



## 4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting

Wednesday, January 22, 2025, 9AM-12PM

Arizona Game and Fish Department - 3500 S Lake Mary Rd, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

### Meeting Recording

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VnRRtGIEMtL3E\\_dfWkLkIV3lnEaDnJzI/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VnRRtGIEMtL3E_dfWkLkIV3lnEaDnJzI/view?usp=drive_link)

### Participants:

Kevin Ordean, Melanie Colavito, Tom Macking, Allan Seabolt, Greg Smith, Gary Moore, Tabi Bolton, Anne Mottek, Sarah Davenport, Scot Rogers, Lisa Bolton, Jon Day, Joe Hinz, Jay Smith, Mary Lou Zimmerman, Brett Crary, Nicole Kennan, Cerissa Hoglander, Joel Jergens, Mike Dechter, Pascal Berlioux, Evan Hjerpe, Meaghan Miller, Elizabeth Munding, Matt Lane, Brandon McKenney, Ericka Luna, Neil Chapman, Mike Martinez

Facilitation Team: Carrie Eberly

### Welcome and Agenda review - Southwest Decision Resources

- March meeting agenda is full and May is pretty full as well. If there are additional items, reach out to SDR.

### Approve December 4, 2024 Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes - SDR

- Approved.

### Review Action Items from December 4, 2024

Action Item	Lead	Status
FS will ask about the clarity on the diversity of products in upcoming sales (G to Z, IRSC), and how that will be accounted for	Scot	done
Need update on Drake Cement project - biomass	Scot will ping Prescott, SDR can reach out to DFFM	done
Anne Mottek and ML to connect re: Socio-economic info	Anne - MaryLou	done
Send In kind info to Melanie to include in 2 pager	MaryLou	done
Follow up with ERI on TWIG database	Melanie, Andi	ongoing
Scott to send 2024 updated acres treated to updated flyer	Scot to Melanie	done
Risk Reduction for the flyer?	Melanie/Travis	-----
TNC will send updates photos for flyer	Joel	done



Send updated jobs numbers for flyer	Anne Mottek	done
SRP will send info to Melanie, re: dollar figures for preventative risk reduction	Lisa B to Melanie	done
Share Round Valley Project info when out so SDR can post	SDR-A-S	ongoing
Get ppt from A-S	SDR	DONE

### Call to the Public

- None.

### USFS Updates - Scot Rogers

- There's a lot of uncertainty in the Forest Service and Federal Government. Right now, as we're working through both Presidential administration transition as well as our continuing resolution (CR) which was passed in December that goes through March. And these CRs basically put the agency in kind of a neutral planning posture and FS/4FRI moving into FY25, and not able to sort of move forward with some of our longer term projects or annual projects.
  - Think about Irsc, some service work that we have seen about some of our bigger mastication agreements or contracts we might have, because of the uncertainty around what our final annual budget will be. And so, waiting until March right now for any updates.
- Some monies have rolled over from fiscal year 24 specifically in the BIL and IRA funding arena which are not subject to the appropriations process, and so we are able to move forward with spending. Most of those there may or may not be some additional Budget Review with the new Trump Administration Executive Order that they passed yesterday. But we're still working through that process. We do have some funding for our operations to move forward.
- Our (FS and 4FRI) focus on making sure that we maintain vital commercial industry for the restoration projects that we've been moving forward with, as well as execute as much of fuel reduction as we possibly can, so utilize those burn windows. We've completed about 50,000 acres of dual treatment up to this point, which - a little bit behind where we were last fiscal year, but not substantially so. Some burning intended for this week in the Flagstaff District
- We also have had quite a bit of commercial timber success in quarter one which is unique for 4FRI. Usually all of our sales come out in quarter 3 and quarter 4 of our fiscal year. So the summertime we've sort of really taken to heart this idea of a 5 year planning Cycle, which allows pushing sales in Quarter 1. This allows for the offering of availability for industry throughout the fiscal year, which is really helpful, we produced about 20 to 25% of our program work already in quarter one. Some really big sales here on both the East West Sides
- For FY25, somewhere between 20 to 30,000 acres of commercial timber offered, likely closer to 25,000 - 30,000 which is a really good range for us (32,000 what the FY24 number).
  - These numbers are reported by Brett monthly.
- Update on our G to Z project:
  - We have 2 stewardship projects that are G to Z. IRSC, and so that's a service; It's a timber contract where we pay for some service items. The mechanism is not new to 4FRI. In the past our service work has included biomass, removal, maybe road



restoration. Those types of things could be timber stand improvement on merchantable timber work.

