



4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting

Wednesday, July 22, 2026 | 9AM-12PM

MEETING RECORDING

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cwgarATgqvHgMt1lgwB17uJx9hQg0vAx/view?usp=sharing>

Participants: Amy Tinderholt, Scot Rogers, Aaron Mayville, MaryLou Zimmerman, Erin Young, Jay Smith, Melanie Colavito, Gary Moore, Devon Suarez, Joe Hinz, Jess Jones, Kevin Ordean, Patrice Horstman, Josh Eager, Patrick Moore, Lisa Bolton, Tristan Mareb, Travis Woolley, Jake Taris, Mark Maroge, Tom Mackin, Kylie Sharp, Josh Miller, Christine Mares, Brad Worsley, Sarah Devenport, Edward Saltzberg, Cerissa Hoglander, Rimjhim Aggarwal, Amber Dorsch, Chris Verderber, Neil Chapman, Cindy Ann Soqui, Mike Martinez, Jeffery Jacobs, Nicole Kennan, William Brandt, John Richardson, Jeanne Stevens, Mike Dechter

Facilitation: *Carrie Eberly and Jessica Archibald (Southwest Decision Resources)*

Welcome and Agenda Review - *Southwest Decision Resources (SDR)*

- **Approve March 25, 2026 & April 13 Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes**
 - Approved.
- **Review Action Items from March 25, 2026**

Action Item	Lead	Status
Post April 13, 1-4PM Biomass Work Session on Basecamp	SDR	DONE
Share additional contracting questions to Scot/SDR for inclusion in the notes	All	DONE
Work with the Steering Committee to finalize the 4FRI SHG Biomass Statement	SDR	DONE
Post previous 4FRI funding levels to Basecamp	Scot	Ongoing

- Funding levels: Will post today, along with the 6-9 inch briefing paper. Talked about in March.

Call to the Public

- None.

USFS Updates

 - Scot Rogers

- On track for Program of Work - in terms of targets associated with fuels reduction as well as timber sales.
- Funding levels came through - total of \$13 million for this Fiscal Year.



- Aligns with projections - allows us to cover top priorities for future sales and mechanical treatment projects and implementation pipeline.
 - #1 priority - ensuring baseline of timber contracts and surveys needed, as well as for fire.
 - Thanks to partners for helping with getting this work done.
- At national level - lots of changes in grants and agreements program and contracting program:
 - Contracting: when do IRSC (stewardship contracts) projects have to be managed at national level? Based on changes in staff and contracting process, lots of upheaval and some uncertainty (part of why moved away from G to Z projects - unable to manage locally)
 - Agreements: in flux at the moment. 3 major changes:
 - Introduction of new terms and conditions to agreements - mostly worked through those changes
 - YCC agreements and AZCC (weed implementation and monitoring) - change at national level around how partners can account for value of volunteer labor (harder to make match). Working through this - unclear how it will be resolved in the future.
 - Nearly halved the volunteer work value.
 - On pause for now - impacts the weed space.
 - Scrutiny around how we use stewardship agreements - how we as partners identify mutual benefits of agreements and importance of what the federal government receives and what the partner receives.
 - No major concerns at the moment - out of our control locally.
 - Good Neighbor Agreement - in good shape, especially with State's willingness to accept new terms and conditions.
- Working on 5-10 year strategy update - later in the agenda.
- Biomass - FS and ASU Lightworks are still making progress on the pilot for an independent biomass operator. Good progress, have identified funding. Identifying an intermediary market player.
- Coconino National Forest
 - Agency is under significant scrutiny from the Department of Agriculture.
 - Challenges in understanding nuance of FS compared to other entities in USDA.
 - Timber offerings - doing really well. Two more timber offerings to get across the line - Kachina Pumphouse and the Z sale on Mogollon Rim.
 - Change in G to Z was a big decision - contracting process was not feasible (based on new changes). Took a lot of work to shift gears - shout-out to the team.
 - Forest-wide Agreement with DFFM - goal for every forest in the state to get an agreement. Just signed.



