

NEWS RELEASE



Four Forest Restoration Initiative

Forest Service Website: www.fs.usda.gov/4fri

4FRI Stakeholder Group Website: www.4fri.org



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Forest Service Selects Contractor for Largest Stewardship Contract Ever

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Today, the Forest Service selected its contractor for the largest stewardship contract in the agency’s history. The contract 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.

This contract represents the culmination of many years of collaborative work between the Forest Service and more than 30 stakeholder organizations. It is the first large step of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) – a 20-year plan to restore 2.4 million acres of ponderosa pine forest in northern Arizona endorsed by the Forest Service, conservationists, scientists, local governments, and industry leaders.

“The importance of this contract cannot be overstated,” said Arthur “Butch” Blazer, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. “It will help meet Secretary Vilsack’s vision for increasing the size and pace of restoration and will make a difference not only on the landscape, but also to people and communities across Arizona.”

“This is an enormous step in restoring the health and sustainability of our forests,” said Earl Stewart, Coconino National Forest Supervisor. “This contract will help us achieve the goal of setting our forests and economies on a path of recovery.”

“This contract and the 4FRI effort were designed to meet northern Arizona’s ecological needs and the collaboratively developed vision of healthy, sustainable forests in the face of a changing climate,” said Marcus Selig, Co-Chair of the 4FRI Stakeholder Group. “Cost-effective implementation of that vision is dependent upon this contract, which is intended to build a wood products industry that can help offset treatment costs.”

Pioneer Forest Products was selected as the contractor to perform treatments on the Coconino, Kaibab, Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto national forests in northern Arizona. Specifically, Pioneer Forest Products plans to build a plant near Winslow, Ariz., at which ponderosa pine timber will be converted into non-commodity, high value lumber, laminate wood panels, door and doorframe, window frames, furniture, cabinetry, and specialty components. They will use a portion of the slash from the forest operations and mill waste to fire the kiln used to dry the material. They will use the remainder to create

bio-diesel fuel at a bio-diesel plant built as part of the overall operation. Pioneer Forest Products was selected by the Forest Service, in part, because it is an appropriately-scaled, community-based industry capable of removing small-diameter trees to help offset forest restoration treatment costs.

Treatments under this contract and other ongoing efforts in Arizona's national forests are expected to produce a large enough wood supply to support existing industries in the White Mountains and build new industries supported by Pioneer Forest Products. Work under this contract is expected to create more than 500 jobs, performing on-the-ground treatments and hauling and processing wood removed from the forests.

"It is testimony to the commitment of the 4FRI Stakeholders that this milestone was reached," Stewart said. "This scale of collaborative planning and implementation has never been attempted by the Forest Service. Success over the long term will take all of us working together toward the common goals of 4FRI."

The 4FRI is a collaborative effort to restore ecological resilience and function across northern Arizona's ponderosa pine forests, creating healthy ecosystems that support natural fire regimes, functioning populations of native plants and animals, healthy and productive watersheds, and forests that pose little threat of destructive wildfire to forest communities, all while supporting forest industries that strengthen local economies. For additional information, visit the Forest Service website at www.fs.usda.gov/4fri or the 4FRI Stakeholder Group website at www.4fri.org.

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