



## 4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 24, 2015, 9AM – 3:30PM

Arizona Game and Fish – Region I Office

2878 East White Mountain Boulevard, Pinetop, AZ 85935

Teleconference line: (712) 775-7031, code: 439290611#

**Attendance:** Buck Swaney, Sue Sitko, Pascal Berlioux, Tiffany Woods, Diane Vosick, Joe Miller, Scott Russel, Annette Fredette, Randy Fuller, Jerry Payne, Wally Covington, Billy Masters, David Dorum, Greg Smith, Bruce Greco, Ron Klawitter, Rebecca Davidson, Todd Schulke, Tommie Martin, Brad Worsley, Tom Osen, Sid Morgan, Bryce Esch, Karen Warning, Richard Remington, Neda Movahed, Dick Fleishman, Bill Westward, Patti Turpin, Travis Woolley, Jeff Whitney, Steve Reidhead

**One the Phone:** Bob Siedler, Linda Lind, Terry Green Sterling, Kitty Pattersal, Steve Gatewood, Anne Mottek, Alycin Gitlin

**AGENDA UPDATE:** Minutes and Action Items from the May retreat will be discussed/approved under the “Advance” Review. Both documents are attached.

**9:05 Call to the Public**

**9:10 Announcements – All**

- Forest Service and contractor updates are available on BASECAMP

The Camille (managed) fire is located within the 4FRI EIS boundary and has burned over 5,000 acres. The Forest Service (FS) was able to conduct a nighttime burn in a Mexican spotted owl (MSO) protected activity center (PAC).

**9:15 Stakeholder Disclosures – All**

No Disclosures

**9:30 EIS #2: Moving forward with integrating SHG and NRWG (D/A):**

- Update on June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and review of NRWG proposal – Berlioux/SHG

Representatives from the Natural Resources Working Group (NRWG) and the Stakeholder Group (SHG) met on June 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss a potential path forward for the second environmental impact statement (EIS). In response to the conversation, Supervisor Jason Whiting provided the SHG with a letter listing his proposed tenets. These tenets resulted from various interests expressed to Supervisor Whiting that are intended to encourage more east side involvement. The NRWG would like to have more influence on the planning of the second EIS. The implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management for the first EIS would remain on the west side and applicable information from the first EIS would be reflected in the second EIS. The tenets are not intended to work against the SHG and 4FRI, rather they are intended to work with and within the organizational structure of 4FRI.

**Note: The letter is an open invitation to a conversation, it is not a NRWG decision and no formal motion has been made at this time.**

The tenets and SHG commentary is as follows:

- The NRWG would sign the 4FRI Charter.

Clarification is needed on how the NRWG's organizational structure and voice would work within 4FRI.

The following questions were asked by present stakeholders:

1. Who would sign the charter?
2. Who would speak or vote on behalf of the NRWG at SHG meetings?
3. Who are the current members of the NRWG?
4. What is the capacity of the NRWG to get the work done?

Pascal Berlioux noted that the NRWG is one entity, signing the Charter would only be on behalf of the NRWG not on behalf of the various organizations that compose the NRWG. Bruce Greco added that the proposal has not yet been presented to the NRWG and that a lot of work would need to be done, he is concerned with the capacity of the NRWG to get the work done.

- To represent the different phases of 4FRI, the leadership of 4FRI would be adapted. Both the NRWG and SHG would designate a Co-chair to provide shared leadership of 4FRI.

Stakeholders request clarification on the specifics of adapted leadership as the Charter would need to be revised if any leadership changes are to be adopted. Questions:

1. How will co-chairs be selected?
2. Will there continue to be 2 co-chairs?
3. Would this continue to polarize the SHG between the first and second EIS boundaries?

At this time, co-chairs are self-nominated. One of the issues that the SHG is facing is the lack of volunteers interested in being a co-chair. The SHG agreed that adaptive management is an important consideration and they are interested in reviewing the Charter/organization of the SHG, however, they agree that co-chairs need to represent the SHG as a whole, not just the objectives of one organization.

