

Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) Stakeholder Group Charter

I. PURPOSE OF THE CHARTER

The Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) is a joint effort of the United States Forest Service (USFS) and portions of four National Forests (Coconino, Kaibab, Apache-Sitgreaves, and Tonto) along the Mogollon Rim and the 4FRI Stakeholder Group (the stakeholder group). The purpose of the Charter is to provide operating guidelines for stakeholders who intend to work collaboratively with the USDA Forest Service in planning, designing and implementing the Four Forest Restoration Initiative.

This Charter is one of several documents developed or that may be developed by the stakeholder group. These documents include: The Path Forward that presents initial guidance for restoration activities, a Strategic Plan, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines the working relationship between the Stakeholders and the USFS.

II. VISION

The VISION of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative is restored forest ecosystems that support natural fire regimes, functioning populations of native plants and animals, forests that pose little threat of destructive wildfire to thriving forest communities and support sustainable forest industries that strengthen local economies while conserving natural resources and aesthetic values.

III. MISSION

The Mission of the 4FRI is to: 1) integrate comprehensive restoration, fire management, and community protection planning at the landscape scale; 2) strategically prioritize and place restoration treatments; 3) safely re-establish natural fire regimes at the landscape scale; 4) identify and implement sustainable cost offset opportunities through wood and biomass utilization; 5) employ monitoring and adaptive management supported by the best available science; (6) build public support for accomplishing restoration and community protection through public education, and 7) support land use policies that enable landscape-scale restoration while meeting the ecological goals of the 4FRI.

IV. ACTIONS

We agree that the following actions will be necessary to fulfill this vision and mission:

1. Carry forward principles and agreements contained within the *Path Forward* and translate them into proposed actions for landscape-scale, ecologically-based forest restoration within the 4FRI area.
2. Design and implement innovative strategies for collaboration, planning (both programmatic and project-level), contracting, research, monitoring, adaptive management, and project implementation in order to effectively and efficiently accelerate forest restoration across the 4FRI area.
3. Work with the Forest Service at multiple stages prior to, during, and following the NEPA process on such products as the purpose and need statement, proposed action, alternatives, collection and use of data, impact analysis, development of a preferred alternative and/or recommendations regarding mitigation of environmental impacts, and the development and adoption of monitoring and adaptive management processes.
4. Work with the Forest Service prior to, during, and following implementation and monitoring to help ensure that treatments achieve our goals. We will provide timely feedback in order to help the Forest Service adapt implementation, as well as help find resources to integrate all aspects of comprehensive restoration.

5. Advocate for development of and/or continuation of long-term contracts and/or agreements that support appropriately-scaled industry involvement in thinning of 50,000 acres annually over a 20-year period within the 4FRI area, as outlined within the *Path Forward*. As part of this process, participate in the development and evaluation of various utilization strategies/opportunities, including their economic feasibility, potential for cost-offsets, and contribution to the overall 4FRI mission and vision.
6. Support public and private investments needed to carry forward landscape-scale forest restoration with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.
7. In conjunction with the Forest Service implement the Landscape Strategy and future strategic plans.
8. Identify and support necessary policy changes to support comprehensive restoration.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The stakeholder group is an informal organization with open membership. The organization structure consists of three nested and interrelated entities: the stakeholder group, a steering committee, and work groups. Operating rules for the stakeholder group and the steering committee are in Section X.

Stakeholder Group- The stakeholder group is the primary decision making body. Stakeholders can represent individuals or organizations. Membership is open to the public. All members are entitled to participate in decisions before the group after fulfilling the requirements in Section X.

The Steering Committee- The steering committee consists of individuals selected from the whole stakeholder group. The Steering committee’s role is to manage the logistics of the stakeholder group, set agendas, organize meetings, maintain appropriate documentation, and suggest working groups to the stakeholder group. Operating rules are established in Section X.

Work Groups- Are a subset of the whole stakeholder group, and are coordinated by the steering committee. Work groups should be small and efficient, should represent different perspectives, should include those with expertise on the topic and should be formed and disbanded as work arises and is completed. Work group products are final subject to the agreement of the stakeholder group.