- Pocket Fire - things are in good shape. ~27,000 acres, 95% contained. Feeling good with rain. Full demobilization; turned back to the Forest yesterday.
 - All of the cooperators really came together - everyone was safe, and no structures lost.
- 4FRI work highlighted in this incident - between our indirect confinement strategy fire and treatments along 535 road, the fire was stopped. DFFM work in Crater Sink moderated fire behavior. Kachina Pumphouse project also. More to come on the official story.
- Forest Service Reorganization
 - About to finish interviews for State Director positions - will replace regional forester role (Forest Supervisors will report to them).
 - Expected to start those positions in October, start announcing end of July.
 - Effort to start placements for GS14/15 to have new jobs in reorganization (Washington Office or Regional Office).
- Coming soon - Forest Supervisor Tonto and Apache Sitgreaves positions.
- Apache Sitgreaves
 - Signed agreement with National Forest Foundation for Taylor Sink, part of SRP Watershed.
 - Signed this morning for GNA with the State.
 - Forest moved out of all fire restrictions last week - quite a bit of rain. Not huge impact on contractors yet.
 - Pile burning soon with wetter conditions.
- Kaibab National Forest
 - Things are looking good for the Program of Work.
 - On the forest, taking advantage of moisture with some pile burns.
 - Sunflower G to Z - Kaibab, DFFM, and SRP working on GNA agreement. Secured \$6.4 million from BIL, and SRP will match.
- Tonto National Forest
 - Out of Stage 2 - got a lot of rain last week.

DFFM Updates - John Richardson

- Project acres treated - Christine will post to Basecamp.
- Awarded Windfall Project - part of Cragin Watershed Protection Project (awarded to Suarez)
- Pumphouse project - extension added until July 31 because of Pocket Fire closure (awarded no later than Aug 15)
- Working with Amy to add more sale prep and survey projects to current agreements - those agreements are a lot of projects. Will be very busy. Adding botany, wildlife, heritage surveys plus sale prep activities.



- Heritage surveys on Kaibab - been working on two large-scale surveys. Wrapping up largest one - 14,000 acres. Working to add more large-scale heritage on the forest. Waiting on official word from the Forest Service to lift MSO restrictions so we can get back in. Expecting more acres treated after MSO restrictions are lifted.
- Several projects on Cragin ending this Fall.
- Currently planning for more projects with all Forest Supervisors in SRP Watershed
 - DFFM and FS are collaborating and coordinating projects proposed to SRP for their funding consideration.

Industry/Implementer Updates & Perspectives - All

- Suarez
 - Finished Johnson at CC Cragin a few months ago.
 - On A-S for most of Summer and Fall.
 - Markets feeling strong - customers are demanding more wood.
- Novo
 - Sitting on 45-46 days of inventory - lots of projects.
 - Differences in years - running 10 days less than 2025 (2025 was an exceptional year).
 - Lightning storms are the worst - knocked offline 3 times.
- RFOR
 - Operating Wind West and Dude.
 - Ramping up winter deck building season.
 - Tony Flagor exited for personal reasons - Chris Verderber covering (COO).
 - Strong commitment to get someone online very quickly - next 30 or so days.
 - Woodmeiser being removed - have less equipment now but doing same or more work.
 - New sawmill online: May 2027 (PLC Inatech is the producer).
 - Increasing production over next couple of months.
 - Series Environmental and others?
 - Potential biomass option ahead - lots of people snooping around.
 - Nothing is signed for agreement, but interest is strong. Lot of folks are in due diligence mode.
 - NAU part of the conversation for smaller operation.
- TNC
 - Hoch - all merchantable material removed, now in biomass removal (Dakota Logging)
 - Look for an RFP for mastication and aspen stimulation at the beginning of next month.
 - Bill Williams South - TNC awarded contract to Smith Forestry, taking some acres ground-based that were originally slated for helicopter.
 - Picking up dead and down out there for deck sale.
 - Biomass burned.
 - Coyote Deck Sale and fuel break being prepared - RFP later this year.



- Campbell Global
 - Campbell working with GFFP to start work on Lowell Observatory with Hammer Logging.
- Gary Moore
 - Grinder on Derffer project - finishing shortly (working on Perkins biomass piles).
 - Second grinder doing biomass removal on Whiskey Project.
 - Challenge always with fire restrictions, wildlife restrictions, etc.
 - Feedback on Pumphouse - working 7AM-7PM is restrictive for biomass removal due to the hauling distances.
 - Another grinder at Pinetop Green Waste - being overrun with all the dead and dying trees in the communities, adding to biomass issue this year. Increased fire risk.
 - Green waste site being shut down - because can't use Master Stewardship Agreement work for that, big challenge.
 - Something to take a look at - can this be an olive branch to local communities?
 - These sites are often on FS land.
- SRP
 - Meeting in August with all forest partners to plan for next FY - begins May 1.
- Coconino County
 - Leroux East - Perkins started work. Working on north end off Snowbowl Rd. Excited to see that project go.
 - Got some new equipment: 6-wheel; can be tethered to work on steep area. Good for rocky, steep areas.

