

4FRI Rim Country Alternative Development Feedback

4FRI Rim Country alternative development workshops were held in Payson, AZ on April 13th, and in Show Low, AZ on April 18th to gain input on the preliminary alternatives the IDT is developing for the analysis. Workshop participants provided feedback while discussing the preliminary alternatives, guided by six questions related to alternative development:

- Q1: Do the preliminary action alternatives address the significant issues for Rim Country? Are there other ways or other types of activities you would like to see to address the issues?
- Q2: Are these action alternatives reasonable options to meet the Purpose and Need? Why or why not?
- Q3: Do these action alternatives represent a “range of reasonable alternatives?” If no, please provide an example of an alternative that would expand the range of reasonable alternatives.
- Q4: Are these alternatives distinguishable from each other? If no, what would help make them more noticeably different from each other?
- Q5: Are these alternatives realistic? If no, what would help make them more practical?
- Q6: What types of requirements and constraints would you place in these action alternatives?

*The feedback received is organized by these questions. If a comment was general and not in response to a specific question, it is listed as “General.” Input was entered into this table exactly as it was written on the feedback forms and flipcharts.

Feedback*	How Feedback is Being Used
Question 1. Do the preliminary action alternatives address the significant issues for Rim Country? Are there other ways or other types of activities you would like to see to address the issues?	
Yes	
Dangerous, unhealthy air quality from wildfires, managed burns and prescribed burns is the issue of greatest importance to me, due to the damage it has already caused to my health. Dense, acrid smoke prevailed for thirty out of sixty consecutive days in 2016 from the Juniper, Cedar and Elk fires, while temperatures were in the 90 to 100° range. I don’t mean to make my situation “special” — it’s not. And that’s why timely reporting and forecasting of smoke circulation is a broad public health issue.	Smoke/air quality is a significant issue that will be responded to in action alternatives for the 4FRI Rim Country EIS. It will be responded to most fully in Alternative 4, which proposes fewer acres of prescribed fire and focusing fire on community protection. The effects of wildfire and prescribed fire will be analyzed for each alternative, including the no action alternative, with an emphasis on the effects of smoke on air quality.

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<p>I have well over a dozen websites that do report on the wildfires and, to some lesser extent, the Rx burns. The news presented there is sketchy, historical (often 24-48 hours old as the “reporters” continue firefighting) and cryptic with regard to locations (unless the reader knows that part of the forest.)</p> <p>A July, 2016 academic paper in the journal Climate Change, jointly authored by researchers at Yale, Harvard, U of Michigan and Colorado State University stated: We create a new term “Smoke Wave,” defined as ≥ 2 consecutive days with high wildfire-specific PM2.5, to describe episodes of high air pollution from wildfires: http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-016-1762-6</p> <p>As you may already know, these researchers predict a dire future for people in the US West due to illness/injury from smoke. The Int’l Panel on Climate Change predicted nearly ten years ago that the American southwest would become uninhabitable due to the effects of vastly increased wildfire smoke.</p> <p>Let me say that, in addition to the issues raised at the town meeting, I need predictive information on the continued presence of smoke to better protect myself, as I know others do too. I’m, of course, interested to hear news about the battle to control any particular fire and how things went yesterday or the day before. But it’s most crucial to my health to know what’s going to happen tomorrow. Should I evacuate in my car? Where would the air be cleaner? How would I know when it’s safe to come home? These are the real world, practical questions that I COULD NOT answer last summer, as I sheltered in place, roasting in indoor temperatures of 100° after sundown, without daring to open the windows for the breeze.</p>	

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<p>I'm told by knowledgeable USFS representatives that there is no such unified forecasting model and that it would be impossible to develop one due to infinite variables and complexity. But I say, there are certainly a lot of learned people writing papers on wildfires, air quality, and smoke waves. Let's make a predictive air quality forecasting model a priority. Let's award grants to those best able to advance such a technology.</p> <p>I'm reminded of the improvement in weather forecasting over the past sixty years. Before satellites circled the earth, we knew so little about the weather tomorrow. We didn't recognize a lightning storm as an event that hops around from one state to another in real time. Now we can watch videos of just that. The 10-day weather forecast that I follow daily is uncanny in its accuracy. Weatherunderground.com provides real time weather readings from a personal station within five miles of my rural home. When it says the wind direction has changed (online), I can go outside and verify that, indeed, it has!</p> <p>If the authors of research papers about climate change and the future of the forests are correct, as it seems they are, let's add predictive smoke modelling to the efforts that your group and others are pursuing, such as reducing the density, removing ladder fuels, and nourishing the forest floor ecosystem.</p> <p>I hold the forests and other natural places in our area near to my heart. And I have opinions about the topics discussed at the recent town meeting regarding issues / questions such as mechanical thinning and/or Rx fire, construction and decommissioning hundreds of miles of forest roads, the fate of meadows, streams, wildlife... and the planning, administration and management of those precious</p>	

