



forest



newsletter number five of the forest guild / february 2007

In this issue of ForestWisdom our subject is the Forest Guild itself. We are taking this opportunity to share some of where we've been, and where we're going with old and new members, and our many friends and supporters around the US and Canada.



Fred Clark is the Forest Guild Membership Coordinator and also Lake States Region Coordinator.

Origins of the Forest Guild - Looking Back While Moving Forward

founding members of the Forest Stewards Guild recall different experiences from the early meetings of what was then known as the Progressive Foresters Network. But for the room full of foresters (many of whom were meeting for the first time) who attended the Sugar Hill, New Hampshire gathering in 1996, standing in a circle holding hands and reciting the Prayer for Mother Earth was an unforgettable experience.

For a few participants, folks perhaps with an ecological interest but more traditional notions of what a forestry meeting “ought” and “ought not” to include, such an unorthodox activity was the signal to get out before anything even stranger happened. To most of those attending however, the ceremony signified the welcome promise of an organization that would allow its members to safely bring their heart and passion for land into their experience as professionals. For everyone, it was an unmistakable sign that the new group promised to be very different from any forestry organization they had ever belonged to before.

By 1995, when Forest Trust founder Henry Carey began to explore the possibilities for bringing together “progressive” foresters from around the country, the profession itself seemed to be in the initial stages of significant changes.

“Redwood Summer,” the 1990 event organized by Earth First!, had brought thousands of newly-minted forest activists into northern California and turned the national spotlight of public sentiment squarely on America’s forests. In 1991 Federal Judge William Dwyer enjoined timber harvests on millions of acres of public lands in the Pacific Northwest following the listing of the northern spotted owl under the Endangered Species Act, sending shock waves through the ranks of public land managers and the western timber economy.



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More positively, but no less importantly, 1990-1995 saw the emergence of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification and its promise to create a “global consensus on good forest management.” For foresters inclined toward a more holistic perspective, the FSC’s Principles and Criteria were an eye-opening window to a vision of forestry that sought to protect ecological, social, and economic values. But like any system undergoing adaptive change, different parts were moving at different speeds.

Within professional forestry circles, the conversation often took on a besieged tone. By some accounts, the public was turning against foresters because environmentalists had somehow gotten the public ear (presumably while the foresters were out in the woods doing an honest day’s work) and were willfully spreading misinformation about the shocking, industrial-scale devastation going on in the name of scientific management. Barrie Brusila (Warren, ME) recalled that a common lament within forestry circles went something like “...if we could only get our message out more effectively, the public would be able to understand us.” By this thinking, the (always monolithic) “public” simply didn’t understand the unique challenges foresters faced, and certainly did not appreciate the many values professional forestry provided society – including even the paper all those environmental lawsuits were printed on!

Despite the changes being forced from the outside, from within, professional norms were still preventing foresters who felt called to practice outside the dominant paradigm from freely sharing their interests. As Ross Morgan (Craftsbury Commons, VT) put it, “I had lots of colleagues in forestry, but my experience and that of many other working foresters before the Guild was formed was one of feeling isolated. It was just not always safe to talk about the work I was trying to do in some circles.

“If you did talk about it, you often felt like a lone voice.”

But for some the winds of change were encouraging, even if they were disruptive. Carey had come to believe that his experience meeting foresters practicing a forestry founded on

place-based knowledge and principles of ecology was more than coincidence. With some funding from the Pew Charitable Trust, he and Steve Harrington set out to test his hypothesis - that a latent community of progressive foresters had quietly emerged in the US.



1995 – Foresters gather at one of many field tours put on during the Forest Stewards Guild 1st Annual Meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



1996 – At Sugar Hill, New Hampshire, like minded foresters form the first “inner circle” of the Forest Stewards Guild.

“We needed to find a way to reach these people, but we weren’t sure how at first,” explained Carey. “We decided not to start by asking which foresters practiced excellent forestry – as we felt that might be either insulting, or just an invitation for everybody to raise their hand. So instead we started asking ‘Where are the really well-managed forests? And by the way, who manages them?’ We identified most of our founding members that way.”

