



### 4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 26, 2015, 9AM – 1:30PM

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, Paul Watson, Sheryl Smith, Greg Smith, Tommie Martin, Tom Mackin, Laura Jo West, Ken Butler, David Dorum, Steve Horner, Ann DeMarco, Scott Russel, Wally Covington, Audrey Owens, Kelly Wolff-Krauter, Keith Pajkos, Debra Crisp, Jerry Payne, Billy Masters, Stephen Reidhead, Karen Warnick, Bill Nobel, Randy Fuller, Bruce Greco, Stephanie Coleman, Chris Nelson, Brad Worsley, Larry Ethelbah, Stephen Flora, Paula Cote, Mark Nigrelli, Pascal Berlioux, Steve Gatewood, Tiffany Woods, Annette Fredette, Chris Walker, Gary Moore, Royce Kincanon, Gary Snider

**On the Phone:** Anne Mottek, Rebecca Davidson, Nanabah (Nonie) Nez, Amy Waltz, Rob Davis, Jay Smith, Joe Miller, Todd Schulke

The SHG welcomed Laura Jo West, the Coconino National Forest Supervisor, to her first 4FRI meeting. She is looking forward to supporting 4FRI because of the scale of the initiative and the work of the collaborative.

#### 9:05 Approve minutes from July 22<sup>nd</sup> SHG meeting — Berlioux

Minutes Approved

#### 9:10 Review action items from July 22<sup>nd</sup> SHG meeting — Berlioux

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Determine date for Dr. Jack Williams Presentation on T&E Fish in the Southwest	Steering Committee/Miller	Working on a date. October or November
2. Organize Tablet Technology Presentation and Clark TO field trip for future SHG meeting	SC TNC	TBD. Working on a date October/November
3. Re-post BASECAMP Opt-in Reminder and Deadline	Woods	Complete
4. Send request to NRWG distribution list to opt-in/join the 4FRI BASECAMP	Berlioux	Complete
5. Provide Pascal list of EIS Planning group members so that he can reach out to NRWG members to also join, the request sent to NRWG will include an invitation to join all active working groups	Woods/Berlioux	Complete
6. Establish a desired conditions field trip for August meeting – coinciding with FS presentation	SC	In Progress – Later discussion
7. Send email to Fredette requesting that the FS give a presentation at the August meeting	Berlioux	Complete
8. Convene 2nd EIS planning Group	Berlioux	Complete

**9:20 Call to the Public** – No comments

**9:25 Stakeholder Disclosures and Announcements** – All

- **Stephen Reidhead** – The TriStar Logging sawmill hit record because of the Bear Chambers sale that had been moved outside of the 4FRI contract.
- **Rebecca Davidson** – The Salt River Project (SRP) Forest Health, Vibrant Economy Conference will occur on October 7-8. The SRP website will be updated next week to include more information on the upcoming conference. If you have any questions please contact Rebecca.
- **Pascal Berlioux** – Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (ECO) now represents Cochise County, effective 7/31/2015. ECO also represents Gila, Graham, Greenlee, Navajo, and Apache counties.

**9:35 USFS Presentation on Desired Future Conditions** – Fredette/4FRI ID Team

At the beginning of the presentation the Forest Service (FS) provided those in attendance with five handouts. All handouts are now available for viewing on BASECAMP.

The second EIS for 4FRI will be referred to as the “Rim Country” EIS. While the FS provided a map of the project area it is still considered to be a draft as the project area could change, depending on the data that the FS is collecting. The FS will use the first EIS as a starting point, but they recognize that they will need to make additions and changes as a result of the differences between the two project areas. While they will focus on the topics and issues that are important to 4FRI, they are required to complete the full NEPA process. This means that they will need to be careful to add analyses of what is different. To do this they need to gather and review best available science on the new topics and update knowledge on those analyzed in the first EIS.

