



Ecological Restoration Institute



Fact Sheet: 4FRI Workforce Analysis

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Workforce Analysis Finds Forest Restoration Will Bring Needed Jobs to Northern Arizona

Northern Arizona is home to the largest contiguous ponderosa pine forest in North America—spanning the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Kaibab, and Tonto national forests. The Four Forests Restoration Initiative (4FRI) is a collaborative effort of government, private, and special interests. The collaborative aspires to thin one million acres across these national forests before more large, expensive wildfires, such as the Wallow and the Rodeo-Chediski, develop in the overgrown forest conditions now typical across the region.

The work of forest thinning is labor intensive and the 4FRI project will require a skilled workforce and new infrastructure investments to be successful. To understand the workforce needs for the 4FRI project, the ERI commissioned the Arizona Rural Policy Institute at Northern Arizona University to study the situation. The results of their inquiry reveal the likely workforce needs of 4FRI in the public sector (U.S. Forest Service), the private sector (in-the-field work, wood products transportation and manufacturing), and any educational needs.

Public Sector Workforce (U.S. Forest Service)

- Sixty-nine Forest Service personnel will be required, according to the study. The study shows that the required positions are already in place and the existing personnel are generally adequate to meet the annual needs of the 4FRI. These employees will perform a variety of functions related to treatment preparation and administration.

Private Sector Workforce (in-the-field)

- The report indicates that 422 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees will be needed to meet the 50,000-acre annual treatment goal of the 4FRI project.
- Of these 422 FTEs, about 300 new FTEs will be created at full build-out of the 4FRI.

The private sector workforce will fill the on-site and labor needs of the 4FRI project—mobilizing, cutting, skidding, delimiting, slashing, loading, and other jobs. These jobs can be filled by numerous local, regional, and if necessary, out-of-state employers.

Private Sector Workforce (wood products transportation and manufacturing)

Discussions with local private sector experts indicate that more than 300 FTEs will be created to transport and utilize the wood removed in the 4FRI project area.

Education

- A graduated step-up to full (50,000-acre) implementation of the 4FRI project will provide time for recruitment and training.
- Interviewed experts note that the needed in-the-field skills are traditionally acquired through on-the-job training.
- In the event that specialized workforce training is required, educational facilities, particularly Coconino Community College and Northland Pioneer College, can provide specialized training in a variety of settings.



The Ecological Restoration Institute is dedicated to reversing declines in the condition of forested communities throughout the Intermountain West, particularly those affected by severe wildfires and insect outbreaks. Our efforts focus on science-based research of ecological and socio-economic matters related to restoration as well as support for on-the-ground treatments, outreach, and education.

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