What everyone seems to remember about the founding meetings in Santa Fe and Sugar Hill, and the 1997 Biltmore, North Carolina meeting

Origins of the Forest Guild, continued on page 9

GUILD IN TRANSITION

Question and Answer with: Howard Gross, Guild's New Executive Director



After an extensive search process the Forest Guild has hired a new Executive Director, Howard Gross, who assumed the role on January 2nd. A watershed ecologist by training, Howard brings extensive experience in wildlife conservation and non-profit organization leadership to the Guild. He most recently served as a Senior Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association, and as Executive Director for HawkWatch International. More details of Howard's appointment, including a biography, is available at the Forest Guild website at www.forestguild.org.

We talked with Howard from his California home in late December 2006, prior to moving to Santa Fe and beginning work.

Q. As you've begun to learn about the Forest Guild, can you share any initial impressions with us?

A. It strikes me that Guild members are attempting to articulate ideas and methods around sustainable forestry that are difficult to define, but that is part of our charge. The Guild has built a high level of discourse around an ethic of forestry and forests, and that is impressive. I see other organizations where communication is simplistic and aimed at the lowest common denominator. By contrast, dialogue within the Guild is substantive, thoughtful, and informed. After meeting the board directors, members, and staff, I am also impressed with the high caliber of leadership and passion in the Guild.

Q. Are there any aspects of leading the Forest Guild that are particularly compelling for you?

A. The whole thing! I am excited about the opportunity to learn from some of the country's best foresters, and to work with Henry Carey as a peer and mentor. I am looking forward to shifting gears from working primarily with the National Park Service and their culture to working with forestry consultants, state and national forest services, and other natural resource management agencies.

I like the opportunity to work with a relatively young organization that is still evolving and

finding its voice. The fact that we have a national focus and are building regional offices to realize our mission is exciting. Personally I am also looking forward to the opportunity to live in Rocky Mountain region again.

Q. You've worked extensively in wildlife conservation and in public lands advocacy. Are there any aspects of your work experience that parallel issues or challenges you see within forestry or within the Guild?

A. Wildlife conservation and sustainable forestry are both concerned with maintaining habitat and ecological processes for healthy ecosystems. One difference is that (non-game) wildlife conservation work does not traditionally have a strong utilitarian aspect while forestry does.

I've had extensive experience working with federal and state agencies and I believe this will carry over well with the Guild. The fire and fuels reduction issue, on all land ownerships, will continue to be huge in forestry – especially now in the context of global warming. I believe the current opportunity for the Guild to continue its work as an advocate for sound policy in Congress and in state legislatures is also good.

Also, my prior experience with geographically-dispersed organizations—HawkWatch International and the National Parks Conservation Association—should be valuable in growing and effectively operating the Guild's regional programs.

Howard Gross

new Executive Director of the Forest Guild says "Don't hesitate to give me a call or contact me any time."
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“The Guild has built a high level of discourse around an ethic of forestry and forests, and that is impressive.”



Howard's faithful companion, Sam, is another new addition to the Forest Guild office.

Q. What are your initial goals as Guild Executive Director?

A. The Board of Directors asked me to develop my top five priorities. They have varying time horizons, but they are:

- To develop a knowledge base on excellent forestry and immerse myself in communities that are working to further it. An important part of this will entail spending time in the forests learning from Guild members.
- Work with the Guild board, staff, and members to refine the Guild's strategic plan.
- Adjust and grow the Guild's programs to be consistent with the strategic plan.
- Create and implement a development plan that supports our strategic plan and programs. Fund-raising will continue to be essential for the Guild's success – I plan to expand our circle of supporters.
- Gain knowledge of the Guild's operations and integrate into the Guild as a leader.

We have many potential programs and opportunities to choose from in promoting sustainable forestry and serving our members. We need to critically determine which are the best for us to pursue, looking always at our core strengths and resources. Clearly, providing more meeting and training opportunities for members to connect and learn from one another is paramount.

Q. Tell us something about your personal interests and activities?

A. That's a long list. At home I enjoy throwing pots and have also taken up homebrewing. Outdoors, some of my passions include bird-watching and photography. I enjoy skiing, both downhill and cross country, and also paddling on rivers. I did not share this in my interviews, but I enjoy playing the harmonica. Someone left one in my car once in high school – and I picked it up and have played a harmonica ever since, mostly folk and blues songs. (Ed. note: We expect both Howard's beer and harmonica to figure prominently at a future annual meeting.)