The resource leads from the 4FRI interdisciplinary team will be presenting summaries of what is different in the second analysis: Bill Noble (Wildlife Biologist), Randy Fuller (Silviculturist), Chris Nelson (soils/water leads), Debbie Crisp (Botanist), Mary Lata (Fire Ecologist), Mark Nigrelli (GIS), and Paula Cote (NEPA Planner).

Before moving into summaries, Annette Fredette reviewed the second EIS timeline. Please view the handout on BASECAMP titled **4FRI Rim Country EIS Timeline**. She also reminded the SHG that the goal of today's presentation is to encourage stakeholders to become more familiar with the desired conditions in the three forest plans (Apache-Sitgreaves, Tonto, Coconino) included in the analysis area. The FS 4FRI Team will be making all of the desired conditions available on CD, but are still determining what conditions to include.

**Silviculture** – Randy Fuller

1. **Dry Mixed Conifer (frequent fire series)** – As we move south and east across the second analysis area one begins to encounter more dry mixed conifer. In the first EIS dry mixed conifer was not included in the analysis, but it will be included in the second analysis because it is more abundant and it has a frequent, low intensity, fire regime similar to that of ponderosa pine. The objective is restoring resiliency in the frequent fire regimes. Currently, fire intolerant/shade tolerant species are expressing dominance and in the new forest plan the FS would like to reduce the occurrence of the shade tolerant species. Prescriptions will be written for dry mixed conifer once the FS has identified it, this will take some time as it is mixed with the ponderosa pine and the spruce/fir forest types.
2. **Riparian & Riparian/Forested** – The Coconino NF is relatively dry, there is a substantially higher number of streams in the second analysis area. Riparian/Forest is a specific ecological response unit in the revised forest plans and is classified as stream sites that are carrying a canopy cover (10%).
3. **Pine Stringers** – There are two strong transition zones that will be found in the second EIS, the first being the dry mixed conifer and the second being the pinyon-juniper woodland series. Running down

these pure woodland series one finds strings of ponderosa pine. This causes an issues as 4FRI wants to restore frequent fire regimes (fire regime type 1) in ponderosa pine, but the pure woodlands have a fire regime type 4. The general consensus is to treat the woodlands as a means to protect the ponderosa pine forest types, but this is a unique situation (although the current Tonto NF forest plan includes management direction for pine stringers) and the FS is still gathering data to determine what needs to be done here.

4. Extent of Uncharacteristic Fire Effects – In the second analysis area one finds highly departed landscapes as a result of the Rodeo-Chediski fire. The area is recovering, some sections are coming back forested, others are going to take an extended period of time to come back forested. There are more open spaces, grasslands, and gamble-oak (brushland) and it is struggling to get back to the ponderosa/gamble oak forest type. The FS plans to reintroduce fire in the burn area, but in some cases fuels are not enough to carry a fire and in others the fuel loads are too high to conduct prescribed burns. The FS wants to determine how they can get fire back on the landscape while protecting the regeneration and managing the fuels.

#### **Fire – Randy Fuller for Mary Lata**

A main objective of 4FRI is to get fire back on the landscape for frequent fire regimes. The second analysis has new vegetation and habitat types. Mixed conifer poses issues because the wet mixed conifer is positioned next to spruce-fir and at lower elevations includes pinyon-juniper and heavy woodlands. These forest types have different fire regimes than ponderosa pine and the FS is going to have to determine where to use mechanical treatments vs. mechanical and fire treatments vs fire only treatments. Another concern is sensitive receptors connected to different air sheds; the FS needs to be careful not to load air sheds with smoke or particulates and, to do this, extensive modeling will need to be completed.