- The difference. And what's unique about the G to Z approach is that we're identifying the survey and temper prep work as service items, and so effectively, we are paying the winning contractor to help us prep a timber sale (typically done by FS).
- Undersecretary has committed to getting us to commercial timber removal. We have about 50% of the money necessary; it'll be a 60 day solicitation window, more likely than not. Still a little uncertainty there, but pretty confident it will be 60 days. Once we do post it on sam.gov, we're already looking at a 90 to 120 day window for award, so early summer at this point, right before we have some concrete understanding about when those 2 projects will be awarded, although I do expect that those 2 projects will occur in FY 25.
  - There's 1 on the Kaibab, which is very much a full G to Z. Approach. Whereas we basically have identified a 10,000 acre lot of land and said, We want you to write a civil cultural report. We want you to do all the surveys. Give us the full package.
  - There's another project of around 8,000 acres on the Coconino, which most of that work has already been done. All the survey work has already been done. There's some additional re-cruising that needs to happen. But both are ready to go, and we're just waiting on that final funding which we'll see with the new administration. How long that takes to arrive.
- Appreciative of DFFM and other partners, but especially Dffm, so last fall we talked about the decision by the agency to pause seasonal hiring. They're a substantial part of how we get timber sales out the door, both Timber prep. in terms of marking and cruising and civil cultural reports, but also the different specialist surveys necessary, such as wildlife, botany, and archeology. The pause created a bit of concern, especially regarding the Mexican spotted owl Survey Protocol which has a very strict 2 year window, and so if we missed 2025 in terms of getting folks out there, it has a downstream impact into 27 and maybe 28. So we reached out to DFFM; We had an existing agreement with them for September prep. They have graciously agreed to expand their agreement and expand the use of dollars that we had already put into their agreements 2 or 3 fiscal years ago to move beyond just timber prep and include those different survey items that I mentioned, and so effectively, they're going to help us cover that missing seasonal workforce for fiscal year 25. So it's a huge lift and really appreciated.
- Finally, there was request for updates on what we're predicting for the fire season, and for the next few months our National Office. There are predictive modeling reports at a national scale, MaryLou will post those on basecamp every 2 months.
- Forest Supervisors were mostly unavailable today (due to vacations and last minute conflicts), we appreciate the understanding.
- **Questions:**
- RE: DFFM helping with some of the survey work and and things. Do you know if they intend to use personnel already in shop, or will they be contacting?
  - Some of those seasonals have been doing some of that work for years; it's a mix of biologists from AGFD and contracts for archeology and timber prep and using seasonal employees that are available.
  - Re: survey oversight (especially MSO), when those surveys are completed by these outside contractor, just want to validate that those steps are still taking place, yes?



- So for the DFFM agreement, we're spending a lot of time ensuring it's not too redundant/bureaucratic and that there are safeguards (contract administrators and specialists - silviculture and wildlife, etc.) throughout the process.

DFFM Update - [here](#)