Q. What kind of personal experiences were formative for you in choosing a conservation career?

A. I grew up in the suburbs of Monmouth County in central New Jersey. My neighborhood was not an extensively forested landscape, but there was a creek and woods nearby where I spent countless hours exploring. These were formative places and experiences for me.

My first college degree was in mathematics and my first job after college was with IBM as a software developer. I quickly realized, however, that writing code in the corporate world was not for me. After three years there, I left and spent two years pursuing outdoor adventures, including working in Virginia on an Appalachian Trail crew and in Maine at Acadia National Park. I later led a busload of teenagers on a cross-country camping trip to western national parks.

After a move to Boulder, Colorado, where I was working again in computer science, I began volunteering for environmental groups involved in policy advocacy - my first real exposure to environmental issues. Though I certainly shared the concerns of folks leading these efforts, I felt they frequently painted the issues in black and white, with no room in between. I felt a stronger basis in science could improve the necessary dialogue between stakeholders and ultimately lead to better outcomes. I started taking natural resource classes at night, which led to a new path in my education and a new career.

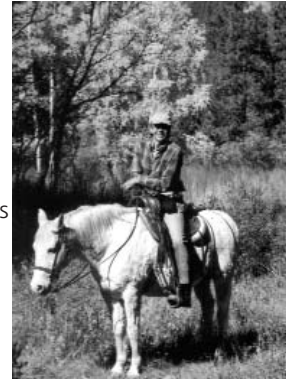
Q. Is there anything else you would like our members to know?

A. I recognize and respect that the Guild has a substantial history and a lot of people have worked hard to get the organization to where it is today. I also recognize that the clock is ticking on a lot of the issues we collectively care about that affect forests and I am ready to work hard to help all of us be heard and make a difference. I look forward to meeting you, sharing in your knowledge, and leading the Guild into the future. ■

“ I recognize the clock is ticking on a lot of the issues we collectively care about that affect forests and I am ready to work hard to help all of us be heard and make a difference. ”

The Forest Guild in Transition – Taking the Long View **A letter from Guild Founder and President Henry Carey**

I have been delighted in the last months to share the news of Howard Gross's appointment to Executive Director of the Forest Guild with our members and supporters. This transition caps more than two years' worth of effort that I, our board, staff and many committed supporters have shared to craft a new direction for our growth and development as an organization. Howard's arrival importantly represents the beginning of a new chapter for the Guild. It is one of many milestones in a continually evolving organization that I have had the good fortune to help lead since its inception.



During the Guild's board meeting in May 2006, at a time when we were well into our search process for a new Executive Director, Board Chair Robert Hrubec asked me what had been done to ensure the longevity of the Guild. My response was that almost every change we've made was specifically designed to contribute to our health and longevity.

Many of the adjustments we have made were suggested by my experiences in the nonprofit sector over 30 years. My first forestry job was with a research organization that ultimately failed. Of course, I took away lessons from that failure. Since then I have observed many organizations struggle while others succeeded brilliantly. Those experiences have guided my efforts to ensure the long term sustainability of the Guild.

One significant attribute of successful membership organizations is that they provide multiple and consistent points of engagement for their members. In my discussions with members across the country, I found that the core value people associate with the Guild is the opportunity to share perspectives, wisdom and stories with like-minded professionals. Everyone acknowledges that our national meetings are great forums for making connections, but I have found as much or more support for regional and state-level activity. Developing policy statements, building and promoting model forests, and sponsoring Guild training sessions and working groups provide important opportunities for members to meet, share knowledge and ideas, and build value within the organization. We will ensure that opportunities for personal engagement for Guild members and supporters remains a core focus as we grow.

I've also seen that the success and longevity of organizations are best served by having a board of directors that includes both members of the organization and representatives of the various groups the organization serves. For any but the simplest of organizations to survive and succeed, their governing boards need representation from many disciplines. In order to provide that broad representation, the Forest Guild retained the original appointed board structure of the Forest Trust. We also provided a significant role for an elected Membership and Policy Council – thus retaining the legacy of member-driven governance that marked the Forest Stewards Guild.