#### **Soils and Water – Chris Nelson**

1. Soil Types and Conditions. The soil types in the first analysis area are derived from basalt or cinders versus the sedimentary soil types found in the Rim Country EIS. Sedimentary soils have more rapid infiltration and the effects of logging will be different.
2. Riparian Extent and Condition – There is a lot more water in the second project area. There were only 93 miles of riparian area in the first analysis, whereas the A-S, alone, has over 600 miles.
3. Perennial Stream Extent – There are only 9 miles of streams in the first analysis area and they are all intermittent (ephemeral). In the A-S there are 69 miles of perennial streams and 900 miles of intermittent streams.
4. Water Quality – There were 3 impaired lakes in the first analysis area (based on ADEQ information) and 1 impaired stream. In the Rim Country EIS there are 5 impaired lakes and the FS does not currently have the number of impaired streams. The FS is gathering data on this.
5. Watershed Conditions – Please view the watershed condition class map to see how the FS will classify the watersheds in the second analysis. The map is available on BASECAMP. The majority of the watersheds are classified as functioning at risk, the FS hopes to improve these conditions with the treatments they will be prescribing.
6. Extent of Uncharacteristic Fire Effects – There was a large amount of soil lost as a result of the Rodeo-Chediski fire and it has also degraded soil productivity. Recovery is ongoing as streams are still trying to stabilize and the riparian areas are coming back. Recovery is also still happening in the footprint of the 1990 Dude fire as streams are still stabilizing and conversation of vegetation, which has effects on water yield.

#### **Wildlife – Bill Noble**

The second analysis area is substantially more complex and diverse than the first because there is the introduction of new vegetation types and aquatic habitat. While some species will be carried over from

the first analysis area, they will look very different in the second analysis because of the landscape. For example, when treating PACs in the first EIS only the ponderosa pine cover types were treated, however, treatments for all vegetation cover types in PACs will be established for the second EIS.

The complexity of the second analysis can also be attributed to the fact that, regardless of the size of a vegetation type, a set of species is tied to each vegetation type and each species will need to be brought into the analysis. In general there are three times the number of species in the second EIS than the first and a species specific analysis will have to be completed for each species in each species group. This could lead to multiple analysis being completed on one species because they are included in multiple species groups. Essentially, you will need to multiply the number of species by the number of vegetation treatments that are being determined and the FS will need to develop environmental consequences for each one and this is not including the number of alternatives that will also need to be added.

In summary, there are three major points to take away from this review:

1. There are more vegetative cover types, which means that there are more diverse wildlife habitats.
2. There are more complex juxtaposition of those cover types, which means a more diverse selection of habitat.
3. There are many more species to analyze in those cover types.

Please view the wildlife handout, available on BASECAMP, to see the comparison of species between the first and second analysis areas.

### **Botany and Invasive Species – Debra Crisp**

A handout was provided that listed potential Region 3 sensitive plant species, it is available on BASECAMP. This list is subject to change dependent on the data that is collected. A list of weeds has not yet been created, but the FS is receiving regional direction from the regional weed coordinator that could impact how they address and rank species. In the first analysis there was a single weed EIS, in the second each forest has their own weed document.

Other important considerations include the review of three old conservation plans for the Goodding's onion, Arizona willow, and the Arizona bugbane and the inclusion of analysis species from the 2012 Planning Rule. If the conservation plans are considered to still be valid the FS will need to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and analyses will need to be done for each analysis species that is at-risk, where the FS can control the mitigation process.

### **Planning and the NEPA Process – Paula Cote**

The FS will be using the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR Part 219). In terms of Forest Plans the A-S NF has a revised final plan, the Coconino NF is expecting to have a final plan in 2016, and the Tonto NF is currently in the middle of their revision process (at the assessment stage). The FS does not anticipate having a final Tonto NF Forest Plan until after we have a 4FRI decision, this explains the need for forest amendments that will establish consistency amongst the forest plans.

Included in planning is travel management. The Coconino NF annually updates their motor vehicle use map, the Tonto expects to have travel management decision by December 2015, and the A-S NF is scheduled to start an analysis by 2016 with a final decision in 2018. Even though the A-S isn't set to have a final travel management decision until 2018, they have put a lot of direction and guidance in the revised forest plan. For example, they have added a motorized use suitability decision that gives direction on where motorized use is appropriate, including the use of temporary roads. Travel management decisions do determine what roads will be open for various uses. The data used to inform the analysis provides recommendations on what roads or routes should be decommissioned or naturalized for

resource benefit. The 4FRI analysis will review the data to develop the routes and roads that would be proposed for decommission.

