smith	Anne Mottek
November	Anne Mottek	Pascal Berlioux?
December	NO SHG MTG	NO SHG MTG