As an organization with a small but growing membership, outside financial support has always been a key ingredient of our ability to deliver programs and other benefits to our members. Our challenge today is to communicate to our supporters and the public the many ways in which the Guild contributes to growing societal interest in healthy forests. Thus, a major part of my new work for the Guild in the months ahead will be to broaden the base of our support.

The board, staff, Membership and Policy Council, and I have tried to embed some of these learnings into the reorganized and still evolving Guild. I am especially excited about working closely with Howard Gross in his role as Executive Director and my new role as President of the Forest Guild. Together with our many volunteer leaders and our excellent and dedicated staff members, we hope that the Guild will enjoy a growing success and ability to serve its members and society over the long haul.

Sincerely,



Henry Carey
President

Pacific Northwest

136 Members

The Guild continues to build a stronger presence on the West Coast. Regional meetings are planned in Oregon and Washington in 2007. Current advocacy projects include helping build consensus among land-owners, conservation organizations, and forestry groups to reform the California Forest Practices Act. The Guild is actively recruiting a Region Director for the Pacific Northwest Region.

Richard Hart
Black Creek, BC

Jean Shaffer
Olympia, WA

Gary McCausland
Olympia, WA

Sarah Deumling
Rickreall, OR

John Belton
Sandy, OR

James Able
Eureka, CA

Bill Wilkinson
Arcata, CA

Lynn Jungwirth
Hayfork, CA

Linwood Gill
Ft. Bragg, CA

Bill Hutton
San Francisco, CA

Robert Hrubes
Emeryville, CA

James Greig
Henderson, NV

Tom Sisk
Flagstaff, AZ

Jon Martin
Albuquerque, NM

Kaarsten Turner-Dalby
Evergreen, CO



National Office
Santa Fe, NM

Henry Carey - Pres.
Howard Gross - Exec. Dir.
Mike DeBonis
Zander Evans
Orlando Romero

forestGUILD where we are

The work of the Forest Guild is made possible by the efforts of many committed members, supporters and staff. Only a few of our 612 members are shown here. In addition to members living in the continental United States, Guild members reside in Alaska and Hawaii, Canada, Scotland, The Republic of Ireland, and Honduras.

Southwest

75 Members

Region Director – Mike DeBonis

The Southwest Region has a 20-year history of program implementation including research, public lands policy and community forestry. Current projects include collaborative monitoring efforts for public lands, a workers compensation insurance reform program for forest workers, and sponsorship of the Forest Guild Youth Conservation Corps.

forestGUILD

Mission

The Forest Guild promotes forestry that sustains the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. The Guild provides training, policy analysis, and research to foster excellence in stewardship, to support practicing foresters and allied professionals, and to engage a broader community in the challenges of forest conservation and management.

Lakes States

64 Members

Membership has doubled in the Lake States since the first regional meeting in Fall 2005, and the 2006 Annual Meeting in Boulder Junction. The Guild will be performing an ecological resource assessment and planning consultation with the Huron Mountain Club of Michigan. Guild members are coordinating a member's Model Forest Network which may add as many as 9 new Model Forests in the region.