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<p>resources. Thank you all for what you do for nature and for the citizenry.</p>	
<p>They do address the main issues of making the forest fire-resilient, maintaining its important ecosystem services and recreational value, while improving wildlife habitat and aquatic habitats.</p> <p>With a great deal of wisdom along with your knowledge, the proposed actions could result in achieving the goals. This is a very complex project, so do not lose sight of the details. Call upon local volunteers who may have detailed knowledge of specific forest areas, to help with on-the-ground evaluations.</p>	
<p>Waterways record and integrate all that goes on within a watershed and provide the ‘canary in the mine’ indications of good marginal, and bad activities.</p> <p>Ultimately, stream and waterway health is a paramount issue for 4FRI.</p> <p>Action alternatives set out to address several significant issues; however, since waterway health is not identified as a significant issue, the draft is vague on appropriate mitigation measures.</p> <p>The preliminary action alternatives for mitigating Issues 1, 2, 3,4, 6, and 7 initially sound good, however, these can be quickly negated if sufficient enforcement measures are not used. This could lead to the very problems your mitigation measure are intended to prevent, e.g., erosion of soils and deposition, wildlife habitat disturbance, etc.</p> <p>Treatments vary in their impacts to streams. Stream values must be incorporated into decisions to go with various treatment methods. For example, it is imperative to conduct trade-off analyses to help</p>	<p>Although stream and waterway health is not considered a significant issue for the Rim Country Project per the NEPA process, many stream, riparian, and meadow restoration activities will be proposed in the action alternatives. Restoration of high interest areas (particular springs, wetlands, stream reaches, meadows) identified by the Forest Service, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders will be analyzed, as well as the number, miles, and acres of other springs, streams, and meadows through the flexible toolbox approach for aquatic and watershed restoration activities. Effects of proposed activities on watersheds, streams, and riparian areas will be analyzed for each action alternative.</p>

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<p>prioritize MSO PAC and Goshawk treatment methods with those needed to protect streams, especially those containing listed aquatic species.</p>	
<p>Yes. I don't have any other issues. I see the issue of smoke/air quality as only temporary.</p> <p>Likewise road dust is temporary.</p> <p>Road interference with streams and habitat needs to be mitigated but is also temporary.</p>	<p>Smoke/air quality is a significant issue that will be responded to in action alternatives for the 4FRI Rim Country EIS. As such, the effects of wildfire and prescribed fire and the resultant smoke on air quality will be analyzed for each alternative. The air quality analysis for Rim Country will be expanded to detail steps that are taken to mitigate effects on air quality.</p> <p>Mitigation measures in the form of Best Management Practices, design features, and conservation measures will be included in the alternatives to mitigate the effects of road dust, and any effects from roads on streams and habitat.</p>
<p>Yes they do address major Rim Country issues. Aggressive use of natural ignitions should be used to achieve goals even at the risk of higher than ideal fire intensity results.</p>	<p>Use of natural ignitions will not be included in the Rim Country alternatives or analysis, since there is no dependable method for predicting their occurrence. The Rim Country Project will not make any proposals on how to manage wildfires, but will consider the effects of wildfires that have burned in the Rim Country landscape.</p>
<p>A blend of Alt. 2 & 3. To be able to open the forest up would provide more area for snowpack cover, great way to store water, thinning on wet meadows would allow the groundwater to recharge into our system.</p> <p>Leaving downed trees could allow for a more productive watershed? Slow water runoff?</p> <p>I like Alt. 2 with maybe a little more emphasis on thinning for the purpose of healthier watersheds</p>	<p>The mechanical treatments proposed in the action alternatives are designed to open and reduce the density of the forests in the project area. Leaving some downed trees will be identified in design features to meet or exceed the down woody material requirements for wildlife habitat and soil productivity. The beneficial effects of these activities on watersheds, streams, and riparian areas will be analyzed for each action alternative.</p>
<p>We need to insure that Cragin Reservoir area is treated as a <u>highest</u> priority. Since water for Payson and surrounding area depends on</p>	<p>The Cragin Reservoir area is a high priority for the Coconino National Forest and the Salt River Project, who are working together on the</p>

