



Autumn 2021

the Forest Steward

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We're in this together – to learn...

Join us for these events in coming months and make the experience richer with your presence. Details are online at <http://www.foreststewardsguild.org/events>. We look forward to seeing you on screen and in the woods!

Maine Forest Climate Change Webinar and Field Tour Series

► October 2021 – April 2022

Year-two of this series starts in late October. Each free webinar is followed a couple of days later by an accompanying \$20 field tour. Each will feature a panel of diverse experts who will address climate impacts on specific forest types such as spruce-fir, oak-pine, coastal, and mixed hardwoods.

Guild Gathering at NorthWoods Stewardship Center

► November 5, 2021

At this Guild Model Forest in Charleston, Vermont, forest managers enhance wildlife habitat, timber quality, education, and recreational opportunities. They will emphasize climate change resiliency, incorporating adaptation planning into harvests, and interpretive signage about climate practices.

Changing Faces of Forestry – a two-part, online discussion

► Part 1: October 25, 2021, Ever changing - past, present, future

Join this storytelling time and conversation with forestry professionals from all levels and interests. They will share how people and the forests have influenced their direction and outlook as we continue to celebrate the Guild's quarter-century of positive impact on the landscape.

► Part 2: November 1, 2021, Setting up the future of forestry (an interactive session)

What is our legacy within the forestry world? Is there room for innovation and change in the industry and the culture? Speak with our panelists and other peers and share your insight, reflections, questions, concerns, and hopes for forestry. Let's spark and explore thoughts and actions for the future of forests.

Check our event webpage often for more opportunities and support these events by hosting, or with your donations if you can. Your participation helps these events make a bigger difference for all. If you'd like to host a Guild Gathering, please email membership@forestguild.org to start the conversation.



Guild members share time on Guild-owned land in Michigan.

*“Learning together,
we make a bigger
difference for all.”*



When Guild members gather, a favorite activity is “Guild Intro Circles” where we share who we are and how we found our way to the Forest Stewards Guild.

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A national network born for learning together

by Emily Troisi, Associate Director, Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network



Participants from Pacific Northwest communities who co-developed learning objectives with FAC Net staff for a series of regional learning exchanges in 2016.

The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network at <http://www.fireadaptednetwork.org>, is a national peer-learning and action network that was founded in 2013 by practitioners who wanted to connect with others leading community-based fire solutions. FAC Net now works in [more than 30 states](#), with two-dozen core member-communities and 150 affiliates to connect, champion and resource community-based fire leaders and organizations. From those centers of local capacity, we work across scales and sectors with partners at regional and national levels. Examples include state and federal fire and forestry agencies, regional health consortia, tribes, and academia. A founding principle has always been to foster relationships that promote transparent lessons and knowledge-sharing across sectors and geographies to help communities move their fire work forward. The Guild has been an active

participant in FAC Net from the beginning, leads a state-wide network in New Mexico, and contributes to projects from Minnesota to North Carolina.

Since its beginning in 2013, FAC Net has learned a lot about the complexities of our nation's wildfire problems. Real changes in community resilience require investments in peer support, organizational capacity-building and local leadership. FAC Net provides learning, training, capacity-building and relationship-building support to its members to help folks access immense knowledge and experiences from the people doing this work.

FAC Net staff employ creative facilitation and agenda design techniques in every learning opportunity we provide. Staff continue to connect with other network leaders from outside of the fire world as well as facilitation experts to further

our own skills and share them with our network members via capacity-building training. We believe that facilitation and deliberate and thoughtful agenda design are critical to hosting effective learning opportunities. Some of our favorite resources over the years have come from [Liberating Structures](#), [Interaction Institute for Social Change](#), and [The Goodman Center](#).

From [multi-day, in-depth peer learning exchanges](#) (started in 2016) to FAC strategy workshops, to [multi-month learning and virtual opportunities](#), we look for ways to lift up people's lived experience and knowledge. We allow space to bring both heart and mind to the work. Depending on the goals and desired outcomes, different designs and techniques might be employed. But regardless of the format, each opportunity is designed with the practitioner's learning in mind.

