

**2018 WIR Board of Directors Fall Meeting
Maricopa County, Arizona**

WIR President Tommie Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance and presided over the meeting.

WIR Partner Update from the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC)

WFLC Executive Manager Mike Zupko updated the WIR Board on the September 2018 WFLC meeting and opportunities for future engagement on issues surrounding wildland fire and public lands management. WFLC priorities for the coming year include more focus on active management, the public health impacts of smoke inhalation, and greater investments in planning tools. Mike Zupko requested that NACo assist in finding a county-level GIS expert who can help to make recommendations for local governments in using new mapping technologies.

- **Mr. Mike Zupko**, Executive Manager, WFLC
mike@zup-co-inc.com

Jonathan Shuffield, NACo Associate Legislative Director for Public Lands and WIR Liaison, provided a legislative update that covered the FY 2018 omnibus spending bill, PILT, SRS, the Farm Bill, infrastructure and opioids legislation. Additionally, Jonathan presented a 2019 WIR budget to the Board, who then voted unanimously to approve it.

jshuffield@naco.org

Roundtable Discussion on State and Local Issues Impacting Member Counties:

- Impact of wild horses and burros on Western rangelands
- Need for a permanent BLM Director
- More focus on rural development, including broadband access
- The impacts of tourism on communities, such as parts of Utah where national parks draw millions of tourists, but the state requires 2/3 of bed tax revenue be returned to the state tourism bureau for more marketing and tourism promotion.
- Changing the PILT formula to where counties under 5,000 in population are compensated fairly—including the need for bigger counties to speak up in support of this formula change.
- Post-fire recovery and the need for greater post-fire salvage on public lands
- Lack of coordination from the Department of the Interior with local governments
- Grazing and its positive impacts on the landscape
- Compensation for county governments with large swaths of untaxable tribal lands
- Federal government contracting with counties to perform parts of NEPA analyses

Presentation and Discussion on Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4-FRI)

National Forest managers in Arizona have been working for 15 years with a broad group of stakeholders to reduce the threat of high-intensity wildfires to neighboring communities through a variety of means. These have included using prescribed fires and mechanically thinning trees to restore forests. While the NEPA planning of these projects has been successful, the implementation has been challenging and the acres treated have not been sufficient to significantly reduce the threat of large-scale fires. This panel featured individuals from local government, conservation groups, industry, and other stakeholders who have been involved in the initiative's development and implementation. Additionally, there was a discussion on new technologies (i.e. tablet software) used to accelerate implementation and reduce the cost of treatments preparation, administration and monitoring. Panelists included:

- **Mr. Pascal Berlioux**, Executive Director, Eastern Arizona Counties Organization, one of the original creators of 4FRI. pberlioux@easternarizonacounties.us
- **Ms. Wendy Jo Haskins**, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Apache/Sitgreaves National Forest; member of the U.S. Forest Service 4FRI Board. Throughout her career with the USFS, Supervisor Haskins has led, planned, and implemented land management restoration projects on National Forest System lands.
whaskins@fs.fed.us
- **Dr. Wallace “Wally” Covington**, Regents' Professor and Executive Director, Ecological Restoration Institute, Northern Arizona University. Dr. Covington is the founder of the Ecological Restoration Institute at NAU and one of the founding commissioners on the National Commission on Science for Sustainable Forestry. He is one of the developers of the forest restoration science on which 4FRI is based.
w.wallace.covington@nau.edu
- **Mr. Steve Rosenstock**, Statewide Wildlife Habitat Coordinator, AZ Game & Fish Department, one of the founding members of the 4FRI collaborative and serves as the Department lead for 4FRI.
srose@azgfd.gov
- **The Hon. Jason Whiting**, Supervisor, Navajo County; Chairman, Eastern Arizona Counties Organization. As the Chair of ECO, Supervisor Whiting is the primary local government interlocutor in Arizona for the Forest Service.
jason.whiting@navajocountyaz.gov
- **Mr. Travis Bruner**, Interim Conservation Director, Grand Canyon Trust, one of the founding organizations of 4FRI and the 4FRI collaborative. tbruner@grandcanyontrust.org
- **Mr. Brad Worsley**, President, Novo BioPower, the only biomass facility in Arizona. It produces 28 mega-watts and supports the implementation of ~15,000 acres of ponderosa pine forest restoration per year in the White Mountains.
bworsley@novopower.com
- **Mr. Allen Reidhead**, President, Tri Star. The Reidhead family’s company, Tri Star, implements almost 10 times as many forest restoration treatment acres as all other players combined in Arizona. They also own and operate the Novo Star small diameter sawmill.
allenreidhead@msn.com

Shared Stewardship of National Forests—Roundtable Discussion

On August 16, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) unveiled a new strategy to collaborate with state and county governments to better manage the National Forest System. This “Shared Stewardship” strategy shows how they intend to use the new authorities granted to the agencies through the FY 2018 omnibus spending package for managing national forests. Arizona State Forester Jeff Whitney discussed his state’s efforts to coordinate forest action plans and approaches for counties to work with state foresters to impact federal forest management under the new Shared Stewardship strategy.

