

Guiding Principles for A New Economy Based on Forest Restoration

Restoration Economy Subcommittee of the
Arizona Forest Health Advisory and Oversight Councils

Preamble to the Guiding Principles

Arizona's high country is home to magnificent forests harboring a diversity of biological, cultural, and economic values. Yet many of Arizona's forests—especially Arizona's extensive ponderosa forests—have undergone a dramatic transformation during the past century due to land use, climate, and other factors. These changes have increased insect and disease outbreaks, abnormally severe fires, and adversely affected biological, cultural, and economic values. The unacceptable risk posed by these conditions requires immediate and strategic action, including community protection and ecosystem restoration.

With this urgent need for strategic action comes an opportunity for positive change. It is recognized that there is a need to develop a viable restoration economy to accomplish the goals of community protection and forest restoration. Conversely, we have learned from past years that sustainable forest communities and sustainable wood-based enterprises depend on ecologically sound management of our forests. Therefore, new and existing forest industries need to be developed around the needs, goals and by-products of collaborative ecosystem restoration and community protection.

The Restoration Economy Subcommittee has developed, through collaboration, a zone of agreement for principles to guide the sustainable utilization of community protection and forest restoration by-products.

Guiding Principles for a New Economy Based on Forest Restoration

1. New and existing forest product industries should be developed and enhanced around the needs, goals and by-products of collaborative ecosystem restoration and community protection. This restoration economy can and should provide sustainable economic, environmental and social amenities and benefits to Arizona's rural communities.
2. A viable restoration economy includes tourism, recreation, and other community economic benefits. These amenity based economic benefits, which are tied to wildlife, watershed, scenic, and other values, should be enhanced and developed in association with community protection and forest restoration.
3. A viable restoration economy, like ecosystem restoration, must be collaborative and all-inclusive. Commitment to forging and proceeding within broad zones of agreement will ensure long-term effectiveness.
4. A viable restoration economy requires a reasonable predictability and a reasonable level of risk for business. Given that there is a large amount of material likely to be available as a result of community protection and forest restoration, all parties should work together to plan and develop systems to facilitate the regularity and predictability of material supply.
5. Additional public and private financial incentives should be created to develop and encourage new and existing forest industries that implement community protection and forest restoration.
6. Programs should be established to promote markets and public awareness of Arizona-made forestry and wood products.
7. A viable restoration economy should prioritize investments in local and regional Arizona based forest products industries. This approach should maximize local economic benefits, and improve the long-term stability of industry needed to implement community protection and forest restoration.
8. By-products of community protection and forest restoration will primarily include small diameter trees and woody biomass. Existing and new industry must be encouraged and developed to provide for utilization of these materials.
9. Ecosystem restoration and community protection projects should be designed and implemented using "best value" criteria, with emphasis on ecological values and support for local businesses.
10. Workforce development and training programs should be developed to support a viable restoration economy. To be most effective, these programs should be locally based.
11. Multi-party monitoring is essential to measure the success of a viable restoration economy. An effective multi-party monitoring process should include social, environmental, and economic facets of community protection and forest restoration. It is essential to utilize an adaptive approach to ensure these programs are most effective for the land.