



### 4FRI Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 28, 2015, 9AM – 1:30PM

South County Complex Health Building – Frontier Conference Room

600 North 9<sup>th</sup> Place, Show Low, AZ 85901

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

**Attendance:** Pascal Berlioux, Judy Bratcher, Debbie Cress, Wally Covington, Rebecca Davidson, Rob Davis, Ann De Marco, David Dorum, Dick Fleishman, Stephan Flora, Randy Fuller, Annette Fredette, Steve Gatewood, Tiffany Geisler, Bruce Greco, Ron Klawitter, Lynn Krigbaum, Bill Masters, Martin Merrill, David Newlin, Spencer Plumb, Heather Provencio, Stephen Reidhead, Todd Schulke, Greg Smith, Paul Summerfelt, Buck Swaney, Diane Vosick, Kelly Wolff-Krauter, Tiffany Woods, Brad Worsley

**On the Phone:** *Technical difficulties, the line at the meeting facility was not properly functioning, unable to connect to the conference line.*

#### Call to the Public:

Geisler Diesel (Tiffany Geisler): Geisler Diesel was subcontracted by Good Earth Power Arizona (GEP) from February to April. They provided \$39,601.00 in services during this period that have not been paid. In addition, GEP has promised \$10,000. GEP has made multiple payment plans; however, none of these have been followed through. Geisler Diesel is not the only local company that has not received payments for services provided while subcontracting for GEP. This situation has been brought forward to the U.S. Forest Service (FS) and while the FS was unable to comment, they recommended that subcontractors contact the FS contracting officer with these concerns.

Pascal Berlioux noted that Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (ECO) is concerned about the lack of payments being made to local subcontractors that worked with GEP. Instead of expanding industry (an objective of 4FRI), it is hurting it.

#### 9:05 Approve minutes from September 23<sup>rd</sup> SHG meeting — Summerfelt

Minutes were approved

#### 9:10 Review action items from September 23<sup>rd</sup> SHG meeting — Summerfelt

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Finalize date for MPMB presentation on FY15 monitoring assessment	MPMB	Complete – Jan. or Feb. Agenda Item
2. Post recent newsletter on public 4FRI site	Woods	Complete
3. Post Dashboard, Utilization and Implementation meeting information on BASECAMP	Horner	Complete
4. Request GEP to give a presentation on their implementation plans for 2016	Smith	Complete – January Agenda Item

5. Update 4FRI Planning Workgroup charter with FS Feedback from today's meeting then post on BASECAMP	Berlioux	Complete
6. Review the excerpt of A-S Revised Forest Plan Desired Conditions that was handed out at the August SHG meeting for any concerns	4FRI Planning Workgroup	Complete
7. Post draft forest plan amendment language for review by SHG	FS	Complete
8. Post draft SHG Charter to BASECAMP on September 30 <sup>th</sup>	Swaney	In Progress – November Agenda Item
9. Review and potential approval of updated 4FRI Charter at October SHG meeting	All	In Progress
10. Continue Field Trip discussion at following SC Call	SC	Complete

**9:15 Mexican Gray Wolf Presentation – Sherry Barrett (FWS) & Jeff Dolphin (AZGFD)**

The Mexican gray wolf is a subspecies of gray wolf that has a historical range encompassing forested areas of the Southwest. It was listed as an endangered species in 1976, and in 2015 the FWS announced the final *Revision to the Regulations for the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf* that will expand and more successfully implement the Mexican wolf reintroduction program in Arizona and New Mexico.

By 1982 there were no Mexican wolves left in the wild, however, in 1977 they were able to capture some of the last remaining wolves in Mexico allowing the FWS to establish a captive breeding population. The 1982 Recovery Plan intended to maintain the captive breeding program and re-establish a population of at least 100 Mexican wolves in the wild. Under 1998 regulations they designated a Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, but as time passed the experimental range did not provide a large enough area to release the required number of wolves into the wild to address genetic concerns. In fact, if a wolf established itself outside of the designated range it needed to be returned or placed in captivity. The new range is located between the I-40 and the U.S.-Mexico border and has been sectioned into 3 zones.

