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August 7, 2016

Annette Fredette, 4FRI Planning Coordinator

Coconino National Forest

1824 S. Thompson St.

Flagstaff AZ 86001

Re: Scoping comments on the 4 FRI Rim Country Proposed Action (June 2106).

Dear Ms. Fredette:

The Coconino Sportsmen welcome this opportunity to comment on the 4FRI Rim Country Project Proposed Action. As a 60+ year local sportsman's organization that has been active over the decades on forest, wildlife and other related issues we support and agree with the letter submitted by John Hamill of the TRCP. In addition we would like to submit the following additional comments to supplement those topics included in the TRCP letter.

When discussing the project Purpose and Need we could not agree more on all of the purposes outlined, restoration of forest health, structure, function and resiliency are absolutely necessary to meet mutually beneficial goals. Current conditions are a far cry from the historic norm and we're fortunate today to have the knowledge, experience and desire to remedy this problem. Unfortunately there does exist roadblocks to the success of this project including adequate funding, balancing of priorities, contractor activities and fulfillment of obligations, frequent turnover of key personnel and stringent social and industrial pressures. We realize that we're not going to please everyone regardless of the scientific knowledge available but we cannot afford to ignore proven facts and scientific evidence in order to appease personal opinions or that of a small but highly vocal portion of the public. A balanced adherence to procedures and treatments that achieve the needs and purposes of the project must be kept in the forefront at all times without undo emphasis on any one of the goals. We know how we've arrived at the current conditions and we know what it takes to attain the desired conditions and that should be first and foremost with any activities in our forests and other public lands.

When discussing the specific proposed actions on page 14 of the document I've received we'd like to make the following comments or suggestions

\* When it comes mechanical thinning and prescribed burning, whenever possible insure that multiple objectives are being considered. For example, thinning or prescribed fire on MSO PAC's or NGH areas should be done in a manner that also reduces the undesirable effects of fire. There will be limited or no MSO or NGH activity in an area that suffers high severity wildfire. Wildlife is resilient and adaptable to various conditions as long as minimum carrying capacity conditions exist.

\* Roads should be managed as part of the TMP program and not dependent on 4FRI budgets or priorities. The ongoing discussions and resulting changes to roads and other access opportunities is a program that has shown to be feasible and effective when coupled with appropriate enforcement activities and budget appropriations.

\* Numerous opportunities exist for volunteer activities to carry out objectives related to meadow, wetland

and riparian areas and these opportunities should be explored and implemented whenever possible.

\* There have been many activities already completed to inventory springs and assess their current conditions. Like many other areas of concern, the knowledge and experience in what should and must be done already exists and all possible opportunities for collaboration and financial support/sharing should be implemented.

\* In regard to protective barriers, a topic we have a great deal of experience with, planning and implementation must include discussions for future maintenance, access, monitoring and possible decommissioning once appropriate. Within the project area there are existing sites where barriers were constructed that have not been maintained or monitored and the costs of the initial development were wasted due to the lack of adequate planning and foresight.

\* Finally, we understand that not all of the proposed actions will be completed at the same time or in the same order so prioritization and order and location of treatments should be planned to make the most of available resources. In addition, with resources and planning already built into the schedule, resolving other problems, like the removal of unnecessary pasture and allotment fences, removal of old, ineffective or significantly damaged aspen or wetland exclosures and general housekeeping on forest lands should be included under the proposed actions.

Again, thank you for this opportunity and we look forward to continued involvement with the 4FRI effort and we hope to see improved education and information sharing on some of the misconceptions regarding the proposed actions, like the need to have prescribed or managed fires and the inevitable smoke that may accompany these activities.

Respectfully,

Tom Mackin, Secretary/Treasurer  
Coconino Sportsmen