4FRI Strategic Plan & Restoration Strategy Update - Amy Tinderholt and Travis Woolley

- Pri-Opt updates
 - Been working on dashboard update to display QWRA information.
 - Amy has been working with the Enterprise Team to switch the dashboard format for sharing information about 4FRI generally and QWRA.
 - Talking about potential ways to do optimization with QWRA.
 - Talking with SIGS, a nonprofit, that developed a model.
 - Looking for areas to protect values at risk.
 - All this information can inform the strategic plan and program of work.
- Strategic Plan & Restoration Strategy Update: [Presentation](#)
 - The ask: Join the Pri-Opt Working Group! This group will lead planning on things like:
 - Create and use strategic planning tools
 - Inform and evaluate the plan and strategic accomplishments
 - Improve planning feedback and the communication process



- These items will be presented to the SHG, who will review, edit, and comment on the final drafts.
- Need more capacity - please consider joining (between now - Oct, the bulk of work will be done).
- Looking at Jan-Feb to bring this to SHG for review.
- Questions
 - How do high-level metrics dovetail with implementation monitoring and MPMB indicators?
 - This is higher level than the on-the-ground outcomes, but they are both outcomes of what we are trying to do.
 - Could have a process to cross-talk between monitoring and these metrics.
 - Annual report on the plan, the MPMB, etc.
 - What is the product?
 - Implementation plan building off 2017 plan - idea is not to revisit that, more focusing specifically on implementation elements of that.
 - Refocusing again on looking at broader plan, what are the most important objectives to focus on in the next 5-10 years?
 - Nested under this: operational piece, an annual implementation plan.
 - More of a refresh of the 2021 plan - keeping what is relevant, removing what is not.
 - Communication products can come out of this after the first year.

From Prescription to Monitoring on the 4FRI Landscape - Panel Discussion - Scot Rogers, Mark Nabel, Jacob Lopez, Tabi Bolton, MaryLou Zimmerman

- Project Development Process - Mark
 - Project prioritization:
 - Over time, there has been an emphasis on protecting the San Francisco Peaks and working around the WUI.
 - Balance access, economic viability, and reducing wildfire risk.
 - Lots of decisions in this process.
 - Once a project area is designated:
 - 4FRI EIS has a layer that shows the designated treatments - that's the first step in looking at what kind of treatment to do.
 - Do a bit of ground truthing and look at what has happened since the EIS in that area.
 - Potential changes: Is there new Goshawk? New MSO?
 - May limit or open up potential for management.



- There is a how-to guide for what these implementations mean, defined by the 4FRI SHG and others over time.
 - Appendix D & C are the guide for how to implement those treatments with specifics on basal area, % openness, etc.
- 4FRI was a million-acre treatment - not fine-grained data. Need to complement the landscape treatment with ground-truthing.
 - Do a plot-based system to get stand-specific data - tree composition, density, disease issues.
 - All this information helps fine-tune the treatment.
 - Have a matrix - not allowed to treat more intensively than designated in EIS, but can treat across or less intensively.
- After plot-based data collection, summarize the information and see how it applies to treatments.
- Things trying to control:
 - Residual stand density
 - Spatial patterns
 - Tree quality
 - Size and age class distribution
 - Maintain all yellow pines, old and large trees
- Write prescription using all the information above.
- Prescription to contract - Jacob
 - When you get a prescription, it identifies the area that needs treatment. Go either paint the area or virtually mark it in the prescription.
 - As you outline the project area and units within, see what is operable (what's too steep, what's too rocky, what needs to be protected (heritage sites, utilities, caves))
 - Once the project is outlined, do sampling. Do some plots, confidence intervals, and determine volume estimate and error (all about money and volume expectation).
 - At that point, offer a bid for product or solicitation for proposals.
 - Identify a contractor - now they work directly with the contractor to ensure quality - it's a partnership; we do this work together.
 - There are very strict policies governing contract awards, and the awardee has rights.
 - Consider if prescription is viable with contract tools
 - Note: prescription is the same regardless of the contract; it just depends on the money component.
- Partner perspective - Tabi
 - As implementation partner, do not get to change the prescription. We do get to synthesize those guidelines and hand them to the contractor so they will be successful.