While the recovery plan has successfully doubled the population of wolves in the wild since 2010 by inserting wolves from captive breeding into wild packs, cross fostering, and the ability for wild packs to successfully reproduce (wolves only breed once a year), there was still a high mortality rate of 99 wolves from 1998-2014.

Another focus of the revision is to improve human acceptance of wolves and decrease conflicts as degradation and predation are concerns of the general public. At this time, state game agencies have not been able to measure an adverse impact on elk or other wildlife populations and in 2014 there were only 36 cases of livestock that were confirmed killed by wolves. The rules for the taking of a Mexican wolf within the MWEPA have been modified to allow take if it is determined that wolf predation is having a negative impact on wild ungulate herds or livestock. However, this is only applicable to the experimental population as Mexican wolves are listed as endangered outside of this area. Other project efforts have been made to reduce livestock conflicts including the establishment of the Mexican

wolf/livestock council and the passing of the 2014 Farm Bill Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) that compensates livestock owners for depredation of livestock by Mexican wolves.

Questions:

What are the effects of the experimental population on logging and thinning operations within the MWEPA? Do loggers need to consult the FWS? As it is an experimental population, loggers do not need to consult with the FWS. They are unable to kill the wolves, unless they become a problem (all instances of rake must be reported within 24 hours).

What is being done to ensure that the wolves are being released in their natural habitat? Was their historical range located more in Mexico than the U.S.? There is a lot of controversy concerning their historical range, but they do know that they were found in the Southwest. The FWS does not have authority of the regulations in place in Mexico, but Mexico does have their own plans and they have listed the wolf as endangered. Both countries work together collaboratively.

How are livestock producers compensated when a wolf kills a female that could have reproduced, how do they determine the rate of compensation? There is a limit to what producers can receive from the FSA program, increases in the amount of compensation a producer can receive need to be addressed through legislation.

Sherry Barret is the Mexican wolf recovery coordinator of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), based out of ABQ. Her presentation concerning the management of Mexican Grey Wolf in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas is available for viewing on BASECAMP. Also available on BASECAMP is a FWS document listing FAQs on the rule revision and a Mexican Wolf Depredation Compensation document.

Field Activities Presentation: Brent Wolf, field biologist with AZGFD (Alpine Office)

The maps in Brent's presentation represent the location of 2014 packs. It has slightly changed from the previous year, and there has been the establishment of new packs. The map distinguishes between a pack's core habitat and additional habitat, essentially the areas that they expect to locate the wolves.

The field season starts at the beginning of the year with helicopter captures, with a main objective of collecting population counts. While helicopter collaring is easier, they also conduct field collaring. Last year they were able to catch and collar 20 wolves, but some of the GPS units were lemons. This year they were able to get out a total of 18 GPS collars, all working. Included with the population count, they also conduct pup counts and cross-fostering releases. In some situations they must enter a den to get accurate data. This year they had a minimum count of 34 pups.

Other field activities include analyzing the depredation of livestock and wild ungulates. They determine if the wolf had killed or scavenged the animal and then they determine which wolf pack was responsible. For mitigation, they cache food in areas where wolves are established near herds of livestock to reduce the chances of conflict.

Questions:

What are the impacts on elk populations? There have been 13 cases of predation from the Blue Stem pack that is located between the Gila and A-S National Forests. The majority of cases of predation are seen with elk yearlings and females, as well as some mule deer.

How aggressive are these wolves? The wolves are generally scared and run away, unless there is a trap or they can't get away. You never know how they are going to react, do not approach them, this goes for all wild animals.

