

GREATER FLAGSTAFF FORESTS PARTNERSHIP

Restoring Forest Ecosystems and Protecting Our Community

Annual Report – 2018

The Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP) is a respected community-based organization that supports collaborative efforts and has been a leader in examining and demonstrating approaches to forest ecosystem restoration in the ponderosa pine forests surrounding Flagstaff, Arizona since 1996. GFFP continues to help lead a shift in public understanding and support for proactive forest management that is designed to increase awareness of threats our forested communities face and the proactive solutions underway to reduce our risk. 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 pre-disturbance composition, structure, and/or function over time and can be maintained for future generations of forest users. As GFFP works toward 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) utilization of woody biomass, and 4) outreach and education.

In 2018, GFFP's work plan and accomplishments were focused on the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI), the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FACLN), Arizona Fire Adapted Communities (AZFAC) Learning Network and in cost-share programs that encourage and fund on-the-ground forest restoration treatments on private property in and around Flagstaff.



Mechanical Thinning Operations in the Middle of Town, Near Sechrist Elementary School (Hwy 180)

Planning and Implementation. GFFP regularly participated in the 4FRI stakeholder group and, through our work and grants the Partnership received, has made a substantial contribution to increasing capacity and funding toward the Initiative. In addition, GFFP is the primary stakeholder group for the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP) and offers assistance to this project, as needed. GFFP completed mechanically thinning trees this fall on approximately 60 acres behind Sechrist Elementary School, off of Highway 180. This project was funded by a Wildland Fire Hazardous Fuel (WFHF) grant that was awarded to the Partnership. This WFHF grant will also fund treatments (thinning trees and prescribed fire) that are expected to be completed in spring 2019 on five private parcels in Hart Prairie, at The Nature Conservancy Preserve, and at Camp Colton, a highly valued Flagstaff Unified School District property. Since 2004, the cost share program has resulted in total funding of upwards of \$1.4 million that has been distributed to property owners to treat approximately 3,000 acres of land. The Partnership completed an update to the [Greater Flagstaff Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#) (CWPP). Lastly, in collaboration with Coconino County's GIS Department, updates and refinements are being planned for GFFP's treatment map that illustrates completed forest treatments within the greater Flagstaff CWPP boundary.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management. GFFP continues to work with 4FRI's Multi-Party Monitoring Board to plan and conduct projects like songbird, forest structure (LIDAR and drone imagery) and vegetation inventories. With GFFP grant-funded support from Coconino County and Arizona Dept. of Forestry and Fire Management, the ["Regional Economic Contributions of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative"](#) report was completed. This economic monitoring project provides the first collection of primary data from 4FRI contractors, which established a baseline for successive longitudinal studies. The results reveal economic activity (e.g., jobs, green tons removed, etc.) that included thinning, wood utilization, and other restoration activities. Collectively, these efforts assist in conducting monitoring projects that better determine 4FRI effectiveness. Based on monitoring results, application of lessons learned promotes enhanced economic, social and ecological outcomes and programmatic sustainability.

Public Outreach and Education. This is the sixth year that GFFP participated as a national member with the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FACLN or FAC Net). The FAC Net supports the Partnership to develop and share best practices and innovations that

accelerate the adoption of fire adapted communities' concepts. Notable FACLN activities completed this year include: 1) participation in a Learning Exchange with Ashland Fire & Rescue in Ashland, Oregon; 2) produced and published a 4-page color newspaper insert in the *AZ Daily Sun*, *Red Rock News*, *The Camp Verde Journal*, and *Cottonwood Journal Extra* focusing on the characteristics of severe versus prescribed fire and the differences between these types of fires and smoke events; 3) attended a facilitative leadership workshop; 4) participated in a Festival of Science event, "Science in the Park: Forest Treatments, Harvesting Methods & Fire Adapted Communities;" 5) Designed and installed a kiosk in Ft. Tuthill County Park that included a Fire Ecology Demo Site (illustrates the difference between a treated vs. an untreated forest); 6) continued to develop a statewide learning network, "Arizona Fire Adapted Communities, AZFAC" (see AZFAC.org). AZFAC presented at two community meetings -- Prescott Area Wildland Urban Interface Commission (PAWUIC) and at a pancake breakfast at the Yavapai Fire District, near Yarnell and People's Valley, to spread the word about AZFAC and how their communities can increase fire adaptation efforts. In addition, AZFAC chairs attended a state network training in Denver, CO with other western state network leads. GFFP also hosted a film screening,



Cross-Cut Saw Competition at Festival of Science Event



AZFAC Steering Committee Visit to PAWUIC in Prescott

"Fire and Water Restoring Arizona's Forests," and panel discussion at the Museum of Northern Arizona. This event was attended by more than 100 residents and visitors and emphasized the current fire danger of an extremely dry winter and how we can work together to mitigate the greatest public safety issue within the City of Flagstaff and Coconino County.

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. For example, GFFP, along with Coconino County and Campbell Global, engaged and worked with a

local contractor to assist in implementing cost-share treatments near Sechrist Elementary School. The Partnership also held a field tour to provide an opportunity to visit the site. Through the FACLN, GFFP co-chairs the Wood Utilization Community of Practice, which is a national forum to share challenges, lesson learned and practices to improve wood utilization success across the west.

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. In addition, the Partnership secured external grant funding to supplement our work. The GFFP website (gffp.org) was redesigned and overhauled to more accurately reflect the Partnership's direction and accomplishments. GFFP was a fiscal sponsor of the 2018 AZ Wildland Urban Interface & Firewise Summit. The Board of Directors meets monthly to review financial status, complete other administrative duties and coordinates with and oversee 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 and supplies; 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 reduce risk to Flagstaff from threats presented by severe wildfires burning in the area. We've come a long way.

In 2019, GFFP plans to provide:

- a professional forum and collaborative entity to achieve Partners' goals;
- assistance with 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 for FWPP efforts through monitoring, public engagement, financial leverage and program management;
- funding for/implementation of on-the-ground treatments for targeted private lands;
- increased awareness, mitigation and resilience to wildfire through implementing FACLN activities across Arizona;
- a statewide Arizona Fire Adapted Community Learning Network (AZFAC);
- promotion of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: 1) resilient landscapes, 2) fire adapted communities, and 3) safe and effective wildfire response;
- support for and participation in regional workshops and conferences that assist restoration efforts and our goals; and
- development and implementation of monitoring and adaptive management to assure effectiveness in our work.

GFFP Board of Directors

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