In regards to the NEPA process, the FS is currently in the existing conditions phase where they are gathering and consolidating all of the data, soon everyone, including the collaborative, will need to work together to determine the gap(s) between the existing conditions and the desired conditions. The determined gap will influence the purpose of need and the proposed action. The goal is to release the proposed action by the spring.

As the FS moves into the other steps of the NEPA process they plan to have more workshops and share draft documents. Based on feedback from the collaborative, this approach seemed to work well. Another application they plan to use that would increase transparency is Wikispaces, this would encourage the public to edit documents and allow everyone to see all suggested revisions.

Desired conditions – please view the FS PowerPoint **4FRI – 2<sup>nd</sup> EIS Planning Strategy/Desired Conditions**, to view the full definition for desired conditions and how the FS determines the desired conditions. BASI stands for best available science and information. Examples of desired conditions were covered in the slides, but the handout **ASNF Revised Forest Plan Desired Conditions Excerpt for Ponderosa Pine, Mixed Conifer and Wildlife and Rare Plants** covers these desired conditions more in depth. Many desired conditions may seem familiar to those stakeholders who participated in the first EIS, particularly for ponderosa pine and management within goshawk habitat. The FS will use current recovery plans to develop the need for change in terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Forest plan amendments will not be needed for the Coconino or A-S NFs. A forest plan amendment will be needed to bring direction for ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, and old growth management within goshawk habitat into alignment with the Coconino and ASNF revised plans. The revised forest plans provide desired conditions for all resources (including soils and water, springs, caves and karst features, and scenery) that will be used to develop the purpose and need and proposed action.

The FS is required, by the 2012 planning rule, to be in alignment with desired conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines, suitability decisions, and special areas. Monitoring is used as a gauge how management is maintaining or moving towards desired conditions. For more information on the requirements for documenting consistency with the forest plans please view the handout titled **Documenting Consistency with the Revised Forest Plans in accordance with 36 CFR 219**.

The final handout **Summary of Potential Tonto NF Plan Amendments** reviews potential amendments that will be needed for the Tonto NF, it is available on BASECAMP. These amendments will get the Tonto in alignment with where the second analysis is heading in terms of desired conditions. As earlier discussed, amendments will not be needed for the Coconino or ASNF because draft and final revised forest plans are available.

#### **Questions:**

Stephen Reidhead voiced concern on the annual range of acres treated (5,000-35,000) in the consistency document. Why would the forest service even consider making a contract for 5,000 acres? The range came from ASNF revised forest plan (p. 37) and they determined those numbers to ensure there was a wide enough range should they have low output as a result of industry. It is only included to ensure that the forest is moving towards or meeting those objectives.

Brad Worsley wanted to know if there was any way the FS would be able to speed up the process because at this time his biomass factory only has a contract for 7 years, it will end before the anticipated 2019-2020 timeframe. The FS does recognize that there will be additional items covered in the second EIS, but they hope that using the first EIS as a starting point will streamline the process, they want to do it faster. Brad also asked what resources would be required to complete this process by 2017. In

response, Scott Russell noted that 4FRI is not the only supply to industry, there are many projects happening outside of 4FRI

Kelly Wolff-Krauter brought up the current projects that were considered shelf-ready projects that won't be reanalyzed in the second EIS. She would like to know why they won't be reanalyzed when they aren't consistent with the first EIS because they used the old forest plan. The FS is looking at these shelf-ready projects and determining if there are more vegetation treatment areas within those projects that can be reanalyzed, this is why the boundaries of the second analysis area might change.