**Action Item:** Develop a working group tasked with reviewing the Charter.

- The NRWG would take the lead on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 4FRI EIS analysis, integration of the White Mountains industry needs, and implementation issues.

The integration of NEPA and industry was well-liked in the White Mountain Stewardship Contract and industry members on the east side believe that the NRWG would be more aggressive in supporting their needs. Tommie Martin suggested that the FS issue smaller contracts and that the second EIS include a better economic analysis. However, the second EIS is not implementation, it is a guide to implementation. As with the first EIS a working group was established, a working group will also be established for the second EIS and membership/leadership is open to all stakeholders that volunteer, including NRWG members. Clarification is needed on what "take the lead" entails and if the NRWG has the capacity and structure for the third tenet to be viable. Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (ECO) might be able to provide/add the resources and capacity that would be required for the second EIS.

- The SHG would take the lead on the 1<sup>st</sup> 4FRI EIS implementation issues, monitoring, adaptive management, and relevant issues.

Once again, clarification on "take the lead" needs to be made. The SHG believes that tenets 3 and 4 could be combined, but concern was voiced that if they are agreed upon they would continue to polarize the SHG between the first and second EIS boundaries. The listed issues should be addressed by the SHG as a whole, not separate entities. Joe Miller adds that if there is a continued reference to the east or west side, these terms need to be clearly defined.

- Quarterly 4FRI meetings would be held alternately on the Westside and Eastside, with agendas alternately focused on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> analysis areas issues.

Tenet 5 was not well received by present members of the SHG. Meeting frequency and agenda items need to be adaptable to the needs of the group. If quarterly meetings are adopted, the group will want to discuss all of the prevalent 4FRI issues, not just those that are specific to the region that the meeting is held. Jerry Payne suggest that the language be more inclusive so that the group will be able to address issues as needed. Pascal Berlioux noted that tenet #5 was only included in order to accommodate the proposal made by stakeholders at the Retreat that there be only quarterly meetings, hence it is a proposal from the SHG, not from the NRWG. NRWG is fine if SHG wants to withdraw their proposal and continue with monthly meetings.

**Action Item:** Assess quarterly meeting schedule at July SHG meeting.

- The 4FRI Group would send a letter to the Forest Service, cosigned by the two Co-Chairs representing both the NRWG and SHG, outlining the above decisions made by the stakeholders on their involvement and representation in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> analysis areas.

The SHG agreed that it is too early in the discussion to determine what the content of the letter will include, but they do agree that documenting any agreements or decisions is desirable. This will be an ongoing process, but both the NRWG and SHG want to constructively work together to move forward. These tenets and the SHG feedback will be further discussed at the July NRWG meeting.

Supervisor Whiting's letter is available for review on BASECAMP.

**Action Item:** Summarize NRWG discussion (Integration Interests) and present to Supervisor Whiting

### **11:00 Implementation of Restoration Activities: Building Consensus (D/A) – REVISED 6/22/15**

Before reviewing implementation from the view of the Forest Service, three components of implementation that were determined by the SHG at the May Advance were mentioned:

1. How does the FS do implementation and what does it mean to them?
2. Implementation as contractor activity – How do we create benchmarks?
3. Include the comprehensive ecological restoration meaning with the economic objective.

The development of an industry roundtable/working group was discussed at the Advance. Industry members could work together to develop benchmarks and explore or solve issues that industry members are facing.

- Define “implementation”

The FS definition of implementation is that implementation is complete once the contract has been issued. Dick Fleishman stated that implementation also can include USFS working with Stakeholders to review the plan and become involved in the layout and sequencing of treatments. However, the SHG needs to reach consensus when discussing implementation as contractor activity. The creation of industry benchmarks will help the SHG maintain accountability, measure success, and effectively respond.

- Information: Implementation steps by USFS – USFS

The FS provided a handout (Implementation of Restoration Activities) that reviews implementation and helps provide insight to the prioritization of restoration activities. **Please view Appendix A for handout.**

Question (Woolley): Concerning the post-prioritization process, could the FS provide a list of things that need to be done on any given task order (TO) before mechanical thinning or prescribed burning or any

restoration activity can occur? An article in the Arizona Daily Sun from June 23<sup>rd</sup> does include the requested list, but before any implementation occurs there must be an EIS or signed NEPA decision followed by the required survey work depending on the restoration treatment.