### Industry/Implementer Updates

- RFOR:
  - Currently operating on 3 different sides, chasing what we can while we can, Camp Navajo salvage from the fire - trying to clean that up and Newman Park and Frog Tank, both over north of Munds Park, operating those um.
  - Sawmill continues to increase production week over week. So hoping to ramp up in springtime and get everyone lined up for 2025
- Canyon Creek:
  - 2 of our grinders running right now, grinding biomass piles and a lot of that material. We got behind when Novo had their outage, but currently making good progress. Lots of inventory for the mills (Show Low pellet mill and White Mountain Lumber in Heber). Anticipating an early fire season and that will impact overall industry.
    - Concern from Novo Power is having piles that have to sit, and the potential fire hazard that can bring
  - White Mountain Apache Tribe mill (WMATCO) burned down last night, uncertain how this will impact production in the area.
- Empire Machinery:
  - I mentioned to Scott earlier Empire and our technology side of the business, we just teamed up with a company and are the dealer now for Arizona, called FLIR. And they are basically wildfire management, drone technology. Helping the firefighters assist. You know where hotspots are watching fires grow through that technology. Can share with the group via Basecamp.
- Campbell Global/Tabi:
  - See TNC updates
- Devon Suarez:
  - Few updates on the status of our projects. For Poco Pino and Baker: We're looking to have that all closed up and tied up by the end of February, so both of those projects will be done.
  - We're currently doing the pre-commercial, thinning (PCT) treatment on Johnson on the CC. Cragin, about halfway done with that.
  - Roosevelt. We pulled out of Roosevelt since our last uh update. Canyon Creek was in there doing a lot of grinding. They were able to move a lot of loads out of Roosevelt. I know that wasn't easy. That haul going that way towards Novo was not easy.
  - We are looking to start Cold Stallion this coming month on the Tonto.
  - Currently operating on Pine Canyon for NFF; about a 3rd of the way done with that project, and we were able to add a new feller buncher at the very last minute of last year.



- We're looking to up our production and our capacity here as we move into the New Year.
- Joel/TNC:
  - We finished grinding on Sawmill Springs this morning, the final loads are in transit right now. That was Project 685 acres on the Kaibab National Forest, biomass only project. So it was. Cut, drag, deck, and grind and off site. The cut, drag, deck portion of the work. Including TSI work was completed in under 50 days. And then grinding finished today, which is great, and will be closed out within the week.
    - 1st Tree was cut on August 14th and there will be a final report (out in 3-4 months) on outbound biomass, related operations. Everything is timestamped and the volume removed from every acre is recorded. we've timestamped everything. We know the volume that's come off of every acre. Can give a presentation once the report is complete
  - Will be releasing some RFPs in the the near future:
    - Bill Williams - Off slope work: It's a combination of hand Thinning as well as some mechanical work.
    - Little Wing: It's just around 2,500 acres on the west side of the slope. I think we'll have that Rfp. Out likely next month. With the expectation that work will start as soon as weather allows.
    - Bill Williams - steep slope: north aspect of Bill Williams (multiple stages of releasing information over the next couple of months), not huge acres, but very difficult work, 260 acres of the total ~600acres will be helicopter logging
- Jay Smith/Coconino County:
  - Coconino County is providing support and complement to Federal funds coming from the US Forest Service for Bill Williams
    - Likely multiple contractors to work on this project, helicopter contractors likely from out of state
  - Doing our best to help keep industry vibrant with product availability (even if mills are full at the moment)
  - One other item: County is not going to be able to fund the entire north of Rio de Flag projects, and will be focusing on efforts to the south. NFF will be putting out an RFP for that project in the coming weeks

#### **Working Group Updates - *Written Updates* [here](#)**

- Communication WG - *Melanie Colavito*
  - Briefer on Basecamp for feedback and received a little bit of feedback from Jay From Nicole, and from Shaula.
  - Largely editorial stuff like, increase the font size or add Usda before Forest Service. Darken some labels, make the lettering stand out, Some bigger text popping some text out.
  - The only semi-significant change recommended by Shaula was using high severity instead of catastrophic when we describe Wildfire
    - Some SHG members feel catastrophic is appropriate in light of recent Los Angeles fires, and the context/sentiment doesn't change
  - And adding other Federal partners to some language as well. Compiled the small



feedback received. The plan would be to incorporate those edits. As best we can, and once those are incorporated, then it would be considered final. So what I'm asking for is approval.