Northeast

200 Members

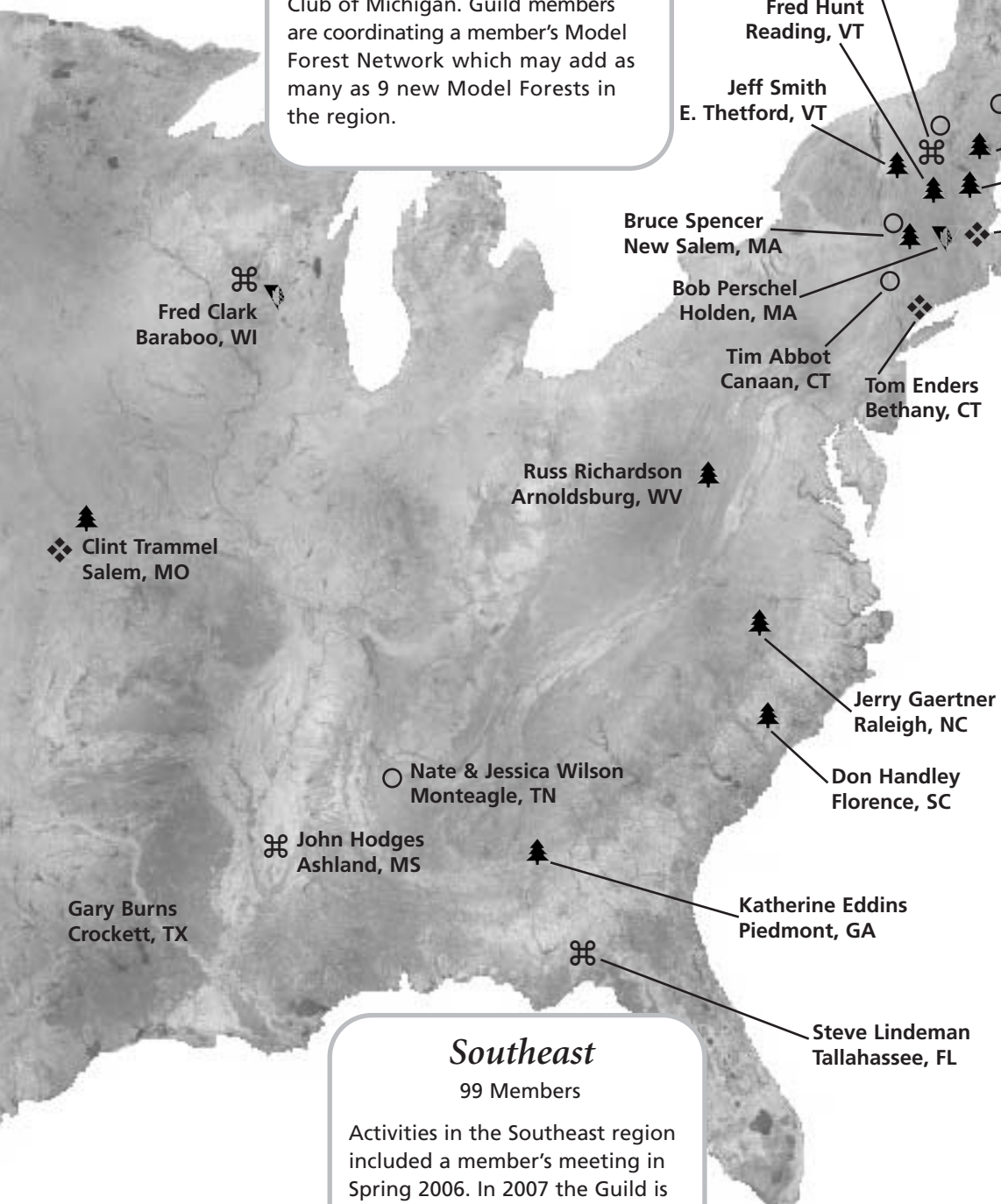
Region Director – Bob Perschel







Regional meetings and workshops have been a focus with support from regional volunteer coordinators in each of the Northern New England States. The Guild has continued its tradition of advocating for public policy issues throughout the region, including town forestry in Vermont and reform of forest harvesting laws in Massachusetts. The Guild established a Northeast Student Legacy Fund and recently published the report *Ensuring Sustainable Forestry Through Working Forest Conservation Easements in the Northeast*.

Southeast

99 Members

Activities in the Southeast region included a member's meeting in Spring 2006. In 2007 the Guild is continuing a project to evaluate policy and program needs and opportunities to advance sustainable forestry with other partners in Georgia.



-  Staff Member
-  Board Member
-  Membership & Policy Council Member
-  Model Forest Forester
-  Guild National Office
-  State & Region Coordinators



FOREST STEWARDS

Forest Stewards Look Inward - Guild Professional Member's Survey Completed

Oh! that you could turn your eyes towards the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves. - William Shakespeare

Foresters, of all people, understand the value of inventories. It should not be surprising then that an organization comprised of forest professionals should have an interest in swinging our prism around a few of our own members. In fact the Membership and Policy Council (MPC), the Guild's elected link to our full membership, has been intently interested in gauging the needs and attitudes of Guild members in light of the expected, but not always easy, challenges of our re-organization. In 2006 the MPC requested that Forest Guild staff develop a first ever comprehensive survey of our Professional Membership. MPC Chair Linwood Gill observed that, "On the MPC we felt strongly that a thorough and well-crafted survey would help guide us toward programs and activities that best serve the needs of our members."