Pascal Berlioux added that the Natural Resources Working Group (NRWG) has been working with the FS on the bridge the gap projects. Many of these projects already have decisions and others will have decisions soon. The bridge the gap projects will supply restoration acres to industry for about 5 years, including 2015. The issue is being able to bridge the gap between the non 4FRI projects and the second 4FRI task orders, to maintain the east side industry. If the process for the second EIS cannot be accelerated, discussions must be had on increasing the number of projects within the bridge the gap projects. The FS will share their 5 year plan with the stakeholders and industry so that the group is aware of the timber sales that will take place outside of 4FRI, this will help determine if there is a need for more bridge the gap projects.

Karen Warnick had two questions; 1) What happens if there are wildfires that burn large portions of the forest, will we need to start over? 2) If the Wildfire Disaster Act and the Resilient Federal Forests Act pass, will they speed up the NEPA process for the collaborative? At this time, the FS does not know exactly how the two acts would impact their NEPA timelines, there is a chance that they could help. Large scale forest fires create a huge sense of urgency for the FS, they are taking the time to properly complete the work to ensure that implementation can happen. A wildfire within the second EIS boundary would create a delay because they would need to reanalyze the changed conditions, but they would not need to start over.

Steve Gatewood noted that the term adaptive management wasn't mentioned in the discussion and monitoring was only mentioned a few times. He wants to know how the FS plan to integrate these items into the second EIS as they would be critical for success. The FS does plan to use products from the first EIS and lessons learned from the first EIS. The second EIS will build upon the adaptive management and monitoring plan that were developed for the first EIS. Monitoring results will be used to inform the analysis when they are available.

**Action Item:** Review Bridge the Gap Strategic Plan – for the Dashboard, Utilization and Implementation Planning Group

**Action Item:** Provide feedback to the FS on Desired Conditions (Due by September). Questions asked by the FS: Is the SHG Landscape Strategy a good crosswalk or is work needed? Do the stakeholders feel that these desired conditions are incorporated in the Landscape Strategy as you have laid it out for ponderosa pine ecosystems, particularly those for dry mixed conifer, pine-chaparral transition, pine pinyon-juniper, grasslands, and riparian vegetation types?

**Action Item:** Feedback on the SHG Landscape Strategy and its status in the second EIS

**Action Item:** Provide feedback to the FS on the Preponderance of Large Young Trees (Due by November)

**11:50 Communications Working Group – Davidson/Sitko**

- Newsletter Review

The Communications Workgroup handed out a draft of the 4FRI newsletter, Sue Sitko reached out to present industry members to provide information for the section titled: Industry Insider. Sue & Rebecca

plan to post a finalized version to BASECAMP by Friday, 8/28 and are in the process of creating a distribution list that is separate from BASECAMP. The SHG approved the release of the newsletter.

The Communications Working Group would also like to update the process required for approving and releasing future newsletters. The month prior to the release of the newsletter, they would like to generate ideas from the SHG at the SHG meeting. The month that the newsletter is due, they will present a nearly complete draft at the Steering Committee call for approval. Then at the SHG meeting they would provide final hard copies to those that are present at the meeting. The SHG approved this new process.

**Action Item:** Post Communications Working Group updated process for releasing newsletters on BASECAMP and update the charter to reflect the new process under the communications section.

### **12:05 Working Group Updates**

- Multi-party Monitoring Board – Waltz
  1. Plot work is ongoing in 4 task orders, they have over 25 plots done out of their goal of 275. These plots are important because they will help measure effectiveness of treatments at meeting the desired conditions. The NEPA they are monitoring are outside of the first analysis area, but they are very similar.
  2. Their agreement for remote sensing analysis has been approved.
  3. The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory work is complete and analysis is underway.
  4. Concerning next steps, on BASECAMP you can find the draft letter for the MPMB response to the resolution letter. They have also added the MPMB meeting calendar to BASECAMP. If you are interested in participating, please contact Bryce Esch (her email is available on BASECAMP).
- Dashboard, Utilization and Implementation Working Group – Gatewood
  1. Next Steps for Establishing Working Group
  2. Call for members