Rob Davis, who was not present, sent the following questions via e-mail prior to the SHG meeting: How are the contractors selected? How large and long are the contracts? How do they use what they cut? What else do the contractors have to do? How do they leave the site after cutting? How does the economics of their process match what they cut and have to perform?

Pascal Berlioux points out that the SHG has already dedicated time, under the leadership of the NAU Forest Ecosystem Restoration Analysis, determining the first strategy of implementation. While the SHG is focused on prioritization, sequencing, and locations of treatments there needs to be a discussion about the mechanical thinning that is occurring on the ground because riparian restoration and the reintroduction of a cool fire regime is only possible if the fuel source is removed. Berlioux believes that the group cannot have a serious discussion about implementation without primarily discussing the cutting of trees because the current state of the forest does not allow for the reintroduction of fire without thinning and this does fall within the framework of 4FRI.

These questions can help use see what all is involved with implementation, but Buck Swaney reminds the group that the core question is what influence does the SHG have in the implementation process?

- SHG level of influence on implementation accountability

The SHG needs to come to consensus on how the group wants to discuss implementation and what we want to see accomplished. It is agreed that implementation is a matter of contracting and this is a matter between the FS and the contractor and the SHG has no input in the process. However, influence isn't just technical it is also political and when 4FRI reaches consensus the group can be extremely influential.

- Incorporating contract stipulations

Scott Russell, from the FS, notes that some aspects of 4FRI are inherently governmental, the SHG will be notified of these process at the same time that they become available to the public. Todd Schulke countered that there have been instances where other regions have worked more closely with outside organizations and requests that representatives from region 6 be contacted to provide input on their strategy/approach to outside assistance.

Question (Vosick): When will the FS make a decision on their contracting approaches for the second EIS? This has not yet been determined, but the first contracted was aimed at getting industry in place which would determine the need for another contract. The decision is also often determined at the offering.

While implementation is necessary for improving the health of Arizona forests and reducing the chances of high intensity fires, not all acres are economically equal. Some acres pay for themselves, others require stewardship contracts or subsidies, and then there is the overwhelming problem of the costs associated with moving biomass. To determine the successes/challenges and establish benchmarks industry, the FS and the SHG all need work together to move forward. The needs of industry need to be addressed and discussed so that they can help facilitate the move to a healthy forest and there needs to be a rigorous economic analysis.

Jeff Whitney, Arizona State Forester, is in favor of an industry roundtable and is working to convene an industry roundtable.

The 4FRI industry roundtable/working group is aimed at addressing the following:

- I. How to set measurable goals/benchmarks
  - II. On-the-ground realities/economics
- Process for addressing both successes and challenges in meeting benchmarks – Requires further discussion and SHG consensus.

**Action Item:** Establish and Industry Roundtable/Working Group – Approach potential members.

### **12:30 Lunch**

### **1:30 Multi Party Monitoring Board (MPMB) Update – Esch **Agenda Item Addition****

Bryce Esch is currently one of the MPMB co-chairs and notified the SHG that the MPMB would like to request an official document from the FS clarifying the language in the 4FRI Objection Resolution letter that pertains to monitoring. The MPMB can A) draft an official letter that would be presented at a SHG meeting and voted on or B) work directly with their FS partners who participate in the MPMB meetings to obtain the desired clarification. It was recommended that the MPMB utilize BASECAMP to better inform the SHG on their request for clarity before it be presented to their FS partners and to provide the SHG with a more detailed update/presentation at the July meeting.

**Action Item:** Post the MPMB request for clarification on the resolution letter on BASECAMP

**Action Item:** July SHG agenda item: MPMB Presentation

### **1:40 “Advance” Review and Discussion on Significant Outcomes (D/A) – **REVISED 6/22/15****

- Review Minutes and Action Items; Approve minutes – Vosick

The Advance was framed by 13 interviews that were conducted by Southwest Decision Resources (SWDR) and attendance between the 2 days ranged from 30-40 participants. The minutes are available for view on BASECAMP.

