

4FRI NEWS: The Four Forest Restoration Initiative's Quarterly Newsletter

October 2012



Flagstaff City Bond - Forest Health and Water Protection Project

On this fall's ballot, Flagstaff voters will have the opportunity to invest in forest restoration treatments in two of their City's key watersheds by voting "yes" on Question 405. If approved, the \$10M Forest Health and Water Supply Protection bond will augment U.S. Forest Service funding, supporting forest thinning treatments in the Rio De Flag and Lake Mary watersheds.

The treatments proposed under the bond would reduce the risk of wildfire and catastrophic post-fire flooding in the Rio de Flag and Lake Mary watersheds. Flooding in the Rio, coming from a severely-burned area, could significantly impact downtown, the Sunnyside neighborhood, and Northern Arizona University's campus, and cause tens of millions of dollars in damage. Fire and subsequent flooding in the Lake Mary watershed could result in loss of storage capacity in Lake Mary and change the chemical composition of the water itself, requiring the City to alter its water treatment facilities or seek alternate water sources. Many of the treatments proposed under the bond measure are being planned and analyzed as part of 4FRI's first analysis area.

For more detailed information on the Forest Health and Watershed Protection Bond Question visit the City of Flagstaff's website at: www.flagstaff.az.gov/bondinformation. You can also contact [Marcus Selig](#) or [Steve Gatewood](#) to learn how you can support bond efforts.

Arizona Watershed Investment Fund

Recognizing the need for additional funding to support on-the-ground ecological restoration activities across the state, a collection of forest and watershed restoration collaborators have united to form the Arizona Watershed Investment Fund (AWIF). This group of nonprofits, scientists, and land management agencies is working with the National Forest Foundation and attempting to partner with utilities and other businesses across the state to develop a statewide restoration fund.

The statewide fund, once established, would be operated as a competitive grant program, providing direct funds to support restoration projects across Arizona, such as the 4FRI or FireScapes. A common thread connecting all AWIF grants will be an interest in collaborative, action-oriented projects that

enhance the viability and resilience of natural resources, while benefitting and directly engaging surrounding communities.

In the spirit of collaboration, and based on the notion that all Arizonans and Arizona businesses benefit from healthy, fire-safe watersheds, the AWIF is attempting to work with Arizona utilities and businesses in various capacities to help develop this important fund. For more information or to participate in this effort, please email [Marcus Selig](#).

Upcoming Meetings & Events

The public is welcome and encouraged to participate in the 4FRI Stakeholder Group. If you are interested, consider attending one of our monthly **4FRI Stakeholder Meetings**. Upcoming 4FRI Stakeholder Meetings include:

- **Oct. 24 – 9am-2pm:** Arizona Game & Fish Department, 2878 E. White Mountain Blvd., Pinetop, AZ
- **Nov. 28 – 9am-2pm:** Coconino NF Supervisor's Office, 1824 S. Thompson St., Flagstaff, AZ

On Oct. 1, Marcus Selig with the Grand Canyon Trust rotated out of the role as 4FRI Co-Chair, with [Ed Smith](#) of The Nature Conservancy moving into the position for the next three months. For information on meetings for stakeholder working groups, visit 4FRI.org or contact the working group chairs:

- **Steering Committee:** [Steve Gatewood](#), [Marcus Selig](#)
- **Communications:** [Marcus Selig](#), [Tayloe Dubay](#)
- **Landscape Assessment and Monitoring:** [Amy Waltz](#)
- **Economics & Utilization:** [Steve Gatewood](#)
- **Fiscal:** [Marcus Selig](#)

The Forest Service and 4FRI Stakeholder Group continue outreach efforts to spread the word about 4FRI. Outreach efforts are being scheduled. If you have suggestions for outreach activities or would like to participate in any planned outreach efforts, please contact Forest Service communications contact [Jackie Banks](#) at (928) 635-8314, or Stakeholder Group communications contact [Marcus Selig](#) at (928) 774-7488.