The purpose of this group is to reach consensus on how the group measures the success of the work that is being done (implementation). They will discuss how to integrate what they learned from the first EIS into the second EIS, the kinds of implementation that are happening and how to accelerate the process, and how to continue to integrate utilization into the implementation schedule. This group will provide a forum to strategically address issues associated with implementation and utilization. A meeting will be scheduled for early September. The following meeting attendees volunteered to participate: Stephen Reidhead, Steve Gatewood, Stephen Horner, Gary Snider, Pascal Berlioux, Paul Summerfelt, Jerry Payne, and Neil Chapman.

**Action Item:** Convene first Dashboard, Utilization and Implementation meeting

**Action Item:** Post working group charters on BASECAMP

### **12:20 Stakeholder Group Meeting Discussion – Berlioux/Gatewood/Swaney**

- Outcomes of discussion with the Natural Resources Working Group (NRWG)

For the complete review of the discussion please view the SHG meeting minutes from June and July. The 4FRI SHG group determined that changes to the charter were not a fundamental need as anyone who would like to participate in the SHG can participate and sign the charter. At the last NRWG meeting the NRWG Chair on behalf of NRWG, and various NRWG individual members signed the 4FRI charter. A number of NRWG members volunteered to serve on the Steering Committee members and co-chair.
- New members and co-Chairs and co-Chair configuration

Greg Smith (SC member and co-chair), Paul Watson (SC member and co-chair), Brad Worsley (SC member and co-chair), Stephen Reidhead (SC member and co-chair), Allen Reidhead (SC member and co-chair), Tommie Martin (SC member and co-chair), Jason Whiting (SC member and co-chair).
- Discussion of one-time exemption to Good Standing requirement for NRWG members and co-chairs in order to bring in NRWG members and co-chairs.

The good standing requirement (attendance at 4 meeting annually) was developed to protect the decision making process, however, the existing co-chairs would like to allow for a one-time exemption for all NRWG members that were invited to join the group and signed the charter. This exemption will allow recently joined NRWG members to participate in the decision making process by automatically granting them good standing status, charge to them the then maintain their good standing moving forward, as any other member of 4FRI. The SHG approved the one-time exemption.

- Charter Revision – Swaney

The goal is to simplify the charter by using input suggested by stakeholders. Those interested in participating in the charter revision process need to contact Buck or send him comments/suggestions. The plan is to present a vetted version of the charter at the September meeting.

- Discussion on facilitation – Swaney

Buck is currently under contact until September. The FS is currently putting together a request for proposal (RFP). While Buck will apply for the RFP, it is not a guarantee that he will continue to be the facilitator. Those having questions concerning this process need to contact Annette Fredette, do not send questions to Buck.

- November/December SHG meeting –

The SHG has decided to forgo the December meeting and move the November meeting from Wednesday, 11/25 to Wednesday, 11/18.

**Action Item:** Add exemption process to charter

**1:00 Review Action Items/Adjourn**

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Review the Bridge the Gap Strategic Plan	Dashboard, Utilization and Implementation WG	
2. Provide feedback to the FS on Desired Conditions (Due by September)	EIS Planning Group / Steering Committee	
3. Provide feedback on the SHG Landscape Strategy and its status in the second EIS	EIS Planning Group / Steering Committee	
4. Provide feedback to the FS on the Preponderance of Large Young Trees (Due by November)	EIS Planning Group / Steering Committee	
5. Post Communications Working Group updated process for releasing newsletters on BASECAMP and update the charter to reflect the new process	Swaney	
6. Convene first Dashboard, Utilization and Implementation meeting	Gatewood	
7. Post working group charters on BASECAMP	Gatewood	
8. Add exemption process to charter	Swaney	

**09/23/15 SHG meeting information:**

Wednesday, September 23, 2015  
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 Teleconference line: (712) 775-7031, code: 439290611#