- Flexibilities for partners
 - More flexibility in who contracts with, and can contract with multiple at the same time.
 - Timing - can do longer-term contracts.
 - If there is money left over, can add things in the footprint to help achieve Forest goals.
- Have to work on operationalizing things - how to make things feasible, how to break things up to make it effective.
- Partners can be involved in all transactions and work more directly with all pieces of the puzzle (hauling, cutting, etc.).
- When there are operational issues - what happens when things go wrong?
 - Lots of things can go wrong: fire restrictions, weather, road conditions. You will have to work things out - things can get messy by nature.
 - Work directly with partners to address compliance issues.
 - Complete inspection reports - document where there were violations of the contract; provide a certain timeframe to fix it. If violations repeat, contractors must pay FS for repairs, or FS can suspend them and terminate the contract.
 - Try to avoid termination - requires starting the process over.
 - If there is repeated failure, you can submit paperwork stating that the company is a risk and shouldn't be operating. Puts them in debarment for 3 years - not able to bid.
 - Partners can be the in-between the FS and the contractor
 - FS doesn't have to question the motives as much, because partners aren't benefiting economically directly.
 - Each tree is public property - important for the government to account for those resources.
- D x P - type of timber marking process and contract process
 - Traditionally, they have done a lot of paint tree marking; over the last 10 years, they have been working toward designation by prescription.
 - D x P - prescription is incorporated directly into contract and handed over to logger. Logger is responsible for implementing prescription without paint on trees.
 - Questions for considering D x P:
 - How important is it that we get the treatment right? (e.g., MSO, wildlife considerations, WUI, high visibility)
 - How is the stand structure? Simple vs complex.
 - When it is more homogeneous - easier to do D x P.
 - Partners add a lot of capacity in D X P - in interpreting and training and providing tools.
 - D x P is a bit more challenging with accountability.



- Usually more work ensuring that prescription was achieved compared to painting.
- It's a partnership - need continual checking. Consistent visual inspection.
 - Balancing enforcement and encouragement.
- D x P +
 - Uses a tablet to help interpret the prescription - helps ensure more clarity earlier on.
 - Allows for more metrics tracking earlier on.
 - Often see loggers cutting less than the prescription.
- Monitoring
 - Biophysical monitoring guided by Appendix E in the EIS - lots of experts determined desired conditions and variables.
 - MPMP has direction to develop a prioritization of variables/conditions to determine where to collect pre-treatment and post-treatment samples. Trying to identify trends:
 - Songbird monitoring - Jamie Sanderlin, Rocky Mountain Research Station
 - Rapid vegetation monitoring - NAU
 - Measure a suite of variables for structure and composition of understory.
 - Snowtography - looking at accumulation of snow on the ground; how it stays or goes and how forest canopy cover affects that.
 - Stream monitoring and restoration
 - Implementation monitoring
 - This is a compliance matter - was the project implemented in the way it was designed, were objectives achieved or not, and what happened?
 - Suite of tools to do this data collection.
 - Just starting to wrap our arms around all the data we have and how they inform work ahead.
- Q&A
 - Challenges
 - 6T requires payment of timber subject to agreement - no flexibility for contracting officer even for biomass removal.
 - After evaluation, can call it slash disposal and not charge.
 - 6T challenges - massive escalation (contractor would bid a certain value for timber; on 6T contract, there is an escalation clause, leading to escalating cost to your timber)
 - Tied to indices from Western Wood Products Association - big-time industry that doesn't necessarily apply here.
 - Regionally have had conversations about waiving escalation - more often than not hurts industry/purchaser and isn't as relevant here.



- There are four different contracting officers across 4FRI - challenges in how they interpret differently or the same.
 - 4FRI Board tries to encourage consistency, not always possible.
- Flexibility is key
 - Difficulties with large funders not being able to talk on the ground with contracts (e.g., Coconino County).
 - Need flexibilities in timing - can take advantage of social capital to get more work done (e.g., more cutting in Kachina while support is high).
- ERI has a project that looks to trace this line of telephone - taking NEPA where desired conditions are articulated, looking at how that is implemented in monitoring and back into the world of science.
 - Looking at what is aligned and who is talking past each other or getting lost - any reflections from the group on where this might happen?
 - There was a vision painted with historic reference conditions by scientists which was translated to desired conditions - this is really complex, trying to translate that complexity into a prescription that is understood by logger is a big challenge.
 - Would love to see more monitoring on the back end.
 - Comparing pre and post - function processes, wildlife, social component.
- What are the resources needed to get to “grade A” and is there a role for SHG to play?
 - Best experience typically with marking, which is then inspected and cleaned up. Can get grade A with marking 90% of the time
 - Even before administration changes, when trying to ramp up acres with DxP, there are more complications.
 - When FS has to administer themselves and with limited ability to be selective with contractor, more uncertainty. Contractors are inconsistent/change over time, hard to get them trained on DxP, especially.
 - Resources needed
 - When we go through a partner and give them the project - that is a recipe for increasing success.
 - Still need marking in some areas.
 - More time in the woods.
 - More eyes on the ground - have 4FRI SHG go out and check on progress (similar to Walker Hill)
 - Need to go out more often - 3-4 times a year (off months for SHG?).
 - Help with monitoring.
- How have these processes been impacted by staffing and funding changes



- Down a lot of people; difficult to hire. Ability to go out on the ground with inspections in a timely manner is difficult right now.
- Need to be out there more often for short-term projects.
- Want more results on monitoring - how are these projects affecting wildfire? This is why we are doing this?
 - Want to hear more of that - need to tell this story.