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<p>the continual quality and availability of that water! I see no mention of how area are prioritized for treatment. That must be communicated to the public for comment and review.</p>	<p>Cragin Watershed Protection Project (CWPP), a separate 4FRI project analyzing mechanical and fire treatments in that watershed. The preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) for CWPP is expected to be published for comment this summer.</p> <p>The Rim Country Environmental Impact Statement will re-analyze the CWPP project area for other restoration activities such as spring, stream, and wildlife habitat restoration.</p>
<p>Should be more focus on the brush component i.e., turbinella oak, manzanita, etc. Also juniper. The Tonto has a more significant brush component than the other forests in the 4FRI project.</p>	<p>Treatments that focus on the brush component of forested stands in order to restore stand structure, composition, and function will be included in the flexible toolbox approach for mechanical treatments, and will include the use of prescribed fire. Treatments and design features will be developed to address the brush component in pine stands.</p>
<p>The Tonto Apache Tribe, the Yavapai-Apache Nation, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and the San Carlos Apache Tribe have each stated that the presence of Emory oak in central Arizona is diminishing. This is of great concern to Tribes, because acorns are a cultural and subsistence resource. More emphasis should be placed on restoring the presence of immature and mature Emory oak trees that produce acorns.</p>	<p>The FS will work with the tribes to determine treatment needs and options in the project area. Emory oak tends to be flammable and some mitigation from fire to preserve existing large trees and develop future sources may be needed. The FS will work with tribes to identify areas of concern and develop design features/mitigation measures to preserve this resource in areas of concern.</p>
<p>The summary “Preliminary Alternatives for the 4FRI Rim Country Project” does not adequately distinguish treatments between alternatives. It also reads like the main issue for the project is to deal with dwarf mistletoe rather than overall forest restoration and health.</p> <p>The details of what will be done with regard to springs, streams, lakes is inadequately described. That inadequate description gets even more vague moving to Alternatives 3 & 4.</p>	<p>The restoration activities proposed in the action alternatives will be detailed out and defined in the draft EIS for Rim Country. We are using your input to develop these alternatives.</p> <p>Many stream, riparian, and meadow restoration activities will be proposed in the action alternatives. Restoration of high interest areas (particular springs, wetlands, stream reaches, meadows) identified by the Forest Service, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders will be analyzed, as well as the number, miles, and acres of other springs, streams, and meadows through the flexible toolbox approach for</p>

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	aquatic and watershed restoration activities. Effects of proposed activities on watersheds, streams, and riparian areas will be analyzed for each action alternative.
Question 2. Are these action alternatives reasonable options to meet the Purpose and Need? Why or why not?	
Yes	
If they retain large trees	All treatments considered in the mechanical treatment flexible toolbox approach are designed to retain large trees. The FS has been working with the Planning Workgroup of the 4FRI Stakeholder Group on a process to identify forest stands with a preponderance of large trees. These stands will be considered separately in the mechanical treatment flexible toolbox approach and appropriate treatments applied to retain large trees.
If portable mills were put in would there be a large enough area of cutting to make it economically feasible? By doing this it would keep money in our state. There would be less need for burning which pollutes the air and water	In-woods processing sites of different sizes will be identified and analyzed in the Rim Country EIS. These sites may or may not be large enough for a portable mill. The potential for using a portable mill will be discussed in the economics analysis.
<p>Reasonable, yes. Complete, no.</p> <p>The Purpose and Need deals with protecting and improving forest health and preventing fires</p> <p>As stated above, a paramount feature that determines if a forest is healthy is waterway condition</p> <p>Action alternatives must use waterways' health as the standard-bearer issue to meet the Purpose and Need as it is the best indicator of the efficacy of treatment methods on the watershed</p>	<p>Many stream, riparian, and meadow restoration activities will be proposed in the action alternatives. Restoration of high interest areas (particular springs, wetlands, stream reaches, meadows) identified by the Forest Service, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders will be analyzed, as well as the number, miles, and acres of other springs, streams, and meadows through the flexible toolbox approach for aquatic and watershed restoration activities. Effects of proposed activities on watersheds, streams, and riparian areas will be analyzed for each action alternative.</p> <p>The Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan for the Rim Country EIS will include monitoring of watershed health.</p>