Whether folks have been working in fire adaptation for 10 years, or a few months, we promote the value that everyone is a teacher and a learner and that knowledge exchange between practitioners helps us all improve our work in local communities (even though we have different contexts and capacities and there is no one-size fits all approach). Over the years, we have seen the [tremendous outcomes](#) communities can have through facilitated and deliberate relationship building and information sharing.



Participants from the Pacific Northwest geographical members group come together for a ripple effects mapping effort, to track the learning and impacts they have had on each other over the years of facilitated connecting and learning.

Women Owning Woodlands – continuing and strengthening community

by Leonora Pepper, Forest Stewards Guild

Editor's note: The Women Owning Woodlands Program empowers women landowners across the U.S. to steward their land for the future. Women make up a growing portion of private forest landowners and their knowledge and confidence in managing their land is invaluable. By coordinating information and trainings designed specifically for women in a historically male-dominated topic area, we support women in forest leadership, women who manage their own woodlands, and all who facilitate the stewardship of forests.

This has been a year of evolution and innovation for the national Women Owning Woodlands (WOW) program. Convening in-person gatherings and forging personal connections have long been the cornerstones of WOW. Over the past year-and-a-half, however, bringing people together to learn in the pandemic context has not always been easy. Amid continuously shifting conditions and guidelines, WOW leaders have re-tailored their programs to continue to serve women landowners. The creativity and scope of the resulting virtual offerings have been impressive, and rewarding in-person events were held when conditions allowed.

Since decision-making around COVID safety often depends on local conditions and individual levels of comfort, in many cases it is the women landowners who set the tone and pace of events. Virtual programs originally planned to be in-person have nonetheless drawn enthusiastic audiences, and in some cases have allowed women to participate who wouldn't otherwise have been able. Events held online can bring together people from different geographies, shrink commute times, or mesh with concurrent childcare or soccer practices. We learned from landowners that this valuable mode of learning shouldn't be relegated to the back of the drawer and forgotten once we're able to fully resume in-person activities. This lesson prompted us to offer a four-part webinar series in May 2021 geared toward women landowners. Based on a 40-page, collaboratively-created publication called [Women on the Land: A Landowner's Guide to Stewarding Her Woodlands](#), this series was held over four subsequent weekday lunch hours. It drew women from

Continued on page 5.



Fire Science Knowledge Exchanges help us know, better

By Barb Satink Wolfson, Southwest Fire Science Consortium and Amanda Mahaffey, Forest Stewards Guild

In 2009, the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) shifted its focus from solely funding the production of science to fostering knowledge exchanges designed to ensure that the best science is used to make management decisions, and that scientists are working on the questions managers need answered. The Guild has been part of the collaborative effort from the beginning.

Guild staff helped launch the Southwest Fire Science Consortium (SWFSC), funded by the Joint Fire Science Program, as a way for managers, scientists, and policy makers to interact and share fire science knowledge. One way the SWFSC works to achieve these goals is by hosting interdisciplinary events with various partners across the Southwest. For example, in November 2019 the SWFSC worked with a group of federal, interagency archaeologists and fire managers to host *Working together: Fire managers and archaeologists* in Tucson, Arizona. Archaeologists brought the idea to the SWFSC due to conflicts that arise during both unplanned wildfires as well as prescribed fire and fuels treatment projects. These conflicts can be enough of a distraction that managers are unable to focus on making sound, science-based decisions. Workshop participants represented nine different federal, state, and local agencies. The workshop was interactive and involved role playing so each discipline could learn a variety of perspectives. The workshop also included a field trip to a local archaeological site invaded by an exotic fire-prone grass. Lo-

cal fire management agencies with applicable jurisdiction were invited to discuss potential scenarios for suppression actions and the effects those actions could have on the archaeological artifacts at the site. Participants