Vulpes Area - Aaron Mayville, Jeanne Stevens, & Mike Dechter, Coconino National Forest

- [Map link](#)
- Background
 - A group of residents approached the Forest to do treatments alongside private inholdings; when looking at NEPA, some units are designated as burn only.
 - The short answer as to why it was designated that way: it was a coarse-grain analysis. We have gone out and field-verified, and now it does warrant some tree cuts.
 - As we move out from Phase 1 4FRI, this type of tweak/change may be more common. We need to get feedback and talk about what this means for future changes.
 - It's not new that there have been some decisions, and a few years later there are things we didn't think about or new information - used to be a process for a supplemental decision report to document this. That has all changed with new NEPA regulations in April.
 - We've adopted as an agency many new Categorical Exclusions (over 150 compared to 40 in the past).
 - Now, when we want to change or modify a decision, we have a project reevaluation tool (replaces supplemental decision report).
 - Still being rolled out - there are some templates.
 - New requirement - do a new updated EPA filing (don't have an internal process).
 - New CE categories - allows for thinning in acreage where burn only previously.
 - Have all these new tools - not sure exactly which is best/how to use them. Appreciate any feedback from the SHG in figuring out that path.
 - Figuring this out for Vulpes project now - wanted to inform and get any other feedback
 - They are leaning towards CE option here.
 - Project Evaluation on EIS requires Federal Register notice - leaning towards quick CE.
 - In future scenarios, it may make more sense to do project evaluation.



- A lot of new tools -this project not being driven by them - but there are other projects.
- Rim Country EIS is conditions-based - much more flexibility there.
- Q&A
 - When is the decision being made? Will there still be burning?
 - Will keep ability to burn - doesn't exclude. Don't know when that would happen exactly.
 - Decision on the district - ASAP. Very soon.
 - Can we build a workflow for how we address these nuanced pieces?
 - Identify when we need reporting and how to address.

Working Group Updates

- Communication WG - *Taylor Dubay*
 - None.
- Industry/Biomass WG - *Brad Worsley*
 - None.
- Multi-Party Monitoring Board WG - *MaryLou Zimmerman/Andi Rogers*
 - MPMB's current focus is to prepare monitoring summit
 - Still need more capacity - please join!
- Comprehensive Implementation WG - *Hannah Griscom*
 - Grand Canyon Trust volunteers worked on riparian restoration at Hoxworth Springs for erosion control and building up wetland area
- Prioritization and Optimization WG - *Travis Woolley/Amy Tinderholt*
 - Who will join?
 - Kevin
 - Jay and Joe
 - Melanie
 - Tabi
- Treatment Implementation Group - *MaryLou Zimmerman*
 - Treatment Implementation Group is just starting up - trying to organize a field trip to see some of the pieces talked about in the panel out on the ground
 - John R, Christine M, Kevin O

~~Biomass Effort Updates - NRWG, GFFP, SDR, others~~

- ~~● Brief Overview: [Biomass Disposal Strategies](#)~~
- ~~● Initial priorities (Mentimeter)~~
- Moved to next meeting or Basecamp

11:55 Stakeholder Disclosures & Review Action Items



- ERI Science and Stewardship Forest Restoration Conference is on Aug 11-12, please register!

Action Items	Lead	Status
Post previous 4FRI funding levels to Basecamp	Scot	Ongoing
Discuss 4FRI decision change “workflow” (re Vulpes and similar changes)	Steering Committee	
Contact MaryLou Z to join MPMB and Treatment Implementation Working Group	All	
Contact Travis W and Amy T to join Prioritization and Optimization (including strategic planning ahead)	All	

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
January	Joel Jurgens	Melanie	Joel Jurgens	Melanie
February	Joel Jurgens	Melanie		
March	Melanie Colavito	Jay Smith	Melanie Colavito	Jay Smith
April	Melanie Colavito	Jay Smith		
May	Jay Smith	Pascal Berlioux	Jay Smith	Pascal Berlioux
June	Jay Smith	Pascal Berlioux		
July	Pascal Berlioux			
August	Pascal Berlioux			
September		Neil Chapman		Neil Chapman
October		Neil Chapman		
November	Neil Chapman			
December	Neil Chapman		Neil Chapman	