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Yes – seems to be. The thinning to me is most important	The mechanical treatment flexible toolbox approach will contain the different types of treatments the FS is proposing to thin the forest.
These alternatives are reasonable option to meet the Purpose and Need however the Purpose and Need appears to be trying to accomplish too much. Past implementation performance has not been demonstrated in a manner that would make a successful implementation of alternative 2 likely.	Each action alternative needs to meet the Purpose and Need for the Rim Country Project. The NEPA analysis will consider the different ways of meeting the Purpose and Need, and will look at the greatest potential effects, including the likelihood of successful implementation based on historical funding and current capabilities.
Unknown. More detail required. There should be an issue/alternative in that column that addresses springs, streams, lakes in the treatments area specifically.	Although springs, streams, and lakes are not considered significant issues for the Rim Country Project per the NEPA process, many stream, riparian, and meadow restoration activities will be proposed in the action alternatives. Restoration of high interest areas (particular springs, wetlands, stream reaches, meadows) identified by the Forest Service, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders will be analyzed, as well as the number, miles, and acres of other springs, streams, and meadows through the flexible toolbox approach for aquatic and watershed restoration activities. Effects of proposed activities on watersheds, streams, and riparian areas will be analyzed for each action alternative.
See #1: Should be more focus on the brush component i.e., turbinella oak, manzanita, etc. Also juniper. The Tonto has a more significant brush component than the other forests in the 4FRI project.	Treatments that focus on the brush component of forested stands in order to restore stand structure, composition, and function will be included in the flexible toolbox approach for mechanical treatments, and will include the use of prescribed fire. Treatments and design features will be developed to address the brush component in pine stands.
Question 3. Do these action alternatives represent a “range of reasonable alternatives?” If no, please provide an example of an alternative that would expand the range of reasonable alternatives.	
Yes	
It is difficult to reach a conclusion since waterway health is not identified as a significant issue and the draft is vague on appropriate mitigation measures	Although stream and waterway health is not considered a significant issue for the Rim Country Project per the NEPA process, many stream, riparian, and meadow restoration activities will be proposed in the

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<p>A reasonable alternative would be one which maximizes the protection and enhancement of waterways, for instance, maintenance of appropriately wide riparian corridors, road and skid trails which avoid the 'fall line,' stream crossings with graveled aprons, drainage ditches that minimize direct discharge to waterways, etc.</p>	<p>action alternatives. Restoration of high interest areas (particular springs, wetlands, stream reaches, meadows) identified by the Forest Service, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders will be analyzed, as well as miles and acres of other springs, streams, and meadows through the flexible toolbox approach for aquatic and watershed restoration activities. Effects of proposed activities on watersheds, streams, and riparian areas will be analyzed for each action alternative.</p> <p>Design features and BMPs will be designed for and included in every action alternative, and contract provisions used, to ensure inclusion of proper erosion control in treated areas and on roads. FS contract officer representatives will provide supervision of every implementation contract.</p>
<p>They address the issue/alternatives in the 1st column for those issues included, but specific impact on springs, streams, lakes & riparian zones which are critical to the majority of wildlife (and of course aquatic species) has not been identified as issues. They need to be!</p>	<p>Although effects on springs, streams, lakes, and riparian zones is not considered a significant issue for the Rim Country Project per the NEPA process, many stream, riparian, and meadow restoration activities will be proposed in the action alternatives. Restoration of high interest areas (particular springs, wetlands, stream reaches, meadows) identified by the Forest Service, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders will be analyzed, as well as the number, miles, and acres of other springs, streams, and meadows through the flexible toolbox approach for aquatic and watershed restoration activities. Effects of proposed activities on watersheds, streams, and riparian areas will be analyzed for each action alternative.</p>
<p>I like the emphasis Alt. 2 puts on stream restoration, watershed health etc. Maybe introduce more emphasis in Alt. 2 on water, more water helps every aspect of this ecosystem: wet meadow restoration, enhanced snowpack, watershed health, overall stream health</p>	<p>Emphasis on stream restoration, watershed health, and meadow restoration will be included in each of the action alternatives.</p>

