

Working Group Objectives

Keith Sprengel, Program Chair

Welcome to Sedona and the 10th annual Forest Health Monitoring (FHM) working group meeting!

The national FHM program was designed to determine the status, changes and trends in indicators of forest condition, on an annual basis, across the nation. **That** is a fairly lofty goal!! I would submit, however, that the objective of this conference is even more challenging: to envision and plan what is necessary to ensure that the National FHM program is doing what it was designed to do.

Rich traditions are the foundation of this working conference; each one inter-related and designed to strengthen the FHM program.

First there are all of YOU, a diverse group of talented, and dedicated professionals.

Second there are general sessions. These sessions highlight forest health issues and the analytical approaches employed to interpret ecological impacts. General sessions spotlight specific programs, engage panels and offer case studies. Conference planning committee members' hope that the strategies and analytical approaches presented in the general sessions will have adaptive value: applications across diverse landscapes, each with their own unique challenges. The objective is to share information and ideas, and, in so doing, to trigger your individual and collective thinking about how we can best fulfill our mission.

Third there are poster sessions. Poster presentations illustrate the results of evaluation monitoring projects, in some instances these may be the only published record of these good works.

Lastly, and most vital to the success of this working process, are the focus groups. These groups are FHM's evolutionarily stable strategy! To evolve, we must adapt. Focus groups are where we have opportunities to raise, discuss, and propose resolutions to important issues related to program functions including: Detection Monitoring, Evaluation Monitoring, Intensive Site Monitoring and Research On Monitoring Techniques. We challenge you to take full advantage of this adaptive process...this IS YOUR opportunity as peers and collaborators to set direction in FHM.

Conference planners, individually or collectively, have several specific goals for the work all of us will do here together.

First, we want to strengthen partnerships through open communication and cooperation.

Please take time to get to know others in the working group and others present here today who have taken time from their busy schedules to learn more about our program. FHM regions are immense. Take advantage of rare face-to-face time with your State, University and Federal partners.

Second, we want to learn from the good works of others and avoid the pitfalls they've encountered. Embrace lessons learned. Employ tools already developed.

Our third aim is to create opportunities for connectivity with other monitoring efforts – national to state, state to local. None of us works in isolation and recognizing our inter-relation will help us tackle the challenge of scale.

The fourth aim of this conference is to look for solutions that are balanced and objective.

We want to be of service to our partners, cooperators and clients.

We want to envision and document the best route to the ideal and then plan for alternate realities.

I would add that I hope all of you have FUN and can take time to enjoy the natural beauty that envelops us.

Thank you!