



4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting Notes

Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025, 9AM-12PM

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

MEETING RECORDING

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KsE4WeCMpm1yncZe3FkasRaha9oliHHJ/view?usp=drive_link

Participants: Scot Rogers, Tom Mackin, Amy Tinderholt, Anne Mottek, Niki vonHedemann, Christine Mares, Nicole Kennan, Melanie Colavito, Jay Smith, Joel Jurgens, Lisa Bolton, Patrick Moore, Greg Smith, Mary Lou Zimmerman, Joe Hinz, Tabi Bolton, Pascal Berlioux, Josh Eager, Cerissa Hoglander, Brad Worsley, Neil Chapman, Matt Lane, Matt Paciorek, Bobby Lamoureux, Brian Nowicki

Facilitation: Carrie Eberly and Andi Rogers (Southwest Decision Resources)

Welcome and Agenda Review - Southwest Decision Resources (SDR)

Intros, then record

Approve September 24, 2025 Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes - SDR

Approved

Review Action Items from September 24, 2025

| Action Item | Lead | Status |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| Connect about industry data collection opportunities discussion - Ongoing - Will connect with each other | Anne M., Pascal B. | Ongoing |
| Send high-quality photos to AMY or Mary Lou for the 4FRI storymap - SDR will send some as well, will send link | All | Ongoing |
| Contact MaryLou Z. if you want to join Multi-Party Monitoring Board - looking for more capacity | All | Ongoing |
| Provide Amy T. feedback on the report she posted to Basecamp - content, what is appropriate for the public Met with Neil, quarterly is good, before January would be good. Need to find the report, SDR to send it out. Bret Crary's report, lots of detail, will continue, aiming for quarterly instead of monthly. Amy can present what the quarterly would look like at the Jan meeting | All | Ongoing |



Call to the Public

- None
- Greg Smith, Jan 27 Retiring from Empire, will email replacement - DONE
 - Allen Jensen has been added to Basecamp.

USFS Updates - Scot Rogers, USFS

Staffing updates:

- Robert Trujilla permanent FS Sup with Tonto couldn't make it due to conflicts today with schedule
- Josh Miller acting Forest Supervisor with A-S, position not yet filled permanently
- Matt Lane, Acting FS Supervisor with Coc. Aaron Mayville on detail at WO back in late January.
- Nicole Branton, Kaibab Supervisor, just coming off leave
- No other staffing issues

Furlough and budget:

- 46 days - longest in history
- FS and 4fri able to stay at work, in different capacities, paid and not paid.
 - Now back and paid
- Operations did not cease and were not that disrupted, focused on Executive Orders
- Agreements hopefully were paid on time?
 - If not, contact Scott
- Budget through Jan 20th, Dept of Ag has one through fiscal year (Sept) but doesn't cover FS
- Continuing resolution, budget, longer term planning is similar to last year, not much of a budget except "oops roof is leaking"
 - Makes it challenging for new agreements, another disrupted year
- Hopefully a full budget in January, then 45-60 days to actually get it to execute contracts and agreements
- In good shape generally for 2026, stable despite this years disruptions

Projects

- DFFM pre-sale agreement has allowed for floor for commercial timber operations..
- High profile projects identified: Leroux and NFF (mixture of funding)
- 2026 program of work is well funded, 2027 as well. Scot trying to look out 3 years at a time
- Big update: Coconino G to Z, 8k acres, Dutton Hills south of Camp Navajo, Stewardship (industry helps complete some of the survey work), is out for solicitation, at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). Share the word. Mostly ironed out, big and complicated, if you are interested reach out to contacts at sam.gov. Can continue to clarify doc, answer questions, etc. It will close Jan 14th, then process (30-45 days), then award, late Feb/early March.
- Kaibab's G to Z is a week or two behind, but will have a similar process for opening and questions.