VI. DECISION RULES AND DELIBERATION

The stakeholder group will strive to reach the highest level of agreement (Agreement without Reservations) whenever possible (see Table 1). However, if all of the stakeholders have made every effort to reach an “Agreement without Reservations” and finds that it is not possible, the stakeholder group will use the decision rules to measure the level of agreement among the stakeholders. This approach will enable stakeholders to see where everyone stands, as well as to provide a standard approach for characterizing, documenting and communicating agreements.

Table 1. Decision Rules. Levels of Agreement		
Level of Agreement	Support level	Member commitment
Agreement w/o Reservations	Highest	All members will support and advocate for the decision
Agreement w/ Reservations	High	All members will support the decision, and those who had reservations must express them and have them recorded. The intent of any outside expression of those reservations will not be to undercut the group’s agreement.

Agreement by Acquiescence	Moderate	All members support the decision, abstain, or are opposed but are willing to allow the collaborative effort to move forward, and will not undercut the group's agreement. Those who abstained or are opposed must express their reasons and have them recorded.
No Clear Agreement	Unknown	There is not clear agreement, and there is recognition that this is not the desired end point. Those who are in disagreement must express their reasons and have them recorded. A process and timeframe will be specified for addressing concerns, and for moving to a higher level of agreement. When that timeframe has ended and there is no agreement, the nature of that disagreement will be recorded.

Decisions, agreements, and reservations will be clearly documented and made available on BASECAMP (<https://ffri.basecampHQ.com/login>) and the public website as part of the public record.

VII. STAKEHOLDER GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES AND GROUND RULES

The **stakeholder group** will work to achieve the vision, mission, and actions identified in sections II-IV. In order to accomplish this, the stakeholder group will:

1. Make all meetings open to the public to ensure a full and complete engagement
2. Welcome and actively reach out to new members
3. Maintain communication with the Forest Service in order to track ongoing processes and upcoming decisions so that the group can provide timely input
4. Develop agreement-based recommendations that are intended as the basis for Forest Service action and implementation, and when agreement is not possible, capture and present to the Forest Service levels of agreement
5. Provide input to the Forest Service in a timely manner

Ground rules are defined as governing principles of behavior. They are intended to foster respect and trust among stakeholders. In the spirit of respect and cooperation the **stakeholders** commit to the following ground rules in order to ensure timely progress:

1. Endeavor to attend all meetings of the Stakeholder Group.
Scheduling conflicts may prevent full attendance; however, stakeholders should try to be informed of actions taken at meetings at which they were absent.
2. Come prepared to all meetings.
Read materials submitted in advance of meetings and complete assignments given.
 - a. Stay on track with the agenda
 - b. Share all relevant information pertinent to the stakeholder group
 - c. Keep non-stakeholder group members from your organization informed
 - d. Secure approval within your organization for permission (within limits) to reach an agreement
3. Share the workload to make the initiative successful.
 - a. Be prepared to offer alternative language or examples during discussions
 - b. Volunteer for the steering committees, work Groups, and leadership positions
 - c. Get involved early in work groups and deliberations where you will want to provide active input and feedback

- d. Encourage other stakeholders in the group to assume responsibility and leadership
4. Speak with clarity and candor.

Try to be forthright and avoid the creation of false expectations as the group strives to find points of agreement. Disagreement can be an acceptable component of deliberation.

 - a. Explain the reasons behind one's statements, questions, and actions
 - b. Avoid generalities, be specific
 - c. Define and agree what important words mean
 - d. Openly discuss controversial issues that could undermine the effectiveness of the collaborative process if left unspoken
 - e. Represent the interests and concerns of your organization and constituents as accurately and thoroughly as possible and inform the group when the limits of your authority are reached
5. Treat others with respect.

Everyone brings different perspectives to the 4FRI. No member and no viewpoint is less deserving than another to be heard. Discussions should focus on interests, not positions.
6. Mentor new members and alternates.

It can be intimidating to join and actively participate in any established body. Help new participants understand the 4FRI, its protocols and its members. Encourage their active participation.
7. Support the outcomes of the 4 Forest Restoration Initiative.