Positive highlights include:

- The group diversity fosters good discussion.
- The active working groups work well.
- The SHG drive towards more consensus building is important.
- The structure of the co-chairs works, but there needs to be more co-chair volunteers.

Areas needing improvement:

- Increased trust and respect amongst group members.
- Reduce the number of conversations dominated by few individuals.
- Unbalanced workloads and communication.
- Recognition that the proposed plan of action could have been more collaborative.
- Complex attitudes towards the contract.

The interviews provided the following feedback:

- Facilitation is important.
- Planning and implementation is needed next.
- The group needs to use lessons learned and keep the eye on the prize. Note: ERI is in the process of preparing a White Paper on 4FRI Lessons Learned.

Moving towards the second EIS, it was recommended that:

- The SHG go through all the effected forest plans to become familiar the FS desired conditions.
- Improve collaboration with the FS to better understand their process and the appropriate timing for pressure points.
- Select a Regional Office liaison to improve communication between all levels of the FS and the SHG.
- Provide educational information on fire modeling and NEPA training. Note: USFS to host NEPA workshop is action item.
- Be prepared for the new issues that have been identified in the second EIS. Note: Presentations on the Mexican grey wolf and threatened and endangered fish are being organized.
- Relaunch the Communications Working Group.

The SHG provided no objections to the Advance minutes; **Minutes Approved.**

**Action Item:** Joe Miller contact Dr. Jack Williams for a presentation on T&E fish in the Southwest.

- Action Item Assignments:

SHG: Quarterly meetings starting in July – Moving to quarterly meetings may not be ideal as we move into planning for the second EIS and open the charter. Meeting frequency needs to remain flexible and further review and discussion will be done in the upcoming SC calls and the July SHG meeting.

SHG: Co-chairs – It is recommended that the group establish back-up co-chairs. They will be able to act on behalf of any absent co-chairs. Further discussion will be held at the July SHG meeting.

SC: Working group representation at SC now required – With the reduction of SHG meetings, the working groups will be more active. Their participation in the SC calls with help improve the drafting of SHG agendas.

SC: Change to monthly meetings effective Tuesday, July 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Action Item:** Pascal Berlioux will contact Steve Gatewood to confirm that he will be able to be one of the upcoming co-chairs

Working groups:

1. MPMB – currently active.
2. Communications Working Group: Rebecca Davidson and Sue Sitko.
3. Utilization & Industry: Contact Jeff Whitney and Jerry Payne to have Patrick Rappold lead this group. Other potential members include Stephen Reidhead, Brad Worsley, Gary Moore, Karen Durant, Steve Horner, Darren Gurner, etc.
4. Implementation: Determined to be unnecessary because the work can be completed by the MPMB (adaptive management) and the Industry & Utilization Working Group (benchmarks).

5. Temporary Charter Working Group: This group will be postponed until after the NRWG and SHG reach a path forward agreement.

Each working group requires their own charter. All of the working groups are requested to draft mini-charters and present them at the July SHG meeting.

**Action Item:** July SHG agenda item: Working group charter presentations.

**3:00 Forest Service Announcement – Fredette Agenda Item Addition**

The FS is currently evaluating data needs and preparing for the second EIS. They are also addressing staffing needs for the extended team to assist with the determined data needs.

Anticipated Dates:

August 2015: Forest plan desired conditions

September 2015: Deadline for SHG feedback on desired conditions

November 2015: Revisit preponderance of young large trees

March 2016: Existing conditions and draft proposed action.

2017: Draft EIS

The FS will need to be invited to present and they request that the group distinguish if the presentation will be for a working group or the SHG.