When will the wolves be released in the Tonto National Forest? There are currently no plans for releasing wolves in the Tonto, at least for the remainder of the calendar year. While they have expanded the area that the wolves can be released, they will need to build temporary dens which will require NEPA to determine the best sites for future release. Pascal Berlioux added that ECO has worked with FWS to stop the release of naïve adult wolves (wolves that have been habituated to humans). They will not grant permits for the release of these wolves.

What are the involved costs? What is the cost per animal per year? The program currently runs on \$2,000,000.00 a year. Half is allocated to salaries and an additional \$500,000.00 goes to cooperating agencies. The cost compares with that of other endangered species. An EIS was completed and it included an economic analysis, the EIS can be accessed from the FWS website:

[http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/NEPA\\_713.cfm](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/NEPA_713.cfm)

**Action Item:** Post FWS and AZGFD presentations on BASECAMP

#### **10:15 USFS Update – Fredette/Fleishman**

The FS is still collecting data for the Rim Country EIS. They hope that the stakeholders have familiarized themselves with the desired conditions and have had an opportunity to review the draft amendments they made available on BASECAMP earlier this week. SHG recommendations concerning desired conditions and draft amendments will be given today and at upcoming SHG meetings.

**4FRI Overview:** 4FRI is an initiative with multiple projects and contracts. It includes past, present and future restoration projects that fall within its footprint such as the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project, Bill Williams Mountain Project, C.C. Cragin, and the White Mountain Stewardship Project. The Phase 1 stewardship contract is only one contract, but it is not the only mechanical thinning contract offered within the Phase 1 boundary. Project areas approved through the NEPA process can be defined as a task order (TO) within the contract or offered as a contract outside of the project.

**October Monthly Update:** Those who attended the Natural Resources Working Group (NRWG) meeting will notice that the 4FRI monthly update that was made available on BASECAMP is slightly different from what was provided at the NRWG meeting. This is the result of updated information that was received from on the ground operations in the forest. Also the prescribed fire and managed wildfire tracking only includes data from 10/1/15 to present.

Concerning date changes to offerings (e.g. the Larson Project), it was perceived that dates were being moved back on projects that were already signed or seem ready to be signed. When discussing projects there are three timeframes that need to be taken into account: NEPA, preparation (usually 6-8 months), and the date that the FS decides to make the offering. These three factors can contribute to some variability and miscommunication, however, once signed implementation can start immediately. The FS did clarify that no 4FRI Phase 1 TOs were being allocated to the Phase 1 stewardship contract from the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (A-S).

**4FRI Facilitation Contract:** The facilitation contract is still in the works. At this time a timeline was not provided, but there is still enough funding to keep Buck for the next meeting or two.

**CFLRP Report:** Dick Fleishman has only received 5 responses from stakeholders since posting a request on BASECAMP for information pertaining to leveraged and matched fund contributions. This data is needed by the end of the week as well as some accomplishments that the stakeholders are most proud of from last year. The stakeholders quickly listed the following accomplishments: 15,000 acres treated outside of the GEP contract, Coconino County rezoning to accommodate industry, increase in weight limit to 90,000 tons for trucking industry, the Paired Watershed Project, TNC instrumentation, and the SRP Forest Health Conference.

**Note:** The monthly update and the components of 4FRI handouts are available on BASECAMP.

### **1:15 Agenda Change Working Group Updates**

- Multi-party Monitoring Board – Flora

MPMB meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, they will be having an extended meeting on Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> from 9AM-12PM at the AZGFD in Flagstaff. This meeting is intended to review monitoring from the past year, including the monitoring budget and their prioritization of the top-tier indicators. The meeting will also lead into planning for FY16 and their upcoming budget. A more in-depth update will be given at the next SHG meeting.

Songbird and goshawk monitoring has been entered, they plan to have a report draft by December. TNC field based ground plot surveys were completed this month and data entry is scheduled for November and Decembers. The remote sensing agreement has been signed for the canopy cover model and for the Paired Watershed Project they have added additional instrumentation. The work group is also working with FWPP on the Lake Mary Watershed, and they are looking at hosting a science workshop on MSO. Concerning socioeconomic monitoring they are going to start contacting contractors. Please respond to these surveys to paint the picture of what is actually going on in industry.