Forest Service 4FRI Team Update

Specialist reports and most chapters of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) are complete, and the drafts of these documents have been posted to the [Forest Service 4FRI website](#). Stakeholders are encouraged to review these documents and provide any comments or ask any questions by

[clicking here](#) or calling (928) 226-4686. The goal of the Forest Service in providing access to these draft documents is to build trust and be as transparent as possible in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning process. The full DEIS, which evaluates landscape restoration across one million acres of the Coconino and Kaibab national forests, is expected to be released this fall.

4FRI was selected by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to serve as a national model for collaborative NEPA planning at the landscape scale. Forest Service 4FRI team members and stakeholders recently participated in the first webinar in a series intended to share lessons learned and gained efficiencies with other federal agencies and collaboratives. The webinar drew 80 participants and was considered a success. [Click here](#) for additional information on the CEQ pilot program.

On the operations front, the Forest Service continues to prepare out-year or “shelf stock” projects while coordinating with Pioneer Forest Products on determining where initial task orders will be issued. The Forest Service has identified well over 50,000 acres that could potentially be used to feed the 4FRI contract. Other minor issues being addressed by the Forest Service 4FRI team include land lines and rights of way, bridges, archaeology, wildlife and a certified workforce for timber sale administration.

Phase I 4FRI Contract

On May 18, the Forest Service announced its selection of Pioneer Forest Products as the contractor to perform treatments on the Coconino, Kaibab, Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto national forests as part of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative. Pioneer was determined to be the best value to the government for implementation of the phase 1 contract when considering both price and technical factors.

The contract represents an enormous step in restoring northern Arizona’s ponderosa pine forest. It will result in 300,000 acres of restoration-based thinning over 10 years, improving forest health, reducing the risk from wildfire to communities, creating jobs, and improving local economies.

Since the announcement of the contract, some stakeholders have requested documents and additional information related to the selection process. The Forest Service has posted all available documents to the [Forest Service 4FRI website](#) along with a list of commonly asked questions and their answers.

Pioneer proposes to break ground in January on a lumber mill in Winslow. At the plant, ponderosa pine timber will be converted into laminate wood that goes into furniture and other products such as window and door frames. A portion of the woody debris will be used to create bio-diesel fuel. For additional information on Pioneer’s plans, please [click here](#) to view a recent news release issued by the company.

There will be no net cost to the public for the treatments included in the contract. Pioneer Forest Products will pay the government for material over 6 or 7 inches in diameter (the minimum size limit depends on the location). They will charge the government for the work on material under the minimum size. The price they pay for trees will offset the removal of the material and optional service work that could include road maintenance, stream stabilization, road decommissioning and more.

“The size and scope of 4FRI are beyond anything the Forest Service has tried before anywhere in the nation. Because of that, there are inevitable challenges—both social and ecological—that we have to face if we want to move forward.” To read more from Regional Forester Corbin Newman about the first phase 4FRI contract and moving forward with forest restoration, [click here](#).

4FRI Supports Yellow Belly Ponderosa Outreach Efforts



The Forest Service and members of the 4FRI Stakeholder Group are collaborating with Anne Mottek Lucas of the Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP) and the Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy (FALA) to bring the Yellow Belly Ponderosa performance outreach program to elementary schools and communities across northern Arizona.

Yellow Belly Ponderosa is a theatrical production written, developed, produced and performed by FALA students with themes such as forest health and restoration, stewardship of natural resources, the value of science, wildfire mitigation and flash flood safety. The Kaibab and Coconino national forests applied for and received about \$18,000 in More Kids in the Woods (MKIW) funding to support expansion of the Yellow Belly Ponderosa program.

This entertaining and educational travelling performance was delivered to all Flagstaff Unified School District elementary schools in spring 2011. Due to the MKIW funding, the program will be able to expand to other schools including traditionally-underserved audiences and tribal youth. The programs are scheduled for spring 2013. In the meantime, the Kaibab National Forest, GFFP, FALA, the Museum of Northern Arizona and others are working on script development, set and costume design, and performance outreach and scheduling.

To view a documentary about Yellow Belly Ponderosa, [click here](#). To get involved, contact [Jackie Banks](#) or [Anne Mottek Lucas](#).

The Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) is a collaborative effort between the U.S. Forest Service and over 40 organizations to restore ecological resilience and function to 2.4 million acres of ponderosa pine forests in northern Arizona.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: www.4FRI.org or <http://www.fs.usda.gov/4fri>