

Southeastern Arizona Forest Ecosystem Restoration - Santa Catalina
University of Arizona, Tree-Ring Lab
June 21, 2007
Meeting Notes – by Sherry Tune and John Able

In attendance: Tom Swetnam, Don Falk, Sherry Tune, and John Able

Objective of the meeting was to discuss the potential for a forest restoration demonstration project on the Santa Catalina Mountains taking advantage of a landscape that has already been treated by wildfire (Aspen and Bullock). Tom led the discussion, which was interactive with group discussions and a power point presentation.

We discussed the following:

Challenges and Opportunities

- Public acceptance
- Public education – interpretive information, a memorial of what happened and why – Don't forget
- Smoke
- Getting fire back into the system from an ecological stand point, both integrity and maintaining resiliency through change, to include Climate Change
- These projects take place over a large landscape over a long time.
- Our current budget system does not lend itself to managing processes that occur over decades or centuries.
- A new model of managing a forest that does try to accommodate the time frames required
- This project offers a collaborative process in long term management
- Summerhaven is in the process of revising their Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- The Demonstration values are 1) presence of WUI makes relevant the prevention of future catastrophic fires and 2) the forest mosaic has been reset to a more natural state and this is an opportunity to maintain that mosaic
- Ed Destigier (sp) – Economics of Ecosystem Services, Cost Avoidance
- Translational Science – Science applied by land managers
- Understanding the effects of climate change and how land managers, scientists, and the publics will adapt into the future.
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Partners

Forest Service, University of Arizona, Community, Rocky Mt Research Station (Carl Edminister and Pepe Iniguez), NAU – Ecological Resource Institute (ERI), Arizona Game and Fish, Saguaro Park Service,

Funding Opportunities

The reality is, we can not do this alone as a single agency. Funding from the Regional Office for the Coronado is limited and we are competing with the Stewardship Project on the A-S and the CFRP in New Mexico. Our targets are increasing and the Regional funding is declining.

Adopting the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) in Arizona. The Community Forest Restoration Act of 2000 (Title VI, Public Law 106-393) established a cooperative forest restoration program in New Mexico. Modifications to the Act would have to occur to be applicable for southeast Arizona landscapes, i.e., removing a cap on funding and acre limitations. Working with the staffers Grijalva and Giffords.

Provide funding support to the University of Arizona

FireScape

How can FireScape support this effort? Sherry provided an overview of FireScape and explained the Huachuca Area Fire Partners and Santa Cruz Landscape as examples. The important thing here is that FireScape is a group of individuals whose philosophy is to “Restoring Balance Today for Sustainable Lands Tomorrow”.

FireScape will take the best features of fire management efforts known to all of us, combine them, and apply them across the landscape occupied by the Coronado National Forest. Thus, it is the intent of FireScape to restore fire-adapted ecosystems by:

- Working at a landscape scale and viewing that landscape as watersheds, firesheds, and ecological units, crossing jurisdictional boundaries where feasible.
- Applying current science such as fire history studies, fire effects reviews, work on fire and sensitive species, and modeling tools while we collaborate with our Rocky Mountain Research Station liaison. Monitoring projects and feeding back management recommendations.
- Involving partners who share the common goals of restoring fire as an ecological process and managing fire in a safe, environmentally sound manner.
- Sharing resources in non-traditional ways to get the most from our time, money, and people.
- Streamlining compliance and other paperwork to focus more on implementation by conducting landscape-scale rather than project-by-project analyses that allow for implementation flexibility.

In addition to doing right by the land, FireScape is predicted to have positive morale results by freeing up Forest Service and other professionals to do the jobs they envisioned when they chose to work in the natural resources field.

The FireScape team envisions ultimately (1) making fire management recommendations across the entire Forest that balance ecological and safety needs with social, economic, and political factors and (2) providing monitoring data that contributes to genuine adaptive management.

Proposed steps in this process include:

- Formation of local, landscape-scale partnerships that create a vision for fire management.
- Completion of collaborative, unique, landscape-scale fire management plans, designed to meet the local partnership goals.

- Approval of landscape-scale compliance documents for these plans that include analysis for suppression, wildland fire use, prescribed fire, and non-fire treatments in ways that allow for implementation flexibility.
- Prioritization of fuels and vegetation treatment across the collaborative planning areas, applying local knowledge, past experience, current research, and state-of-the-art modeling tools to evaluate fuel hazard risks and ecological needs.
- Implementation and monitoring tiered to the Forest Plan and Environmental Management System through data collection the results feed back into the ecological sustainability assessment component of the Forest Plan.
- Increased understanding of and appreciation for Sky Island ecosystems among the affected stakeholders and general public.

Modeling Tools

GIS modeling support from the University of Arizona

Mark Finney – looks at fire hazard and political and social issues

WALTER II – Arizona Science Fund, Spatial analysis tool

Name this project

Sherry will send an email to all with a list of names discussed and we can decide later

Tom Swetnam's role is the major lead to move this project forward and make it happen.

Next meeting July 13, 16th, or 19th in a.m., or 20th, who would include the following:

Jeanine Derby, Forest Supervisor

Larry Raley, Santa Catalina Ranger District

Lisa Grumlick, Department School of Natural Resources

Tom Swetnam, Director and Professor at Tree Ring Lab

Don Falk, Associate Professor, Fire and Restoration

Faye Fentiman, Forest Partnership Coordinator

FireScape members

Santa Catalina Ranger District

The objective of the next meeting is to discuss the potential for a long-term landscape scale forest restoration project on the Santa Catalina Mountains with key individuals.