- **Approved with small edits** - will be posted to Basecamp and 4FRI website; this document can be updated as needed.
- Written updates for the following WG were provided:
  - Industry/Biomass WG - Brad Worsley/Tony Flagor
    - None
  - Multi-Party Monitoring Board WG - Jamie Sanderlin/MaryLou Zimmerman/Andi Rogers
  - Comprehensive Implementation WG - Cerissa Hoglander
  - Prioritization and Optimization WG - Amy Waltz/Travis Woolley/Brian Nowicki

#### **4FRI Dashboard - Brett Crary**

- 2 products in development to improve transparency and sharing of work progress across various partnerships and projects.
  - The dashboard, currently in draft form, will track contracts and acres treated on the ground, with the aim to make it publicly accessible - SHG can pull information that is helpful for each organization to use in telling the story of 4FRI and treatment. The idea would be that it pulls data from the FS platform (FACS) without having to be manually entered.
    - Includes work/treatments by forest, district and treatment boundaries with funding types and contracts with timing (when awarded, treatments started, completed)
    - Spatial data cannot be downloaded directly from the dashboard, but stakeholders will likely be able to find and download that data from FACS
  - The story map will provide general information and link to the dashboard. The group also discussed the potential for downloading spatial data from the dashboard for cross-referencing with other data sources. The project is expected to be completed by summer.
- If SHG members have good photos of SHG work, please send to Brett and/or Mary Lou. More updates as the work progresses will be sent to the SHG

#### **Coconino Grasslands Restoration - Mike Dechter**, presentation uploaded in Basecamp, link [here](#)

- Background: From the Prescott National Forest, they completed the Chino landscape restoration project for Grassland Restoration and the Kaibab National Forest. A few years ago they did a South Zone, Kaibab Forest or Grassland Restoration Project, and we're the donut hole in the middle and over at Nalca, the Northern Arizona Landscape Connectivity Alliance. You know, we're looking at that Donut hole and saying, Yeah, it'd be really great if we can get some grassland restoration going on. The Coconino National Forest.
- Encroachment is a big issue and now there are more fire adapted grasses that support higher, hotter, more intense fires, but then they also are able to spread from those fires better. And so that's been displacing a lot of our native grasses in those areas which provide a lot less habitat for small mammals and create a fire problem for a lot of our communities in those areas.
- Desired conditions: about 20 to 30% of the canopy cover being pinyon, juniper, and then the rest grasslands. The actual, true grassland types are 10% canopy cover - that is a definition of a grassland. And so if you go out to most of our areas, what you see, is something like this that's



going to be 20-30% plus. And we want to return our true grassland to this like 10% or less. So basically, fewer trees covering the area, more area for grass and forbs; and less high intensity fire adapted grasses

- This project aims to restore grasslands and improve habitat for species like the pronghorn. The project involves tree and shrub removal, herbicide application, prescribed fire, and revegetation of native grasses and forbs (some decommissioned road beds may be included in revegetation). The project area covers about 350,000 acres, with treatments planned for different grassland types.
- We want to use a condition-based management approach where we treat according to what we see on the ground rather than according to what is said in the decision. And so the decision will help us plan the treatments, identify the impacts. We expect to see.
  - >40% slopes, wilderness areas and areas of high vulnerability or type conversion due to changing climate have been removed from the project area
- Also plan to avoid the removal of large pinyon and juniper and other tree types. So we included basically a lot like a large tree and implementation plan strategy that was included in forefront. We're saying no removal of pinyon trees and trees greater than 14 inches diameter root collar, except in situations where we can't.
- We identified about 102 miles of fire breaks adjacent to non forest land throughout the project area, and these would be about 3 feet wide down the mineral soil, and then thinning out from that. Because our prescribed fire treatments are based on these pod boundaries and not based on our vegetation boundaries. That means that some of the prescribed burning is going to be in non grassland types, such as Pj, or possibly Ponderosa pine.
- The project also includes the use of targeted grazing and virtual fencing to control invasive species.
- The project will be implemented over several decades, with a focus on ongoing tribal stakeholder involvement.
  - Contracts for treatments could include plucking, grubbing and other types recognizing there are tradeoffs for different types
- Feedback is welcome and needed from stakeholders before moving into the public comment process.
  - Considerations: native grass response to grazing (timing, amount, etc.), fires response of large/old junipers, scaling up to treatments on a larger landscape