**Please view Appendix B for complete timeline notes notes.**

**Action Item:** Post anticipated dates and FS notes to BASECAMP

**3:00 Review Action Items/Adjourn**

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Develop a working group tasked with reviewing the Charter	Unknown	Postponed
2. Assess quarterly meeting schedule at July SHG meeting	All	
3. Summarize NRWG discussion (Integration Interests) and present to Supervisor Whiting	Sitko/Berlioux	
4. Contact Patrick Rappold to have him initiate the Industry and Utilization Group: membership, charter, etc.	Sitko	
5. Post the MPMB request for clarification on the resolution letter on BASECAMP	Esch	
6. July SHG agenda item: MPMB Presentation		
7. Contact Dr. Jack Williams for a presentation on T&E fish in the Southwest	Miller	
8. Contact Steve Gatewood to confirm if he will be able to be one of the upcoming co-chairs	Berlioux	Done

9. July SHG agenda item: Working group charter presentations.		
10. Post anticipated dates and FS notes to BASECAMP	Fredette	Complete – Attached to minutes

**Anticipated agenda items for 7/22/15 SHG meeting:**

1. Co-chair volunteers: Paul Summerfelt and Steve Gatewood
2. Examine co-chair and charter
3. Examine performance
4. Coordinate Mexican Gray Wolf presentation for October SHG meeting



## Appendix A

### Forest Service Implementation

Implementation is every aspect necessary to achieve restoration work on the ground for all restoration projects that are accountable for the 4FRI CFLRP Initiative. This includes implementation work on timber sales, task orders, prescribed fire, wildlife habitat improvement projects, roads and trails projects, watershed improvement projects, and invasive species treatments. Within the Forest Service, the accountability for reporting implementation occurs when either the activity occurs on the ground, or when a contract is let to complete the work.

Priority areas for implementation are outlined by the Forest Service and also informed by 4FRI stakeholder input. Specifically, the Forest Supervisors have defined the following areas as priority areas for treatment:

- Wildland Urban Interface
- Watersheds of Concern (Cataract Creek Headwaters (Bill Williams Mountain), Rio de Flag, Upper Lake Mary, CC Cragin (note CC Cragin is outside of the first EIS))
- High Crown fire potential
- Priority watersheds outlined in Watershed Condition Framework (those listed above plus Upper Hell Canyon on the Williams Ranger District) and Coconino Wash (on the Tusayan Ranger District)
- T & E Species Habitat

The 4FRI collaborative has given input through the Landscape Strategy and include the following:

- Active crown fire 97th fire behavior
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan watersheds/flood protection
- Community protection areas (WUI)
- Mexican Spotted Owl restricted habitat
- Passive crown fire 97th
- NEPA completed acres Areas USFS has completed NEPA analysis and compliance;
- Major roads buffer (USFS level 3-5)
- Mountain top buffer
- Northern Goshawk post-fledging areas
- MSO PAC buffer 0.5 mile upwind in restricted habitat
- Active crown fire 85th
- Recreation areas w/ infrastructure + named campgrounds

The bottom line is there is an amazing amount of similarity in the priority areas that have been identified as areas where the Forest Service will locate restoration treatments. Also note that these prioritization areas are not mutually exclusive. For example, wildland urban interface, areas of high crown fire potential and watersheds of concern overlap in the Rio de Flag, Upper Lake Mary and the Cataract Creek Headwaters; therefore these areas have the highest priority for restoration treatment.

## Appendix B

### SHG Meeting 6/24/15

### USFS Follow-up on 2<sup>nd</sup> EIS Process/Insertion Points and NEPA Session

#### What we're already working on...

- Evaluating data needs and conducting data prep
- Looking at current management direction in three (3) forest plans
- Determining staffing needs for 2<sup>nd</sup> EIS

Need new members for extended interdisciplinary team, especially from the Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto National Forests, and different data for additional vegetation types, wildlife species, hydrology, geographic features, etc.

#### Anticipated NEPA/planning topics and timing...

- Desired Conditions – August presentation, September feedback
- Preponderance of Large Young Trees – November presentation
- Existing Conditions and draft Proposed Action – March presentation, April feedback

#### Presentations to entire Stakeholder Group or to workgroups...

Consider which method would facilitate discussions and help us keep moving forward on the NEPA process for the 2<sup>nd</sup> EIS. The Forest Service will need to be “invited” to present to either a workgroup or the entire SHG (FACA consideration).