Each member will support the efforts of the 4FRI among colleagues and the public, even (especially) when it involves risk-taking beyond the comfort zone of one's core constituency.

 - a. Honor the earlier work and agreements of the stakeholder group
 - b. Strive to address difficult issues directly with individual stakeholders or the larger stakeholder group in order to avoid resolution through exertion of outside pressure.
 - c. Outside communications by individuals/organizations with decision makers, the media, and the public are expected but should not undermine agreements made by 4FRI.
 - d. Where the stakeholder group has agreed to proceed but there are members that "agree with reservations or acquiescence," the intent of any outside expression of those reservations will not be to undercut the group's agreement. In addition, members with reservations shall be treated respectfully.
 - e. Work to ensure that any agreement developed by the stakeholder group is acceptable to your constituents or organization.
8. Hold oneself and other members accountable to adherence to the purpose, convening values and goals of the 4 Forest Restoration Initiative. The facilitator (see Section VIII) may assist in helping members stay accountable to one another.
9. The 4 Forest Restoration Initiative's success depends on trust. Members need to conduct themselves so as to foster that trust.
 - a. Members should strive to alert one another in advance of actions they take outside the stakeholder group that would significantly affect the group's deliberations (e.g., introducing legislation or filing litigation on relevant subjects).
 - b. Stakeholders shall assume that other members are acting with the best of intentions. Members should also be willing to discuss their actions in advance with the stakeholder group in order to minimize the potential for any misunderstandings.
 - c. Whenever formally representing the 4FRI collaborative, individual stakeholders must represent the collective interests of the group, rather than referencing their own organizational interests preferentially and/or to the detriment of others' interests in the group. Stakeholders that do represent their interests above and beyond others when formally representing the 4FRI collaborative may not be asked by other members of the collaborative or external entities to serve as a 4FRI representative in future discussions/presentations.

VIII. ROLE OF FACILITATION

Facilitation - At the outset, the group will employ the services of a professional facilitator. The facilitator will work with the steering committee to develop and implement meeting agendas, will help the stakeholder group establish and convene work groups and will produce meeting summaries. The facilitator will help the stakeholder group resolve differences and construct agreements and recommendations for the Forest Service. The facilitator will assist the group to transition to self-facilitation.

IX. COMMUNICATION

The stakeholder group will maintain an environment that promotes open, frank and constructive discussion. Members recognize that such an environment must be built on mutual respect and trust, and each commits to avoid actions that would damage that trust. Therefore, in communicating externally about the group's work, including communicating with the news media, elected officials, political appointees, and agency employees, each member agrees to:

1. Speak for themselves or the organization they represent.
2. Where the stakeholder group has agreed to proceed but there are members that "agree with reservations or acquiescence," the intent of any outside expression of those reservations will not be to undercut the group's agreement. In addition, members with reservations should be treated respectfully.
3. Avoid characterizing the personal or organizational positions or comments of others; and,
4. Consider the impact that a public statement may have on the group, mutual trust, and the ability for the stakeholders to complete their work.

The communications work group works proactively to prepare communication documents for approval by the stakeholder group and assists (when appropriate) with Forest Service media releases and communications as well. The group identifies significant milestones in the stakeholders' activities, and prepares documents and activities that capitalize on the 'headline-worthiness' of such events. Documents and activities will include: media events, talking points, maintaining a list of subject matter experts, updates for the website, and other materials as needed.

- A. We will strive to avoid crisis management situations; however, when there is a time sensitive need to respond to the news media such as when a response to media query is necessary within a very short timeframe, any 4FRI member will:
 1. Represent him/her self and/or organization, making it clear he/she is not speaking on behalf of the stakeholder group.
 2. Respond in a supportive manner of 4FRI, using 4FRI documents developed by the collaborative group as reference materials.
 3. Immediately provide the media representative with an up-to-date contact list consisting of a contact person for every 4FRI member organization.
 4. Immediately email all members on the 4FRI contact list to inform them that a media representative has expressed interest in 4FRI and has been given the contact list.
- B. If there is more than 24 hours to work with the media, but communications need to occur before the next stakeholder group meeting:
 1. The communications work group will develop draft materials and submit them for review by the steering committee. Such materials will be subject to approval by the steering committee, upon which time the steering committee will distribute the materials to the stakeholder group. The stakeholder group will evaluate and critique such communications at the next stakeholder group meeting.