#### **4FRI Economic Analysis (TNC) - Evan Hjerpe and Anne Mottek, report [here](#)**

- The group discussed the regional economic contributions of the 4FRI project. Evan Hjerpe, the director of the Conservation Economics Institute, presented a study on the regional economic contributions of 4FRI in 2023.
- 3 main areas of data: mechanical/commercial thinning, wood conversion and wood processing and restoration activities.
- The study found that the project contributed to 564 full-time jobs and \$150 million in regional output. The team also discussed the importance of industry participation in future studies and the potential for adding qualitative data to the quantitative data collected. The team also discussed the challenges of maximizing wood utilization in rural, remote regions and the need for more infrastructure. The conversation ended with a discussion on how to better understand the economic impact of the 4FRI project on rural counties and the potential for future studies to include more context.





- Discussion on discrepancies in the reporting of acres and contracts in the Forest Service.
  - Pascal noted a 3,000-acre difference between the numbers reported by Brett and the actual numbers.
  - Evan explained that the Forest Service deals in fiscal years, which can cause discrepancies, and that the contractors' reporting may not be exact.
- It was also discussed the inclusion of non-4FRI projects in the report, which Evan clarified was done to be more inclusive but had to be under specific circumstances. Pascal suggested that the difference in numbers could be due to the inclusion of Pj work and other non-4FRI projects.
- The team agreed to continue refining their reporting methods.
- SHG is asked to review 4FRI Economic Analysis report and identify anything that may be missing for future discussion

**Stakeholder Disclosures**

- NO stakeholder disclosures.

**Review Action Items**

Action Item	Lead	Status
Upload final version of the Briefing Paper to Basecamp	Melanie	DONE
Upload weather and fire trend information to Basecamp	MaryLou Z.	
Reach out to DFFM for written update and attach with notes	SDR	DONE
Send links on FLIR (drone work) to SDR and add to Basecamp	Greg Smith	DONE
Determine if there is a draft Dashboard to share with the SHG	Brett C.	
Send high quality photos to Brett Crary for the 4FRI storymap	ALL	
Connect appropriate ERI staff with Mike Dechter (re: grassland data/research)	Melanie C.	
Reach out the Mike Dechter for one-on-one conversations about the Coconino Grassland Restoration project	ALL	
Review 4FRI Economic Analysis report and identify what's missing for future discussion	ALL	
Send out Year in Review survey	SDR	

**12:00 Adjourn**

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**Steering Committee Meetings (second Tuesday of each month)**





- **2025** 1/14/2025, 2/11/2025, 3/11/2025, 4/8/2025, 5/13/2025, 6/10/2025, 7/8/2025, 8/12/2025, 9/9/2025, 10/14/2025, 11/11/2025, December no meeting

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

-**2025 proposed:** 1/22/2025 (Flagstaff), 3/26/2025 (Flagstaff), 5/28/2025 (Pinetop or Holbrook - TBD), 7/23/2025 (Flagstaff), 9/24/2025 (Pinetop), 12/3/2025 (Flagstaff)

**Hot Chair/Cold Chair Rotation**

	<b>2025 Steering Committee</b>		<b>2025 Stakeholder Group</b>	
	<b>Hot Chair</b>	<b>Cold Chair</b>	<b>Hot Chair</b>	<b>Cold Chair</b>
January	Joel Jurgens	Jay Smith	Joel Jurgens	Jay Smith
February	Joel Jurgens	Jay Smith		
March	Jay Smith	Melanie C	Jay Smith	Melanie C
April	Jay Smith	Melanie C		
May	Jay Smith	Melanie C	Jay Smith	Melanie C
June	Melanie C	Pascal B		
July	Melanie C	Pascal B	Melanie C	Pascal B
August	Melanie C	Pascal B		
September	Pascal B	Joel J	Pascal B	Joel J
October	Pascal B	Joel J		
November	Pascal B	Joel J		
December	Joel J	??	Joel J	??