



## What is the Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) at Northern Arizona University?

The Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) at Northern Arizona University *is a federally authorized program* under the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004 (PL 108-317). Along with two other institutes in New Mexico and Colorado, it was established to help land managers, stakeholders and others develop, transfer, implement and monitor practical science-based forest restoration treatments that will reduce the risk of severe wildfires, improve the health of dry forest and woodland ecosystems, enhance watershed function, provide jobs, and improve the quality of life for communities and citizens in the West.



### How Does the ERI Make a Difference?

Conducting scientific research and transferring the best available science to land managers and stakeholders are core functions of the ERI. Under the direction of Dr. Wally Covington, the ERI and its partners have developed and tested forest management prescriptions designed to restore forest health and reduce the risk of uncharacteristic crown fire for more than 30 years.

According to one individual interviewed during an independent assessment of the Institute, “It is impossible to have a conversation with any U.S. Forest Service employee about restoration without some reference to ERI’s work.”

### The ERI helps restore forests and protect communities by:

- **Providing leadership to think and act at the landscape scale**

Since 1995, the ERI has sounded an alarm in the peer-reviewed ecological literature, in Congressional testimonies, and at conferences, workshops, and other venues about the urgent need to restore western forests at the landscape scale or lose them to increasingly larger, more severe wildfires. In collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management and the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the ERI pioneered the first and largest, scientifically rigorous landscape-scale restoration treatment in the Southwest at Mt. Trumbull, which is located in the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. The studies conducted at this research site proved that landscape-scale restoration was beneficial to native wildlife and helped build support for restoration at landscape scales among wildlife experts.



Mt. Trumbull Restoration Site



Western Bluebird



Mt. Trumbull Restoration Unit

- **Designing and testing restoration treatments that restore forest health and reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire to forests and communities**

ERI research is used across the Intermountain West to inform treatment prescriptions designed to restore forest health and tree vigor, reduce the threat of unnatural crown fire, and enhance resource values including watershed function and wildlife habitat.



Fire in a Full Restoration Treatment    Fire in a Minimal Thinning Treatment    Fire in a Burn Only Treatment

- **Translating and transferring the “best available science” to the land managers**

Ultimately, it is the land management professional who determines how a treatment prescription is written and implemented. However, keeping current on scientific findings that should be used to inform action is challenging for most land managers. Through workshops, field trips, rapid assessments, and array of communication tools that include the web, fact sheets, working papers and other media, the ERI actively translates and transfers what land managers need to know *now* to do their job.

- **Providing facilitation and support for collaboration, job development, and economic opportunity**

The ERI, in cooperation with the other Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes, is providing collaborative and technical support to the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) pilot projects. In addition, the ERI actively engages in efforts to attract wood utilization industry to the Southwest by performing economic assessments and other services. The ERI in cooperation with the W.A. Franke College of Business recently completed a work force gap that determined that 300 new jobs will be created in the woods once the Four Forest Restoration Initiative is in full operation.



Four Forest Restoration Initiative Field Trip



Monitoring Workshop

- **Providing technical assistance to Native American communities**

The ERI provides technical assistance to tribes across northern Arizona. Services include: conducting rapid assessments in order to understand historic conditions and guide land management actions, and workshops to discuss and demonstrate using the best available science to design prescriptions.

For additional information contact: Diane Vosick, Director of Policy and Partnerships, 928-523-7854; [Diane.Vosick@nau.edu](mailto:Diane.Vosick@nau.edu)