

# **GREATER FLAGSTAFF FORESTS PARTNERSHIP**

## ***Restoring Forest Ecosystems and Protecting Our Community***

### ***Annual Report – FY 2017 (July 2016 – June 2017)***

The Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP) is a respected community-based organization that supports collaborative efforts and has been a leader in researching and demonstrating approaches to forest ecosystem restoration in the ponderosa pine forests surrounding Flagstaff, Arizona since 1996. GFFP is one of the longest standing forest restoration collaborative organizations in the country and has been recognized as a national model. Various organizations are represented within GFFP including academic; private; and municipal, state and federal agencies.



***Our Vision:*** To research and demonstrate the various approaches to forest ecosystem restoration in the ponderosa pine forests, our actions are based on improving the overall sustainability and resiliency of the forests in the greater Flagstaff area. Sustainable and resilient forests are those that have the capacity to recover to resemble historic conditions (composition, structure, and/or function) and can be maintained for future generations of forest users. As GFFP works towards future sustainability and resiliency of our forests and communities, our efforts focus on: 1) multi-agency planning and coordinated and complimentary implementation of forest restoration projects, 2) monitoring and adaptive management, 3) outreach and education, and 4) utilization of small diameter trees and woody biomass.

***GFFP Recognized: Two Chiefs' Partnership Award.*** Coconino National Forest's Flagstaff District Ranger and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist presented the Two Chiefs' Partnership Award to GFFP Partners Nov. 2016. The awards recognize successful conservation efforts made possible through partnerships that have worked collaboratively to support conservation and forest stewardship. Partners were recognized with individually framed awards that were signed by both the Chief of the Forest Service and the Chief of the NRCS. The citation on the awards reads: "In recognition of your work with the Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership to improve forest health, protect the community from wildfire, and educate the public."



*Paul Whitefield National Park Service  
Accepts Award*

In FY 2017, GFFP's work plan and accomplishments were focused on the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI), the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP), the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FACLN), and in cost-share programs that encourage and fund on-the-ground forest restoration treatments on private property in and around Flagstaff.

***Planning and Implementation.*** GFFP took a leadership role in 4FRI's Multi-Party Monitoring Board and regularly cooperates with the 4FRI stakeholder group. In addition, GFFP has contracted with the City of Flagstaff to work on various aspects for the FWPP in five broad areas: outreach, implementation, monitoring, tribal engagement and grants. GFFP continues to work on a Wildland Fire/Hazardous Fuel (WFHF) grant received from Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (ADFFM) to provide cost-share assistance for conducting forest treatments on non-federal lands. In partnership with Coconino County and the ADFFM, GFFP is assisting with planning, funding and project oversight of a 325 acres in Ft. Tuthill County Fairgrounds (110 acres funded by a GFFP/WFHF grant) and has completed treatments on smaller tracks of private land. The Partnership submitted a grant proposal to conduct treatments on Hart Prairie/San Francisco Peaks and on Highway 180 that are adjacent to FWPP and Coconino National Forest's projects. Since 2004, the cost share program has resulted in total funding of upwards of \$1 million that has been distributed to property owners to treat approximately 2,250 acres of land. Lastly, the Partnership is updating the Greater Flagstaff Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan and [GFFP's treatment map](#) that illustrates completed GFFP treatments within the greater Flagstaff area.

***Monitoring and Adaptive Management.*** GFFP continues to monitor activities in order to understand how actions affect ecosystems and communities. Based on monitoring results, application of adaptive management practices promotes enhanced economic, social and ecological outcomes and sustainability. GFFP is working with the 4FRI's Multi-Party Monitoring Board to conduct ecological monitoring projects in areas like songbirds and forest structure/vegetation inventories. GFFP has initiated an economic monitoring program by collecting primary economic data (CY17) from regional operators to analyze the regional economic contributions of 4FRI-

related projects. In addition, the Partnership is updating the FWPP Monitoring Plan. Collectively, these efforts assist in conducting monitoring projects that better determine FWPP and 4FRI effectiveness.