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<p>See #1: Should be more focus on the brush component i.e., turbinella oak, manzanita, etc. Also juniper. The Tonto has a more significant brush component than the other forests in the 4FRI project.</p>	<p>Treatments that focus on the brush component of forested stands in order to restore stand structure, composition, and function will be included in the flexible toolbox approach for mechanical treatments, and will include the use of prescribed fire. Treatments and design features will be developed to address the brush component in pine stands.</p>
<p>Question 4. Are these alternatives distinguishable from each other? If no, what would help make them more noticeably different from each other?</p>	
<p>Yes</p>	
<p>Please provide more details as they become available about the specifics of aquatic and wildlife habitat restoration (as in Alternative 4), and the number of roads to be constructed.</p>	<p>Each of the action alternatives will be developed to provide details about (1) the restoration proposed for high interest areas (particular springs, wetlands, stream reaches, meadows) identified by the Forest Service, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders; (2) the treatments considered for other springs, streams, and meadows through the flexible toolbox approach for aquatic and watershed restoration activities; and (3) the estimated number of miles of temporary roads that will be needed.</p>
<p>Not too distinguishable. Use of wording like "less," "optimizing," "more," "increase," do not allow me to say they are noticeably different</p> <p>The narrative portion of each alternative does a fair job of describing the differences; but there is a need for more specificity to accomplish a clear separation of alternatives</p> <p>Bulleted items could be more specific and may become so as you further develop ideas and are more comfortable with the distinctions</p>	<p>Each of the action alternatives will be developed to provide details on the estimated acres or miles of treatments being proposed, as well as define the different types of treatments.</p>
<p>Difference between alternatives 2 and 3 is a matter of degree</p>	<p>Alternatives 2 and 3 will be modified/developed to provide more specifics to allow distinction between the alternatives.</p>

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More detail needed. No acreage listed for Alternative 4.	Alternative 4 will be developed further to provide details on the number of acres and miles of treatments being proposed in the alternative.
Question 5. Are these alternatives realistic? If no, what would help make them more practical?	
Yes	
Coordinate grazing so it allows for low under burns.	Design features for the action alternatives will be developed so that coordination of the grazing schedule and prescribed fire treatments will occur.
I know that you have to reach a balance among several important goals. Please provide a statement of your priority values in this project, along with the specific techniques to be used, so that the general public may better understand the project.	The Purpose and Need for the Rim Country Project describes the overarching purpose of this 4FRI project, as well as the reasons it is needed. Ecological restoration focuses on reestablishing the composition, structure, pattern, and ecological processes necessary to facilitate terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems sustainability, resilience, and health under current and future conditions. You are correct that, under this umbrella, there are many priority values that the FS needs to balance.
<p>Alternative 4 seems more so than the preferred alternative as this may be where you will gain the most support for implementation</p> <p>The preferred alternative is pretty ambitious and great if implemented but could quickly lose public support if not implemented in accordance with expected time lines and dollars</p>	<p>The proposed action is the first “alternative” that we publish for public comment during scoping. The “preferred alternative” will be identified in the draft EIS as the alternative the FS deciding officials prefer at that time.</p> <p>The Rim Country analysis will consider the different ways of meeting the Purpose and Need, and will look at the greatest potential effects, including the likelihood of successful implementation based on historical funding and current capabilities.</p>
I don't see the issues of smoke/air quality, roads, and dwarf mistletoe as being significant. The smoke and dust is temporary during the project only, and mistletoe occurs naturally.	The significant issues for the Rim Country Project were identified from public scoping comments as those concerns identifying effects from the Proposed Action. As the NEPA process requires, they will be

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Only the economic issue is worth addressing.	addressed with mitigation measures or in alternatives to the Proposed Action.
<p>Another concern – Is there a plan to identify and save trees that are of value/a home to wildlife even if it is dead or dying? There should be.</p> <p>Something for toolbox....If for an area that has burned in previous fire (like R/C fire) can you retreat/reburn that area to hasten the desired longterm restoration more quickly.</p>	<p>Design features will be used to retain and recruit snags, as well as down woody debris, for wildlife habitat in treatment areas. Each of the three Forest Plans contains guidelines for retention of dead and dying trees, in order to benefit the many species that rely on these structures for food and cover. In addition, the Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan and Northern goshawk management guidelines contain recommendations that provide for snags and coarse woody debris.</p> <p>Many ‘wildlife’ trees are known, some even have tags or plaques identifying them. Where there is one that is known, efforts are made to ensure fire effects are not detrimental to the tree (lining the tree, thinning/cutting ladder fuels around it, adjusted ignition patterns, etc.). This will be included as a mitigation measure.</p> <p>There is a range of conditions in areas that have burned with high severity (Rodeo/Chediski, Dude), and different treatment approaches will be considered. In some places, it will not be clear what the best treatment(s) are until the results of some have been observed. To hasten the restoration across these areas, a broad range of potential treatments will be analyzed, and the results of those implemented will be tracked. The most successful treatments will be applied to other areas in similar condition.</p>
Yes, depending on economic viability of the timber sales.	The economic viability predicted with each action alternative will be discussed and compared in the economic analysis for the Rim Country EIS.
There also needs to be mention of timeframe to accomplish each alternative.	The Rim Country analysis will consider and discuss the different alternatives and the likelihood of successful implementation for each of them based on historical funding and current capabilities.