diverse groups and partners, that develop more broadly based relationships across disciplines and improve overall communication within land management. Fire impacts everything on the landscape, whether positively or negatively, and collaboration is an important part of creating more resilient landscapes. This is especially true in the northeastern U.S. and Atlantic Canada, where the North Atlantic Fire Science Exchange (NAFSE) operates with the help of Guild

staff. In this heavily forested region, foresters and fire managers have more in common than we might have been taught in school. We all have boots on the ground, use science to inform our decisions, and must communicate effectively with landowners about management activities in this densely populated region. Prescribed fire is a tool in the manager's tool basket and can be especially valuable in addressing challenges such as oak regeneration or controlling populations of southern pine beetle.

NAFSE had the opportunity to support a University of Vermont student, Elizabeth (EJ) Jamison, who recently defended her Master's thesis on pine barrens and southern pine beetle. In the summer of 2020, Guild staff orchestrated a virtual conversation with NAFSE community members with expertise in these areas. This conversation helped EJ develop a chapter of her thesis on science-based management recommendations for managing pitch pine stands.



Backbone Fire, summer of 2021 in Arizona, via Inciweb.



New Jersey's multigenerational history of cranberry farming is closely tied with generations of fire management in the Pine Barrens.

left the workshop with a mutual respect and better understanding of the other discipline, as well as better tools to communicate relevant information, and thus avoid conflicts during fire management actions.

It is events like these, bringing together

In September of 2021, NAFSE held a prescribed fire science workshop in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. This event brought together fire scientists and managers in a safe space for exploring challenges and positive actions that can increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire. The workshop used New Jersey's 1.1-million-acre Pine Barrens National Reserve as a "classroom" for balancing the nuances of fire-dependent ecosystems, wildland-urban interface, and a public that sometimes does not demonstrate understanding of the need for fire in this landscape. Workshop participants left with fresh perspectives and budding collaborations that will advance prescribed fire science in the coming years.

NAFSE teamed up with other fire science exchanges in the eastern U.S. to offer an interactive panel discussion series called *Fueling Collaboration*. This highly engaging series enabled fire managers and scientists from across the region to virtually eavesdrop and join in discussions with experts on topics ranging from fire and a changing climate to timber and prescribed fire. The 2021-2022 series includes southeastern perspectives and will explore fire and timber management, smoke, thinking beyond fuel reduction, and fire in the wildland-urban interface of the eastern U.S.

JFSP fire science knowledge exchanges are now active across the country and provide opportunities for land stewards to learn and contribute to fire science.



Participants at a Southwest Fire Science Consortium workshop on ecosystem resilience.



Fire scientists and managers discuss data at a carbon flux tower in the Silas Little Experimental Forest in New Jersey's Pine Barrens.

WOW continued from page 3



A northern New Mexico WOW member offers a tour of her passive solar greenhouse.

across the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Lake States regions to learn directly from other women woodland owners and professionals about forest stewardship.

Through a WOW entomology initiative, women who have experienced infestations of common regional insect pests on their properties can tell their stories and offer wisdom to other woodland owners. This new series of entomology publications highlights women land stewards by pairing an interview of a woman landowner with a fact sheet about the insect she has had to contend with. The publications offer first-hand perspectives and advice to others who may be facing similar challenges and considerations. The [first](#) and [second](#) publications in the series are linked on the [Guild's WOW webpage](#).

In person, we continue to learn from women woodland owners who generously host their local WOW groups for field trips on their properties. When combined with a potluck and some socializing, this



New Mexico WOW members visit an active timber harvest under the gathering clouds of late summer monsoons.

Continued on page 7.



Gathering together to teach and learn

by Colleen Robinson, Forest Stewards Guild



Guild Gatherings are the original way Guild members practiced learning together. These events remain one of the best ways to share ideas, field questions or thoughtful critique, voice concerns, ask for help, and celebrate successes. As one member mentioned after our [26th Anniversary Guild Gathering in Asheville, NC](#) in August of 2021, “There is no better way to learn than together in the forest.”