**Public Outreach and Education.** This is the fourth year that GFFP participated as a national hub with the FACLN. The FACLN supported the Partnership to develop and share best practices and innovations that accelerate the adoption of fire adapted communities' concepts. By engaging with this network, GFFP committed to developing and implementing innovative activities that increase the Flagstaff community's resilience to wildfire. Notable activities completed this year included: 1) Harvesting Methods & Wildfire Preparedness Day Open House, 2) initiated a statewide network of Fire Adapted Community hubs, and 3) Firewise landscape contest and awards luncheon. The Partnership led several field tours on Observatory Mesa and assisted FWPP with community outreach for cost-share funded forest treatments (525 acres on Section 12). GFFP organized three Festival of Science events to inform citizens of our progress in restoring forested ecosystems in and around Flagstaff. Complementing treatments in Ft Tuthill, GFFP installed a [kiosk in the fairgrounds](#) that was adapted from a [treatment effectiveness newspaper insert](#) published in the local newspaper last summer. GFFP also assisted FWPP with outreach to key groups: 1) County Supervisor Association Legislative Summit, 2) USFS International Seminar on Watershed Management (27 international leaders representing 19 countries), 3) USFS International Program (Indonesian delegation of forestry professionals), and 4) Arizona Municipal Planners' Association.



*Indonesian Professionals Visit the Mesa*



**Processing Biomass** Digital Restoration Guide that marks units using a digitally formatted map is being tested on the Mesa as a means of replacing traditional paint to mark trees. Where applicable, this technology can assist in lowering costs and increases the efficiency of forest thinning projects

**Utilization and Economic Development.** The Partnership continued involvement with other FWPP and 4FRI stakeholders to pursue and promote new ways of reducing treatment costs, modify forest density and fuel loads, minimize fire risk, while promoting economically viable solutions to forest restoration efforts. GFFP continued to seek opportunities to attract businesses that use woody biomass by-products from local forest restoration projects. The Partnership engaged and worked with local contractors to assist in implementing cost-share treatments on Observatory Mesa. The slash (tree limbs, bark etc.) was chipped and transported to the Coronado Generating Station in Eastern Arizona. The chips were mixed with coal to test the efficiency in generating electricity. A

**Management and Administration.** The Partnership targets limited funding to specific project areas through contract work. Partners help to develop and guide activities and specific programs and organizations or individuals with expertise specific to each task are contracted to complete projects. GFFP also engaged students from NAU as paid interns that provided them valuable experience. In addition, the Partnership continued to seek external grant funding to supplement our work. The Board of Directors meets monthly to review financial status, complete other administrative duties and coordinates with and oversees project contractors. This model, initiated in 2008, has assisted with our financial viability and has proved effective. As a result, administrative expenses are limited to insurance; accounting and bookkeeping services; office space, supplies, and expenses; and website hosting and maintenance.

**Looking Forward:** In 1996, the Partnership began efforts to determine how the community should address the forest health crisis and protect Flagstaff from threats presented by wildfires burning in the area. We've come a long way.

In FY 2018, GFFP plans to provide support for:

- Implementation of the 4FRI 's first analysis area in the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests and planning for the second analysis area in the Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto National Forests;
- Support FWPP efforts through monitoring, outreach, tribal engagement and financial leverage;
- Implement effective treatments and continue to seek cost-share funding for targeted private lands;
- Increase the Flagstaff community's awareness, mitigation and resilience to wildfire through implementing FACLN activities;
- Continue to build a a statewide network of Fire Adapted Community Hubs;
- Promote the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy 1) Resilient Landscapes, 2) Fire Adapted Communities, and 3) Safe and Effective Wildfire Response;
- Participate in regional workshops and conferences that support restoration efforts and our goals; and
- Continue to develop and implement monitoring and adaptive management to assure effectiveness of our effo

**GFFP Board of Directors**

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