- C. If communications can wait until the next stakeholder group meeting, the communications work group will develop materials for review by the stakeholder group that will then approve them and discuss needed actions at the next meeting

Notes and Communication- In order to facilitate smooth operation, the stakeholder group will use a web-based utility (currently BASECAMP: <https://ffri.basecamphq.com/login>) and the public Website to maintain meeting schedules, notes and agreed upon or final documents.

The notes from the 4FRI meetings will capture agreements, reservations, and next steps. The notes will be returned to the stakeholder group for review and corrections. The notes will be finalized within a specified timeframe and posted to BASECAMP and the public website.

Each work group should keep notes that include agreements and next steps. The notes will be returned to the work group members for their review and corrections. The notes will be finalized within a specified timeframe and posted to BASECAMP.

X. PARTICIPATION AND OPERATING RULES

The 4FRI stakeholder group is open to any individual or organization interested in participating in the effort. The 4FRI stakeholder group will use the decision rules in Section VI on issues pertaining to the Four Forest Restoration Initiative.

Article I. Four Forest Restoration Stakeholder Group – General Membership

Section 1. The 4FRI stakeholder group (hereafter the stakeholder group), is an informal organization.

Section 2. Membership. Membership in the stakeholder group is open to organizations and individuals. Multiple individuals may join representing the same organization.

Section 3. Establishing Membership

1. There are two forms of membership: An individual membership or an individual representing an organization membership
2. To become a member of the 4FRI stakeholder group, an individual, or an individual representing an organization must sign the 4FRI Stakeholder Group Charter and agree to uphold the spirit and guidelines of the Charter

Section 4. Member eligibility to participate in 4FRI decision-making. Individuals and individuals representing an organization are eligible to participate in 4FRI decisions:

1. At the next general meeting after joining as a member, or
2. If the individual or an organization is in good standing (see Section 5)
3. A member in good standing who is unable to attend a general meeting may send an alternate to represent them during decision making. It is the responsibility of the member to ensure that their alternate is well informed on the matter before the group.

Section 5. Member or organization in good standing. A member is in good standing if the individual has attended at least four general meetings during the previous year, or in the case of an organization it has been represented at a minimum of four general meetings during the previous year.

Section 6. A member may be removed from the stakeholder group for good cause, including lack of attendance at meetings or flagrant disregard of the Charter. Notice of intent to remove a member and the reason why must be filed with the steering committee. The steering committee must seek a response from the member in question, and will attempt to resolve the matter discreetly before presenting it to the stakeholder group. The steering committee will use the decision rules in making an initial determination, which will then be presented to the stakeholder group for final resolution.

Article II. General Meetings of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative

Article II. General Meetings of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative

Section 1. Meeting Logistics. Meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month unless otherwise specified at the previous general meeting.

Article III. The Steering Committee, hereafter referred to as the Committee

Section 1. The committee is a continuing body that serves the stakeholder group.

Section 2. Steering committee members will be recruited from members in good standing in the stakeholder group as vacancies occur or after the two year term of a steering committee member.

Section 3. Composition. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of seven members with representation from:

1. A 501c3 nonprofit environmental organization
2. A forest commercial use representative (can be wood products based or other)
3. An organization representing woods workers or restoration based employment opportunities
4. A state or federal agency
5. A tribal representative
6. An academic institution
7. Local government
8. At large chosen from the 4FRI stakeholder group

Section 4. Committee Member Responsibilities. Membership on the committee is voluntary and open to any member in good standing. Rotation of committee members is encouraged to promote broad participation, diversity, and renewal. Those individuals that volunteer will:

1. Commit to serving a two year term from the date the committee is formally established by the stakeholder group or from the time of joining the committee
2. Seek to be responsible to the needs of the 4FRI stakeholder group
3. Attend and prepare for meetings and conference calls
4. Attend general stakeholder group meetings
5. Share the workload
6. Not miss three consecutive committee meetings (notwithstanding excused absences where the coordinator has been notified in advance)

Section 5. A member may be removed from the committee for good cause, including lack of attendance at meetings or flagrant disregard of the Charter. Notice of intent to remove a member and the reason why must be filed with the steering committee. The steering committee must seek a response from the member in question and will attempt to resolve the matter discreetly before presenting it to the stakeholder group. The committee will use the decision rules in making an initial determination, which will then be presented to the stakeholder group for final resolution.

Section 6. Filling Vacancies. Should committee membership fall below the threshold established in Section 3 the Committee will actively recruit new members representing gaps in representation.

Article IV. Duties and Responsibilities

Section 1. The Committee is responsible for coordinating the activities of the stakeholder group in an open and transparent manner.

Section 2. Meetings. The committee shall meet at least monthly to transact business. Meeting notices and notes will be posted on BASECAMP.

Section 3. Duties. In carrying out its responsibilities, the committee will:

1. Select a facilitator, develop an appropriate Scope of Work, and coordinate and evaluate their work on an ongoing basis
2. Develop agendas for the stakeholder group meetings
3. Coordinate the development and distribution of documents of general importance to the stakeholder group
4. Recommend the formation of work groups to the stakeholder group
5. Coordinate with and between work groups
6. Coordinate timelines and activities with the Forest Service
7. Report activities to the stakeholder group in a timely manner including press releases
8. Manage and monitor membership
9. Offer monthly reports to the stakeholder group

Section 4. The officers and committee will have responsibilities as delegated by the stakeholder group and this Charter.

Section 5. The committee will recognize the establishment of work groups and coordinate the creation of a short document that clearly articulates the goals, objectives, and tasks of each work group.

Article V. Officers

Section 1. Officers. The committee will select officers from within the committee by requesting volunteers. The officers will consist of a: co-chairs. The terms and the duties of the co-chairs are:

1. The term for each co-chair is six months.
2. The terms will be staggered by three months in order to maintain continuity.
3. The responsibility of the co-chairs will be divided as follows:
 - a. Co-chair one: Develops committee meeting agendas in cooperation with the committee, conducts the meeting; ensures notes are taken, edited and posted to BASECAMP
 - b. Co-chair two: Facilitates meeting logistics including taking or delegating note taking responsibilities.

Section 2. The co-chairs shall act in each other's stead if one should not be available to perform its functions. If a co-chair resigns before the end of their term the committee will recruit a member to fill that vacancy and complete the term of the co-chair that resigned. Co-chairs who have completed a six month term are encouraged to wait six months before becoming co-chair again. This is in order to encourage broad participation and diverse leadership.

Section 3. The committee shall be responsible for the maintenance of the official records that document membership and members in good standing.

VI. ANNUAL EVALUATION

Section 1. The stakeholder group will set aside time at least once a year (early October) to systematically evaluate the 4FRI program and actions to ensure regular adaptation and improvement; during the annual evaluation, the stakeholder group will also consider changes to foundation documents, including the Charter and Structure of the 4FRI.

VII. FUNDING

All stakeholders recognize that they are working in collaboration with the USFS to support comprehensive restoration and advance the long-term ecological, social, administrative, and economic goals of the 4FRI. Comprehensive restoration includes more than just thinning trees and managing fire; it involves a wide range of activities that include (but are not limited to) road rehabilitation and/or obliteration, erosion control, riparian protection and/or rehabilitation, invasive species prevention and/or removal, etc. Implementation, monitoring, and adaptation of these comprehensive restoration activities will likely require funds above and beyond USFS capabilities. Stakeholders will support these efforts by seeking out, applying for, and/or advocating for funding whenever opportunities arise. If and when funding is received by the stakeholder group, the stakeholder group will make decisions regarding funding allocation, and will determine an appropriate mechanism for monitoring and accounting for this funding.

We the undersigned affirm our commitment to the 4FRI process and this Charter:

Signatures