- Questions: Jay, Small business review? Have you seen it? Scot hasn't seen it. Some confusion
 - Set aside sales? Yes. How much will be set aside for small business.
 - 4fri hasn't had to deal with that because the operators ARE small business
 - RFOR is now NOT a small business which is why there will be a set aside..Integrated Resource Timber Contract (IRTC's) unclear.
 - Scot doesn't have specifics for setaside
 - Generally, there is set aside id'd, targeted for small business set aside, if not offered to small biz, then re-offered to all
 - FS needs to get one out this fiscal year, will be out soon, to meet quota. Matt signed one this week to meet quota.
- A lot of smoke in the air during the furlough
 - 37k acres of understoryburning primarily on Kaibab and A-S
 - Didn't miss windows despite gov funding

Biomass issue: PIPO summit, NRWG meeting (East side industry)

- Attended the summit
- Helpful, to gain perspective, not alone
- Further along in some ways
- Agency understands and is working on how to solve, longer term challenge, offtake, how does FS enable investment opportunity, lots of questions
- Agreements with ASU lightworks, in the next few months will be able to talk about it.
- Longer term agreements/contracts coming? Other solutions
- We understand that the current market is flooded.
- Future sale side - id places where we can minimize/be more strategic about the material that is offtake
 - Examples being considered
 - 6 inches logs DBH that have very low commercial value, therefore being thoughtful about where we require removal, whereas previously we would have required this when there was industry to process it
 - Concrete next steps to share next month on other methods
- Existing contracts
 - NRWG has been talking about this
 - Engaged with WO about extending contracts/flexible
 - More to share there soon as well
 - Looking promising that those contracts can be extended
- To be clear, we are not stepping away from all areas with small timber, but what to do then is what we are trying to tackle.
 - Looking for ALL ideas on how to do this better; lots of nuances to this conversation
- Patrick:
 - Zero timber sale went no big, will re-bid
 - 18, 900 acres burned during shutdown



- Matt P.
 - DFFM, NFF and some of our own projects ongoing
 - Also got some burning done
- Matt L
 - Nothing
- Questions for Scot:
 - Anne: 6-7 inch tree biomass can you explain,
 - Westside sales requested 6 inches and above, challenging and may reconsider, not valuable.
 - Is there a higher priority pile that needs to be removed (strategic steep slope), looking strategically at WHICH pile to remove more carefully. Not trying to walk away from treatments, but trying to get through the needle of service cost, productivity, and help with biomass bottleneck
 - Other choices process and deck, for alternative use at a cheaper rate
 - Trying to understand how to be strategic with biomass is key
 - Contracts may be different due to size requirements in the future.
 - Maybe a likely outcome
 - Comment Decking logs and use is a huge industry on tribal lands - NFF is doing some of this with Wood for Life but haul is expensive
 - Free use areas as an option as well.

DFFM Update - *John Richardson and Kristine Mares*

- DFFM has support, momentum, and wants to continue to partner to increase capacity
- PIPO summit: hosted by Council of Western State Forest: Wood Product Committee
 - Set up to assist state forestry agencies
 - Several committees: includes a GNA committee (3rd year as a committee) - Kristine shares
 - GNA - Committee activities: [LINK HERE](#)
 - Mission statement read: get it
 - Many accomplishments
 - Encourages other to look to see how AZ compares to other states, SW relies on funding because our timber value is negative compared to other states
 - Funding is critical: federal funding FS, SRP, and BLM- grateful for these partners
 - Remarkable how much has been accomplished, report is a culmination of western states from the inception of GNA
 - Able to respond the Active Forest Management Strategy: Chiefs' strategy
 - Enables our western states to have a platform.
 - Improving collaboration with BLM
 - Working at DOI and National level
 - Critical resource for timber



- Projects on the ground:
 - [Handout](#)
 - 4 commercial offerings 2026
 - 4 non-commercial
 - 20k in total
 - 13 task orders (8 active)
 - Kaibab heritage GNA - 2 large-scale Archaeology surveys - on track
 - Tusayan Grassland and Lookout Canyon, delayed due to Dragon Bravo fire
 - Significant pre-sale program - now being led by Amy Tinderholt:. 7 active projects now
 - Want to thank the FS, for the first time getting federal funding for a position - pre-sale coordinator position, coming out in the next few month, GNA business manager also coming out
 - 4 seasonal surveys - Archy on Tonto delayed, 3 more are active
 - Question: State of UT is missing, new to the committee, data not available.
 - UT not elected until recently so no data available just yet