One key to learning together is for everyone to feel valued, with each person sensing that they belong. Tending to this community-building fosters communication, dialogues, and understanding. “Ample time for socializing and the personal and social care was nurturing and welcoming,” according to one recent Guild Gathering attendee.

We create space for people to share how Guild principals are alive in day-to-day work and ideas for how to improve. When people gather from a variety of disciplines, perspectives, and experience-levels, we can learn about obstacles and opportunities that exist across the spectrum of critical benefits forests provide and desperate needs forests have. One Guild Gathering attendee said, “I learned a lot about protection of certain creatures. As a forester with four decades of experience—all at the field level—I must say I wish we’d had more wildlife sense than we did in those years (which, of course, is why the Guild was founded).” A 2019 event for the Pacific Northwest Foresters for the Birds Program gathered a spectrum of participants including landowners, government agencies, soil and water conservation districts, contract foresters, and ornithologists, who all had a chance to test-drive some of the practical aspects of the program together. We also get to share research about topics that come up at Guild Gatherings. For example, in Burlington, Vermont in 2014, members learned about the

latest climate change research and then went out into the field to test those ideas in a hands-on, group activity. This core of Guild Gatherings - coming together to understand how each of us can make a difference - also helps us work together through challenges and barriers by using what we learn from our collective experience.

When we travel outside of our own region of the country to meet with other Guild members and partners, we experience the awe of taking in new forested ecosystems and discover ideas and strategies we may never have been aware of before. These include forest management prescriptions, collaborative approaches, and outreach methods. Both field and virtual sessions have hosted colleagues across regions to consider responses to the Emerald Ash Borer’s decimation of native ash trees. This type of sharing is especially practical as one region has on-the-ground experience that another region can learn from before having to implement it. When I traveled from Wisconsin to North Carolina I explored a completely new type of bog, and discussed ideas and challenges that exist for landowners in the south that are quite different from many in the Lake States. Another member shared, “While the presentations are typically very good, the interaction with professionals from other regions is the real value in these meetings. They have always been great venues for free exchange of ideas.” The shift in perspective we get when traveling and learning in a new place helps us realize just how diverse our work, the need, and our impact is across the landscape.

The many examples of collaboration on these pages don’t capture all the partnerships we engage in and are just the tip of the iceberg of what’s needed. Our Guild Gatherings help us pull together the resources and knowledge to collectively impact forests for the good

on a landscape scale in a way that we cannot accomplish in our own separate projects, offices, and forest stands. A continued focus on gathering together and learning in community always has, and will continue, to help us excel in our efforts to realize our collective vision. We are full of gratitude every day for everyone who supports, makes up, and most importantly engages in this community!



These images were taken during Guild Gatherings across the county in the last five years. They illustrate community, learning, reflection, and wonder - together.

WOW continued from page 5



Wendy Weisiger from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests explains fundamental elements of chainsaw maintenance to a group of women woodland owners.

is a tried-and-true way for women to forge connections with other landowners in their area and with professionals who can offer advice, answer questions, and share their expertise and enthusiasm. Everything from forest health and prescribed fire to writing a management plan, planning a timber harvest, taking on invasives, or the ins and outs of lending pasture to local yak farmers is relevant information.

Recently, in New Mexico, a landowner hosted a field trip to introduce women in the area to her passive solar home that uses water exclusively from a rainwater-capture system. Another New Mexico landowner brought the group to her ranch to learn from her and her forester about writing a management plan and about the active harvest currently underway. She’s promised to host again after the conclusion of the harvest, to give women a sense of how the harvest will have shaped her land.

More than ever, the pandemic has highlighted the need for us to learn together. Through the Women Owning Woodlands program, we continue to seek opportunities to engage with landowners. Whether we gather online or safely in person, the women woodland owners who continue to show up, ask burning questions, and offer their appreciation prove to us that providing a women-focused learning environment continues to be extremely valuable.



Chainsaw safety instructors model wrap-around chaps and describe how well-fitting PPE is essential to women’s chainsaw safety.