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<p>Another issue is the repeated missteps with companies contracted to do the treatment work. The public loses confidence and the fear of major wildfire destruction is high during what is perceived as a slow and laborious process</p>	
<p>Question 6. What types of requirements and constraints would you place in these action alternatives?</p>	
<p>On-the-ground evaluations by the Forest Service are important, especially concerning the retention of large trees. We should keep as many of these as possible because of their key roles in forest and ecosystem health. They are such an important component of the forest that you should plan in detail the strategies for keeping them.</p> <p>It is not necessary to eradicate all mistletoe. The scope of mistletoe treatments should be clearly defined.</p>	<p>All treatments considered in the mechanical treatment toolbox approach are designed to retain large trees. The FS has been working with the Planning Workgroup of the 4FRI Stakeholder Group on a process to identify forest stands with a preponderance of large trees. These stands will be considered separately in the mechanical treatment flexible toolbox approach and appropriate treatments applied to retain large trees.</p> <p>The scope of treatments to address dwarf mistletoe infection will be clearly defined for each action alternative. None of the treatments in any of the action alternatives will have a goal to eradicate all dwarf mistletoe, but rather to restore it to its natural range of infection...</p>
<p>For the good of all stake holder, we need to speed up this process</p>	<p>The FS will continue to streamline the NEPA process as much as possible, as well as include measures to facilitate implementation in each of the action alternatives.</p>
<p>Alternative #2 is most desirable. But whichever alternative is chosen – please retain large trees</p>	<p>All treatments considered in the mechanical treatment toolbox approach are designed to retain large trees. The FS has been working with the Planning Workgroup of the 4FRI Stakeholder Group on a process to identify forest stands with a preponderance of large trees. These stands will be considered separately in the mechanical treatment flexible toolbox approach and appropriate treatments applied to retain large trees.</p>
<p>The program must incorporate a primary focus on waterways as they receive and integrate the end products of all actions on the</p>	<p>Many stream, riparian, and meadow restoration activities will be proposed in the action alternatives. Restoration of high interest areas (particular springs, wetlands, stream reaches, meadows) identified by</p>

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<p>watershed and therefore are the best measure of whether the action alternatives are protecting and enhancing overall forest health</p> <p>Any action which compromises the health of waterways should be reconsidered and redirected to maximize waterway protection and enhancement</p> <p>Existing (or proposed) chemical, physical and biological water quality standards adopted by ADEQ and/or EPA are in place to protect downstream (and instream) water users and meeting these standards should be a requirement of any action alternative</p> <p>ESA and other listed or proposed species of concern should exert tremendous influence on the action alternatives and take highest priority when proposing use of various tools</p>	<p>the Forest Service, cooperating agencies, and stakeholders will be analyzed, as well as the number, miles, and acres of other springs, streams, and meadows through the flexible toolbox approach for aquatic and watershed restoration activities. Effects of proposed activities on watersheds, streams, and riparian areas, along with design features, conservation measures, and BMPs to mitigate effects from treatments, will be analyzed for each action alternative.</p>
<p>An ability to modify during implementation as unexpected information becomes available.</p>	<p>Analyzing a flexible toolbox approach, both for mechanical treatments and for aquatic and watershed restoration activities, will allow modifications to treatments as they are implemented based on new site-specific information.</p>
<p>Another thought...Some way of advertising at the landing piles or in the area of teepee piles explaining <u>why</u> they should not be moved/raided. Folks see that as “the forest service is getting rid of this anyway so I’m doing them a favor by taking it – especially since they don’t burn it for years at a time.” Folks need to understand that piles are set for maximum burn efficiency and raiding piles interferes with that efficiency.</p>	<p>Forest Fire Management Officers will work with their Public Affairs Officers to develop public messages for forest management activities.</p>
<p>Ensure proper silt and sedimentation control on roads; proper USFS contract supervision</p>	<p>Design features and BMPs will be designed for and included in every action alternative, and contract provisions used, to ensure proper erosion control on roads. FS contract officer representatives will provide supervision of every implementation contract.</p>