Industry/Implementer Updates & perspectives - All

- Brad Worsley:
 - Novo continues to run at record levels, sitting on 50 days of inventory, making sure no one exceeds allowable deliveries, adding cost to the process due to distances to store. Overall, 2025 is wrapping up as a banner year
 - Biomass discussion: Have to be willing to act; not meant to be critical and this is not a hard problem to solve.
 - Demand for more power on the grid, gonna take a political will
 - There is a need for another facility
 - We understand how this works and have the legacy of the White mtn stewardship to 4fri to learn from.
 - There is a way to do this. We have a clear way to act with the current methods.
- Tabi
 - Working with TNC trying to try some new methods with smaller trees at Chimney Springs, Parks West and Hawk.
- TNC
 - Active projects on Kaibab and Coconino
 - 2 projects wrapped on Kaibab - 100 acres of hand work on Bill Williams, one near ski field and the other on the south slope of 122
 - Experimental project called CAP, top of Bill williams
 - Tried a slide using gravity
 - Very effective compared to helicopter - 4 acre trial
 - Expanding this work next spring
 - 122 mechanical - cut, skid process, done in the next week



- Hawk project on Coconino
 - 1600 acres complete, cut skid, decked,
 - Still removing material, started this project in July
- Upcoming RFI for a steep slope work for Bill Williams for next summer
 - Will be coming out next month, then following with FRP
 - Working starting in July
- Another RPF associated with 80 base - north slope of Bill Williams
 - Intent to use slide here
 - Removal at the slope transition
 - Hand work, no helicopters.
- County: Jay
 - Agreement with the FS steep slope on Leroux, looking at ground base technique (13 the cost of helicopter)
 - RFP out to start work in the spring
 - 2 parts - 1200 acres total
 - 600 Leroux east, 900 Leroux west - east will be done first
 - Ft Valley experimental marking done: Joe working on this
 - Durfur is also about done - NFF working on this, and Perkins
 - Lowell Observatory - working with GFFP on: Pass through for fed funding
 - CWPP moving forward with GFFP, hopefully final draft by Feb for review
 - County-wide, Neil handing the city part, tribal partners coming on board
 - Going to DC in Feb. NACO. Worked well last year, same page, same messages, would love to talk to this group to coordinate talking points. Driving home the issues as a collaborative.
 - Convene a meeting, for small edits on the briefer to convey good work?
 - County involved with long term recovery - Dragon Bravo and White Sage fires.
 - Natural and cultural resources; Jay is overseeing
 - Question: Leroux steep slope – 4fri or other NEPA? Which one? Leroux NEPA,
 - Scot - could use old NEPA since we've moved away from helicopters. "Old nepa" Scott can get that.
 - Not removing overstory, just dead and down below mixed conifer
- GFFP - Anne
 - Received a congressional spending to thin section 17 on Observatory Mesa; including Mars Hill
 - Expanded by the generosity of SRP, will be able to move into Thorpe park
 - Operational plan being put together
 - Can update in January
 - Treasured area
- Pascal - Eastern AZ counties
 - Share considerations on biomass, similar to Brad's thoughts



- Technology that we have works; review over the last month
- Looked at everything geared to conversion of liquid, bio-char, thin gas, etc
 - We have been talking about biomass in 4fri - for 15 years there has not been any technology or market for these technologies
 - Liquid fuel at the same point we were 15 years ago.
 - Thin gas is the same situation
 - Bio char - a little different, but market hasn't progressed
 - Overestimated market collapsed from 6-2 billion (globally) and degrading yearly
 - Studies in CO, UT yield no measurable benefit for agriculture; aka, question on whether it works
 - Bio-Char to Carbon credit (landfilled) market has difficulty in US or UK
- Back to square 1 with only one thing that works, bio electricity
 - We do not have much to gain on funding other research,seminary, white papers options, etc - factual that bioelectricity is the only one not at a standstill
 - Eastern AZ County - perspective is that we need to accept and engage in building more capacity for bio electricity
- How do we guarantee a supply? - FS side/question
- Trying to enter the execution phase - because the discussion phase is over
- Scot: Clarifying the ASU Lightworks contract as per Pascal's comment
 - Not asking for viable off-take solutions, instead what is the best way for the FS to execute best ways for move forward with biomass and be able to guarantee supply

Working Group Updates

- Communication WG - Tayloe Dubay
 - On the horizon - for DC
- Industry/Biomass WG - Brad Worsley/Tony Flagor
 - No additional
- Multi-Party Monitoring Board WG - MaryLou Zimmerman/Andi Rogers
 - Didn't hard to meet for a few months
 - Did go in the field for snowtopography sensor replacement
 - Big looks from the SHG, what do we want to present yearly, prioritize
 - Trigger and threshold identification, funding limitations
 - Thanks to Michael Barnes to be the new Springs and Streams contact
 - Telling the story
- Comprehensive Implementation WG - Cerissa Hoglanders
 - No updates; excited to be meeting in person with the FS.
 - Andi: Can connect in the future (Feb) with MPMB with any needs for additional monitoring