- Communications Working Group – Davidson/Sitko

Next month the Communications Working Group plans on bringing a draft newsletter to the SHG meeting and a final will be released at the January meeting. Today they want stakeholder input and some consensus on the next round of stories.

For the front page story (Forest Restoration in Action), it was recommended that the story cover the 15,000 acres that had been treated by small industry on the east side. However, others in the group felt that it might be more appropriate to write about all of the acres treated across the total footprint. This caused the stakeholders to have a discussion on what the appropriate avenue would be for releasing a stakeholder stance on the current phase 1 contractor issues. It was agreed that the newsletter should not weigh in on the 4FRI contractor, instead it should focus on the exceptional work that moves us towards our overall goals. An official stakeholder statement will be discussed at the next SC call. Empire Machinery was selected for the stakeholder spotlight, the signing of the ROD for the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP) will be highlighted in the Across Our Forests section, and the DFCs will be covered in Forest Facts. At this time the Stakeholder Perspective was undetermined and any

information on upcoming events or coming attractions should be emailed to Sue or Rebecca to be included in the next newsletter.

**Action Item:** Discuss an official statement from the Stakeholder Group concerning the Phase 1 contractor issues at next SC call

### **10:25 Announcements – All**

- SRP Workshop recap – Davidson

This year's "Healthy Forest, Vibrant Economy" conference was the most successful in terms of numbers. The networking booth was one of the conference highlights as it allowed attendees to make new connections and learn what other organizations are doing. Another highlight was the SRP video with Lynn Sue (retired from channel 12). The video and most presentations will be available to view online at <http://www.srpnet.com/water/forest/conference.aspx> SRP is already evaluating the next steps and discussing what they will be doing next year. Smaller conversations with key audience members is something they are considering.

**Action Item:** Post link to SRP video on BASECAMP

- SHG Calendar Review – Summerfelt

The November and January SHG have been combined and will be on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Coconino NF Supervisor's Office. Stakeholders also requested that meeting information for all upcoming work group meetings be posted to BASECAMP.

Concerning BASECAMP, stakeholders quickly discussed the reorganization and clean-up of BASECAMP. This conversation will be continued at the SC Call.

**Action Item:** Post future work group meeting (location, time, etc.) information on BASECAMP

**Action Item:** Continue BASECAMP cleanup discussion at SC Call

- SHG field trip availability – Smith

The SHG will not proceed with organizing a field trip in the near future. 2016 might provide a better opportunity to plan a field trip to familiarize stakeholders with desired conditions.

- Ponderosa Pine Lumber Grading Short Course

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, Arizona State Forestry will be giving a lumber grading course at Northern Arizona University. Interested parties can find more information on this course through the following link: <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1771335>

### **10:50 Stakeholder Disclosures – All**

**Eastern Arizona Counties Organization (Berlioux):** ECO and the FS have recently increased for the second time, the same volume of the White Mountain Stewardship Contract. They also hope to extend the contract in the near future.

**Carpe Diem West** (Summerfelt): Paul Summerfelt recently attended Carpe Diem West’s Healthy Headwaters’ Tenth Leadership Convening in Eugene Oregon. 80 people were invited and there was a panel discussion. A lot of interest was generated and questions were asked concerning the collaborative process in Northern Arizona. Representatives from SRP were also in attendance.

### **11:15 Desired Future Conditions – Planning Work Group (Berlioux)**

The FS has worked very hard to provide the SHG with the necessary information to build recommendations on the desired future conditions (DFCs) and on the draft amendments to the Tonto Forest Plans. With the information provided by the FS the Planning Work Group (PWG) developed a crosswalk between the stakeholder DFCs from the first EIS and the FS DFCs for the Rim Country EIS.