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Constraints being the ability to sell lumber/biomass	The Rim Country economics analysis will consider and discuss the different alternatives in terms of economic viability and the likelihood of successful implementation based on historical funding and current capabilities.
Leave dense areas on W slopes near riparian areas, because it will dry them out. Concerned that it will take away bedding areas.	This is a practical suggestion and we will try to incorporate as a design feature wherever possible. We might be constrained by high-hazard fuels in some areas.
Consider using meat goats to graze down ladder fuels instead of burning to reduce smoke effects.	The use of goats will be included in the flexible toolbox approach, but is not expected to be used. It has been tried on the Tonto NF in the past with little success. Problems with this method include increased erosion, aggressive guard dog interactions with the public, and damage to trees.
Would like to see greater emphasis on economic viability in Alt. 3 (but not the driver!).	Alternative 4 will identify where there is an overlap between areas most important to treat ecologically and those that can be treated the most economically. The economic viability predicted with each action alternative will be discussed and compared in the economic analysis for the Rim Country EIS.
Will be a mistake to just treat the easy acres, leaving other areas vulnerable.	Operability and accessibility are considered in each of the action alternatives in determining where treatments will be proposed, but to a greater extent in Alternative 4. The economic viability predicted with each action alternative will be discussed and compared in the economic analysis for the Rim Country EIS.
How can Alt. 4 optimize both cost/economics & restoration at the same time?	Alternative 4 will identify where there is an overlap between areas most important to treat ecologically and those that can be treated the most economically.
Is Alt. #3 even possible, given the challenge of contracting?	The Rim Country economics analysis will consider and discuss the different alternatives in terms of economic viability and the likelihood of successful implementation based on historical funding and current capabilities.

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Keep long-term industry viable	The Rim Country economics analysis will look at the measures to facilitate implementation included in each action alternative, as well as compare the alternatives in terms of economic viability. The cumulative effects analysis will address how the Rim Country Project will interact with other federal, state, and private actors to contribute to long-term forest industry viability.
Mechanical thinning in sensitive areas (i.e., near communities) instead of Rx.	<p>The flexible toolbox approach, design features, and professional opinion will be used to allow different combinations of treatments as dictated by site-specific conditions and considerations.</p> <p>Often, implementing both mechanical treatments and prescribed fire close to communities is the best way to decrease the potential for undesirable fire behavior and effects close to the communities. Prescribed fire will remain an option across the landscape, and the implementation of it will be up to FS district personnel.</p>
Preserve & repair trails	<p>Design features and BMPs will be used to protect trails from mechanical treatments. Contract provisions to repair trails affected by mechanical operations will be supervised by FS contract officer representatives.</p> <p>Hydrologically connected trails will be preserved and repaired as we restore riparian areas and improve watersheds, and considered in treatment areas. The Forest Service looks forward to working with partners to accomplish additional trail work.</p>
Need to avoid adverse effects to trails from log landings, skid trails; needs to be monitored!	Design features and BMPs will be used to protect trails from mechanical treatments. Contract provisions to repair trails affected by mechanical operations will be supervised by FS contract officer representatives.
Burning vs. water contamination: How to keep charcoal etc. out of streams and municipal water.	Design features and BMPs will be used to ensure protection of water quality from the effects of prescribed burning.

4FRI Rim Country Alternative Development Feedback

Feedback*	How Feedback is Being Used
	There will be some background level of runoff coming off of burned areas. However, there are mitigation measures that will minimize excessive charcoal and ash from reaching streams. The Rim Country EIS will analyze this topic.
Wildlife and aquatics are economically important: use mitigation and BMPs	Design features, conservation measures, and BMPs to protect wildlife and aquatic species habitat will be included in each action alternative.
Prioritizing/protection of wildfire around towns: Fire wise WUI treatments, minimizing slash piles timelines through burning (shortening time).	<p>Towns and WUIs will be included in the Rim Country analysis as areas in greater need of treatment.</p> <p>Firewise is based on the desires and actions of a community. The FS may help out if requested, but does not conduct treatments on private property. We can participate in Firewise events, or conduct treatments on national forest land to augment the effects of a communities' Firewise efforts.</p> <p>Fire managers do their best to get piles burned when there are burn windows. Smoke is often a factor in not being able to burn.</p>
Mitigation for sedimentation (temp roads): work w/ contractors for mitigation, reduction/plan for spill potentials.	Design features and BMPs will be designed for and included in every action alternative, and contract provisions used, to ensure proper erosion control on roads and spill mitigation. FS contract officer representatives will provide supervision of every implementation contract.
Clarify meaning of temp roads & what happens once it's done.	Temporary roads will be defined and explained in the Rim Country EIS, as well as how they will be decommissioned after treatments are completed. Each of the action alternatives will be developed to provide the estimated number of miles of temporary roads that will be needed.