- **Jeff Whitney**, Arizona State Forester
jwhitney@dffm.az.gov

You can find the Arizona State Forest Action Plan here: <https://dffm.az.gov/sites/default/files/AZ-Forest-Action-Plan-2015-Brief-Report.pdf>

An Update from the Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has been at the forefront of the U.S. Department of the Interior’s efforts to better engage with state and local governments. Karen Kelleher, Associate State

Director for the BLM, discussed the BLM's efforts in Arizona to better interact with local governments and their agenda moving forward.

- **Ms. Karen Kelleher**, Associate State Director, Bureau of Land Management
kkelleh@blm.gov

Discussion on NACo-U.S. Forest Service Guidebook

Since December 2017, WIR leadership and staff have worked with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on a Guidebook for county officials and USFS personnel to help agency employees and county governments better understand their respective roles in the planning process. WIR Immediate Past President Joel Bousman led a discussion on the draft Guidebook and solicit input from WIR membership on its content. A link to the draft Guidebook is included in the download link above. **We ask that you DO NOT share this document with anyone outside of your county government.**

At the WIR meeting, Members offered the following recommendations:

- Move the history of the Forest Service section to an appendix for the document.
- Begin the recommendations on clear and upfront communication at the beginning of the document.
- (page 14) Replace the county model with a new example that is more reflective of a Western county—remove the county executive role and focus more on the board of commissioners/supervisors and their responsibilities.
- (page 25) Include a table of states and how they're governed—i.e. requirements for county governments to draft RMPs or other similar plans.
- More information on case law and how it impacts the planning process—what are the requirements a court ruling can place on federal agencies.
- The Guidebook needs a section on consequences for following or not following the Guidebook and federal laws. How do we get the message to implement this Guidebook to the field and regional staff levels for the U.S. Forest Service?
- Members would like a greater emphasis on coordination.

Comments and other recommendations are due to Jonathan Shuffield (jshuffield@naco.org) by Monday, October 29th.

Economic Development and the Rural-Urban Divide

Seven of the top-10 fastest growing states are located in the West. This population explosion, the majority of which is concentrated in urban centers, leads to competition for resources in states and can strain the ability of local governments to provide necessary services and infrastructure to meet growing demand. This panel focused on economic development efforts within federal agencies, state government and the private sector designed to close the gap between rural and urban areas.

- **Mr. Jeff Hays**, State Director, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development, discussed available federal resources to county governments for economic development, money for hotels for tourism gateway communities, and assistance for dealing with the opioid epidemic.
Jeff.hays@az.usda.gov
- **Mr. Keith Watkins**, Senior Vice President, Arizona Commerce Authority, discussed Arizona's efforts to increase economic activity in rural areas, and recommended that county governments have full-time staff devoted to economic development while also ensuring they are prepared with relevant information to share with state agencies when asking for assistance.
keithw@azcommerce.com

- **Mr. Chris Camacho**, CEO, Greater Phoenix Economic Council, discussed the growing economic divide between urban and rural areas, shared information on a [new report on Distressed Communities](#) after the Great Recession from the Economic Innovation Group, and the need for counties to understand their own infrastructure to ensure economic growth.
ccamacho@gpec.org

Presentation on Tourism and Its Economic Impact

The tourism economy creates thousands of jobs and generates billions of dollars in economic activity in Western states. This panel featured representatives from the National Park Service and Arizona Office of Tourism, who discussed how their respective offices promote recreation in Western states and offered information on how county governments can work with state and federal agencies to increase visitation.

- **Mr. Adam Milnor**, Community Planner, National Park Service Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Division
Adam_milnor@nps.gov
- **Mr. Ben Stewart**, Director of Government and Community Affairs, Arizona Office of Tourism
bstewart@tourism.az.gov

Roundtable Discussion on WIR Key Priorities for 2018-19

Each year, the WIR Board of Directors approves the next year's WIR policy areas of focus. This discussion will include a review of the current WIR Priorities and a collaborative discussion and adoption of the Board's priorities for 2018. Most importantly, we will have a discussion on the strategies and tactics we need to make progress.

2019 Priorities:

- **WIR urges federal policy makers to ensure certainty in federal county payments**
- **WIR urges Congress and the Administration to enact legislation and policies that reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and restore sustainable forest health, function and productivity.**
- **Strengthen local infrastructure and access to modern telecommunications technology.**
- **Encourage access to Western lands and responsible development of Western resources.**
- **WIR urges Congress and the Administration to strengthen the partnership between counties and the federal government when making legislative or regulatory decisions.**
- **Promote safe and healthy communities.**