When developing this crosswalk the PWG observed that there was a difference in the notion of scales. The smallest scale used by the SHG was 20 times larger than the largest scale used by the FS. This is because the FS DFCs are targeted to guide implementation. An objective would be to align the scales used by the FS and SHG and work together to define words and clarify narratives to ensure consistency in statements. Another factor concerns metrics; how will the group be able to communicate and look at canopy cover?

Another observation was that there were many DFCs that were not included in the initial document provided by the FS, the original document focused on forested DFCs. The FS did provide additional information on the excluded DFCs, but as they PWG meets the first Wednesday of the month they did not have an opportunity to review the documents as a group, allowing them to develop a recommendation. These documents will be reviewed at the PWG November meeting.

Overall, the group found that there was a broad common ground between the SHG DFCs and the FS DFCs.

The official recommendation concerning the original language provided by the FS is available on BASECAMP. The document includes a high level crosswalk, a crosswalk for ponderosa pine forest DFCs, objection/resolution inputs, and stakeholder comments. Each of the four tables provide a list of action items and/or comments. Aside from the issues that were brought forth during the objection process for the first EIS (grazing, MSO, roads, etc.), the PWG is in a position to respond positively to the FS request to move forward with the draft DFCs as they were provided, pending the appeal process for the A-S NF Revised Forest Plan and the action items identified in the recommendation document.

There was a slight discrepancy amongst the group concerning the language that was included in the PWG recommendation, the group decided it would be more appropriate to change the word “reflect” in tables 3 and 4 to “consider.” The group agrees that the input provided by the objectors should be used to inform the SHG and the FS and that their comments should be reviewed as a means to address potential issues proactively, but the group is unable to force the FS to incorporate certain language in the DFCs. In response to this concern, the FS reassured the group that the IDT team is working on how they are going to move forward with the objection resolution agreements from the first EIS and integrate them into the Rim Country EIS. They also noted that they did complete a grazing impact analysis for the first EIS and they plan to do another grazing analysis for the second.

The recommendations brought forth by the PWG were approved by the SHG, reflecting the slight change in wording discussed above.

**Action Item:** Post revised 4FRI 2<sup>nd</sup> EIS Desired Future Conditions Recommendation to SHG on BASECAMP

## **12:15 Overview of Draft Amendments – Paula Cote**

There are three proposed draft Tonto NF Plan Amendments and they include:

### **1. Cultural Resources**

The language concerning cultural resources is outdated and it may not be possible to achieve a “no effect” determination for all sites that are listed in, nominated to, eligible for, or potentially eligible for the National Register. The language will be amended to recognize that there could be sites where avoidance is not possible by including “no adverse effect.” This will allow more flexibility to certain undertakings and allow for consistency between the FS findings and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) findings.

### **2. MSO Component**

The Mexican spotted owl (MSO) amendment will align the MSO component in the Tonto NF Forest Plan with the 2012 Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan. The current language includes direction from the former (1995) recovery plan. They will also include the MSO monitoring plan that was a part of the first analysis record of decision (ROD).

### **3. Ponderosa Pine, Dry Mixed Conifer and Old Growth in northern goshawk habitat**

This amendment will allow the FS the ability to implement uneven aged output and establish groups and interspaces. The design features and implementation sections of the first EIS will be used to develop the details, design features, and mitigation options for the second EIS.

The PWG had an opportunity to meet and discuss the provided documents concerning the draft amendments. They developed a recommendation for moving forward, very similar to what was provided for the DFCs. They are in agreement that the FS proceed with the draft amendments as is, pending:

1. The resolution of the 2012 MSO Recovery Plan, as it is being litigated by Wild Earth Guardians
2. The potential litigation or future reaction of GTR 310 pertaining to the goshawk amendment
3. Preemptive NEPA that could lead to issues on standards and treatment definitions that go beyond the DFCs
4. The notion of scale and providing clarity on terms and narratives that need to be defined

The SHG approved the recommendation of the PWG and the group recognizes that the draft amendments are subject to change depending on the above outcomes/action items.