4FRI Rim Country Alternative Development Feedback

Feedback*	How Feedback is Being Used
Mitigation for cultural resources.	<p>Mitigation measures will be designed to meet the needs of the cultural resources that are identified during the heritage evaluation process as having the potential to be affected by proposed activities. Section II of Appendix J (<i>FOR LARGE-SCALE FUELS REDUCTION, VEGETATION TREATMENT, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS</i>) of the 2004 Amended Region 3 Programmatic Agreement between the Arizona (AZSHPO), New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Officers and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservations lists many mitigation measures that can be implemented for these types of projects without prior consultation with the AZSHPO. They include pre-fire treatments for fires on sensitive sites like black lining sites, removing fuel from non-fire sensitive sites by hand thinning, or allowing light to moderate burning across sites; felling trees away from sites; monitoring activities near sites; and flagging and avoiding sites, particularly during mechanical treatments.</p> <p>The forests have also pre-consulted with the AZSHPO and tribes on a strategy to mitigate for potential effects to sites from proposed road maintenance, and can address any mitigation needs from the proposed spring restoration using mitigation measures listed in the 2004 Amended R3 Programmatic Agreement.</p>
General Feedback	
Has the FS considered how the large amt. of biomass produced will affect markets or competition outside the Rim Country footprint?	Proposed treatments will provide a mix of merchantable and biomass products. The economic viability predicted with each action alternative and effects on markets will be discussed and compared in the economic analysis for the Rim Country EIS.
Will it provide a sustainable supply or result in a boom/bust?	Proposed treatments will provide a mix of merchantable and biomass products. The economic viability and implementation success predicted with each action alternative will be discussed and compared in the economic analysis for the Rim Country EIS.

4FRI Rim Country Alternative Development Feedback

Feedback*	How Feedback is Being Used
Restoration needs to be the driving force, <u>not biomass</u> or <u>timber products</u> .	Ecological needs and ecosystem restoration will come first in the Rim Country Project and in alternative design. Economics, as a significant issue for the project, will also be considered and analyzed in each action alternative. In Alternative 4, highest ecological need and economics will both be considered in optimizing treatments.
Prioritize to treat to protect the <u>highest</u> resource values (for example: cultural, riparian, wildlife, T&E species).	The highest resource values will be considered in designing each of the action alternatives, both in terms of restoration and protection, and the potential effects from proposed treatments on them analyzed.
Go for highest ecological bang for the buck, not economic.	Ecological needs and ecosystem restoration will come first in the Rim Country Project and in alternative design. Economics, as a significant issue for the project, will also be considered and analyzed in each action alternative. In Alternative 4, highest ecological need and economics will both be considered in optimizing treatments.
Include bark beetle and fire kill in NEPA to allow faster treatment – flexible toolbox.	A strategy to address bark beetle infestations and fire kill will be considered in the flexible toolbox approach for mechanical thinning.
City of Winslow needs someone from the USFS to address the full council on how this 4FRI Rim Country Project will be effecting the watershed with the different prescriptions. Watershed manipulation in the head waters will cause increase or decrease in the City’s water wells (table) and irrigation channels.	<p>Fuel reduction treatments in forested watersheds can create conditions favorable to increased water yields either on-site or downstream. However, the magnitude and duration of the increases are difficult to predict and depend on many factors. Because the City of Winslow water supply wells are situated in a fairly deep aquifer, it is unlikely that vegetative manipulation will have an appreciable effect on water levels in these wells. Potential increases in surface water flows will be greatest near the project area and diminish downstream. Given the distance of the City of Winslow from the project area it is difficult to predict whether there will be measureable increases in flow. However, it is safe to say that these treatments will improve that potential.</p> <p>The 4FRI team will reach out to the Winslow City Council and schedule a presentation.</p>
We have to consider the economics of having less trees in order to solve the issue in a more timely manner before we lose it all. More	Each of the action alternatives will include mechanical thinning treatments at a range of intensities. Alternative 3 was designed to

4FRI Rim Country Alternative Development Feedback

Feedback*	How Feedback is Being Used
aggressive mechanical thinning and higher intensity to lower BA and move to DC further and faster.	include thinning to lower basal areas even further, but will not be analyzed in detail in the draft EIS.
I support thinning/treatment of the forest to healthy levels	Each of the action alternatives will include mechanical thinning treatments.
Is Alt. 3 viable being that we have a very low timber demand, let alone small diameter trees	Each of the action alternatives will be analyzed in terms of economic viability and the likelihood of successful implementation.
<p>I believe you depend too much on machines and contract workers, and too rigid bureaucratic control.</p> <p>An institution trying to control the forest by itself is like King Cnut trying to hold back the tides (a famous medieval story).</p>	The Rim Country alternatives will call for innovations and efficiencies to implement the proposed restoration treatments. The Forest Service is aware that it will take thinking outside the box and the help of partners to accomplish comprehensive restoration.

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