- Tom: Quick final overview of Friends of Northern AZ Forests - wrapped up many projects,
 - 56th project for the year. Just under 7k hours of volunteer work, 18 miles of fence removal, 140 aspen exclosures maintained, purchased power weed wackers within the aspen exclosure,
 - Thank the FS, able to work through the furlough. FONAF 28 of 56 members participated in field activities
- Prioritization and Optimization WG - Travis Woolley/Brian Nowicki: Next steps outlined from the SHG meeting in September. They are:
 - Short Term – Sharing and communication of results and data
 - 1. Communication/Sharing of QWRA data/maps.
 - 1. Report has been shared with SHG, but if Stakeholders want the actual data layers we need to decide the best way to share.
 - 2. A larger effort will likely start initially by adding it to the 4FRI public dashboard. Amy Tinderholt (USFS) I believe will be leading this effort but welcomes our help and input and will coordinate with this group.
 - 2. Refresh of QWRA based on updated datasets. Led by Richie (R3) and Enterprise Team (Will and Taylor)
 - Longer term - How does this/could this QWRA framework inform Programs of Work for restoration treatments? This is the key question at the core of why we went through this effort.
 - 3. Learning:
 - 1. Are there examples of POW that may be QWRA informed or similar?
 - 2. What does the USFS currently use for POW and how do they see it fitting into current POW development?
 - 3. How can we use it to prioritize/optimize our outcomes?
 - 4. Show/monitor success over time, National Working Group Risk Monitor Slider

Core monitoring indicators for CFLRP and collaborative governance - *Melanie Colavito*

- [Presentation](#)
- Regional Trends?
 - Didn't analyze it regionally - might be helpful for FS (as per Scot)
 - Variable by collaborative (active litigation in the PNW)
 - Follow up surveys will be interesting
 - Non-CFLRP- how are they doing in work compared to CFLRP
 - We have employed this surveys in these areas
 - Melanie is happy to chat about this more
 - Melanie - send collaborative readiness framework



4FRI: 2025 Progress and 2026/27 Priorities - [SDR presentation](#)

Discussion/Reflection on Presentation

- Brad W:
 - Shocked to see how far AZ forests are with collaboration, at the PIPO summit, obvious to Brad how well we are doing
- Scot R:
 - Chief came out, after he had been dealing with closing pulp mills. Not just a western forest issue
 - We have an opportunity to solve it, they are just trying to get through litigation with their “1 remaining mill”. This is why we are a good investment
- Melanie C.
 - Collaborative work isn’t always that shiny or innovative, but it’s worth it. Plugging away at it. Testament to how long we have been around. We can move forward with biomass.

Focus areas:

- Biomass
 - Mary Lou: Summit in our future: tapping into parts of industry that we haven’t hit yet. Bigger than ponderosa pine, what does it look like, how is it changing, etc
 - Group has traction let’s roll with it
 - Jay: How do we lead a group of collaborators and really tell this story to Congress; value in the restored acre.
 - Biomass “sewage”
 - Scot: Level-setting on what the issue really is?
 - How out of alignment is not trekking 6-7 inch trees? If that’s where we go as a FS. How does this impact other groups
 - Tom: Money talks, not sure we have put all the expense side on the ledger. Then, the outcomes that you could achieve from a financial standpoint. Organize a “ledger sheet”.. What would it cost to start a new bio plant? We need these kinds of details. More story telling.
 - Brad
 - Yellow dot on map in AZ, here we have a solution; reality that graphic is the story, need to copy this model
 - Success in 2025, on point when we went to DC in many ways
 - We are not on point on biomass, sequencing, etc
 - Need work on messaging
 - Biomass and Communication; important bridge here
 - AZCC meeting: all giving a little bit
 - Group said, “never support burning”
 - You keep this under 60 and we won’t say anything
 - “Stand aside” need to all give a little