**Action Item:** Post minutes from Planning Work Group that reflect the SHG recommendation concerning draft amendments

## **12:45 ~~Dashboard~~ Industry Workgroup Charter – Worsley**

The Dashboard Utilization and Implementation (DUI) Work Group presented their proposed charter to the SHG for approval. The main goals of the work group are primarily industry driven, and the corresponding dashboard that they developed (also pending SHG input) will monitor mechanical thinning. After the first meeting the group determined that the most critical deliverable pertained to socioeconomic impacts and they wanted to work to find ways to expedite implementation, such as the tablet technology. The group does recognize that implementation isn't specific to mechanical thinning



as they will also be tracking other restoration activities, as outlined on the sample 4FRI Progress Dashboard.

As a result of the goals provided in the charter, it was recommended that they change their name to the Industry Workgroup. Stakeholders also felt that it was appropriate to clarify goal 2 by changing “lead” to “advise” and by changing “visualized in green/yellow/red color code” in goal 6 to “visualize appropriately.” The SHG approved the Industry Workgroup charter.

**Action Item:** Post revised Industry Workgroup charter to BASECAMP

When discussing the Sample 4FRI Progress Dashboard the following discussion points were discussed by the work group members and stakeholders:

- The acres treated mechanically will include both those acres treated by the phase 1 contractor and other contractors. This gauge will be modified to include year to date.
- The other restoration/fire will mainly track prescribed and managed fire as other types of restoration is harder to gauge (e.g. riparian areas). The group recommended that there be a gauge specific to prescribed and managed fire as it is easier to track and then have an additional gauge for all other restoration treatments.
- Major milestones and timeframes. They want to be able to determine if we are hitting those milestones. The next work group meeting will focus on determining these goals.
- Utilization capacity at mills. They want to answer: What is the capacity needed to treat 50,000 acres? What is the existing capacity? And what capacity is available but isn’t being utilized? Pertaining to utilization capacity, it would also be helpful to include a percentage pertaining to what is needed by industry on a month to month basis. Another helpful metric would be to see how the material is being consumed.
- A final item they would like to gauge is the FS, specifically pertaining to the work they have completed to help meet 4FRI objectives.

To ensure that the graphics can be easily read by the public, it was decided that a comment box should be located next to each graph that would easily explain what the data is showing. It was also determined that the dashboard will need to be adaptive to changes, it is an evolutionary project.

After today’s discussion, the IW will incorporate stakeholder feedback and plan on presenting a final version to the SHG for approval at the January meeting.

**1:30 Review Action Items/Adjourn**

Action Item	Lead	Status
1. Post FWS and AZGFD presentations on BASECAMP	Woods	
2. Post link to SRP video on BASECAMP		
3. Post future work group meeting (location, time, etc.) information on BASECAMP	All Workgroups	
4. Continue BASECAMP cleanup discussion at SC Call	Steering Committee	

<b>5.</b> Post revised 4FRI 2nd EIS Desired Future Conditions Recommendation to SHG on BASECAMP	Planning Workgroup	
<b>6.</b> Post minutes from Planning Work Group that reflect the SHG recommendation concerning draft amendments	Planning Workgroup	
<b>7.</b> Post revised Industry Workgroup charter to BASECAMP	Industry Workgroup	
<b>8.</b> Discuss an official statement from the Stakeholder Group concerning the Phase 1 contractor issues at next SC call	Steering Committee	

11/18/15 SHG meeting information:

Wednesday, November 18, 2015

Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office

1824 South Thompson Street, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

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

November Agenda Items:

1. Dr. Jack Williams Presentation on T&E Fish in the Southwest
2. Charter Revision Update
3. SHG Response to Proposed Forest Plan Amendments