- Perhaps the greatest value of a new biomass facility is the protection of a \$400M+ investment in the Belmont sawmill
- Christine
 - Make sure that we spend the money appropriately
 - Concerned about the slowdown of the industry
 - Now what, where will the momentum go
 - Westside biomass facility in addition to other ideas
 - Can we break down the processing of a timber sale, from the cut
 - Separate the contracting-in-woods efficiency discussions
 - Create more value in the product in the woods
 - Would like to break down the process and think about efficiencies
 - We have pre-sale innovations, but what she hasn't seen are innovations in the in woods processing piece.
 - Hauling out too much biomass
 - Are we removing the "right material"
- Melanie
 - Implementation efficiencies more discussions here (ERI has some of this)
 - One observation she has, is that we all are pushing at the same goal
 - Restoration at the landscape scale was the goal, not up for debate
 - We had agreement on what restoration on a large scale, but what is the biomass goal - need to ground in this
 - Can we articulate this? Describe the problem
 - Portfolio of biomass options
- Pascal
 - We have many answers - we have 20 years experience, including White Mtn Stew and 10 years with 4fri
 - NEPA and a series of decisions based on Forest Restoration based on restoration vs "highgrading"
 - Data: Every acre we restore is 20 tons logs, average 25 tons of logging slash,
 - NEPA requires leaving course woody debris, habitat, etc
 - FACT of 10 years, we have removed 17 tons of slash/acre
 - Westside moving forward: RFOR needs 20K acres for year, others need 5k acres/year
 - If we want to treat 25k/year we need to remove 425k tons logging slash; that is only 1 part of the equation
 - We create additional biomass when we remove
 - At 25 tons of logs, 40% "mill residue" that is essentially 10 tons/acres
 - Accumulate slash plus residuals you generate 675k green ton of "biomass" when you combine small product with mill residue



- Looking for years for ways to dispose
 - White chips can be used into pellets
 - Bark - landscaping
 - Potential applications/can place some of the tons; but there are some applications for 675K, but what that means is that there is A LOT remaining of dirty chips
- For 15 years, nothing has changed
- It's always good to explore other strategies, but looking at what is working is key/what we know
- NEPA removal: Changing work orders violates NEPA, makes the problem harder
- Either allow RFOR to log 20k/year and to process in mill, therefore they generate a lot of residual (340-540 tons/year), or we don't and we use existing technology that works.
- The purpose of 4fri is not to be a technology incubator - the purpose is to restore forest. Not in 10 years, but now
 - Urgency - do we have it?
- Needs:
 - Do we have the commitment to coalesce around one message
 - What do we do with the biomass NOW
 - Do we have FS commitment for the interim 2 years before the biomass plant is up and running
 - Additional 50 MW who is buying it; discussion with utilities.

Communications and Next Steps

- Pascal: Willing to work on a draft communication message, "Briefing paper" on biomass to present to group "pinata"
 - 4FRI briefing paper based on data
- Can we devote a meeting to developing the messaging categories?
 - Recognizing the urgency
 - Would be more of a collaborative product but reaching the same goal
- Feedback: Scheduling something will be hard in the short time; therefore supportive of putting a small team together
 - Team:
 - Pascal, Brad, Jay, Brian, Tony to draft a letter
 - Draft "white paper" to be drafted and shared with the rest of the group when ready.

Stakeholder Disclosures & Review Action Items

Action Item

Lead

Status



| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Send "old NEPA" Leroux NEPA to SDR | Scot Rogers | |
| Kristine to send DFFM GNA committee report | Kristine M | |
| Get together to talk DC talking points | All going | |
| Cross discussion with MBMB and CIWG re: future projects and any additional needs to monitor | Andi/Cerissa | |
| Collaborative readiness framework - to send to group | Melanie | |
| Send Flickr link to all | | |
| Biomass ""white paper"" to be drafted/written and share with SHG | Pascal, Brian, Tony, Jay, Brad | |

Steering Committee Meetings (second Tuesday of each month)

-2026 [1/13/2026](#), [2/10/2026](#), [3/10/2026](#), [4/14/2026](#), [5/12/2026](#), [6/9/2026](#), [7/14/2026](#), [8/11/2026](#), [9/8/2026](#), [10/13/2026](#), [11/10/2026](#), December no meeting

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

-2026: [1/28/2026](#), [3/25/2026](#), [5/27/2026](#), [7/22/2026](#), [9/23/2026](#), [12/2/2026](#)

| | 2026 Steering Committee | | 2026 Stakeholder Group | |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Hot Chair | Cold Chair | Hot Chair | Cold Chair |

TBD