The web-based survey (with a paper response option for those who choose not to use computers) went out to all professional members in early October 2006 and will be closed to responses on February 28th. As of mid-January, 110 professional members had participated - a response rate of over 35%. Given the time commitment required, the response rate and the quality and thoroughness of the responses themselves are encouraging. According to Guild Southwest Regional Director Mike DeBonis who helped coordinate the project, "We realized early on that the questions themselves communicate important information about the Guild to folks responding, so we put a lot of work into just getting those questions right and providing context for them. The quality and rate of responses we've received seems to signal that this effort paid off."

So we asked some good questions, and some good people took the time to answer them. So what next? Isn't one of the classic pitfalls of any survey the failure to plan adequately for

just how to use the information good questions can generate – just at a time when the people who participated are most enthused about all the ideas they've finally committed to paper? Well we certainly don't intend to fall into that trap!

Step one of our plan to stay 'above the root zone' will be analyzing and then communicating the results. With the Membership and Policy Council guiding the effort, Guild staff will identify clear directions as well as questions that are less clear and that may require more information to answer. We'll look for correlated trends in the data at the national, regional and state level. More complete survey results will then be shared with membership in a subsequent issue of Forest Wisdom and through the Guild website.

The responses will also serve as an important foundation for planning. Executive Director Howard Gross is leading the effort to develop a strategic plan based on the 2006 Guild business plan. "This work will build on already established strategic priorities, and provide direction for our national and regional development efforts, our programs, staffing needs, and the member activities we can support. The wisdom of our members will be a key piece of information for us in guiding these efforts and choosing where to put our resources in the years ahead," said Gross.

Finally, we believe the considered opinions of 110 natural resource professionals who share the Guild philosophy is worth telling others about! So we'll be looking for opportunities to use those aspects of the results pointing us to policy or research needs to communicate about Guild programs and priorities to our funders and the public.

And then like any good forest inventory, we'll start planning for the next one. ■

“We realized early on that the questions themselves communicate important information about the Guild to folks responding, so we put a lot of work into just getting those questions right and providing context for them.”

Mike DeBonis

where the Forest Stewards Guild was formally established, was the energy that seemed to be released: as though so many forest practitioners had come out of their woods at the end of the day and, instead of a cold truck, found a group of their like-minded fellows gathered around a fire.

Craig Blencowe (Fort Bragg, CA), attended the 1995 Santa Fe meeting. “It seemed like we spent most of the time just talking, sharing philosophies, land ethics, and just learning how people did things in the woods.” Blencowe observed, “Most of the people there were field practitioners and that was great. There were a lot of younger, idealistic people, and there was just this kind of ‘feel good’ thing going on. Now I’m a practical person, by necessity, and I don’t usually have a lot of time for this esoteric stuff, but I didn’t mind this because we were talking about all the right things.”

“The Sugar Hill meeting was unlike any forestry meeting I had ever attended,” said Brusila. “To find a room full of people who could share their passion and to know that I was not a lone voice was remarkable. I was just blown away by that. And these meetings were fun! The people there were mostly all field practitioners – and, of course, we made sure we spent time in the woods. There was a lot of just sharing of stories, informal communication, and a lot of socializing. It was as though we’d missed each other all our careers and just had not known it.”

Not surprisingly, founding members have many different ideas about the future of the Guild, but one common theme is our need to adapt and evolve. Mary Snieckus (Silver Spring, MD), who served as executive director of the Forest Stewards Guild from 2000 to 2003 observed,

“In the beginning, the fact that we existed at all was unique and of interest to our funders, but that’s no longer the case. The transition to an organization that delivers fundable programs makes the question of how best to serve our members an ongoing challenge. As Bill Banzhaf challenged us to consider at the 2006 annual meeting in

Wisconsin, ‘Do we risk becoming an ideological dead-end if we choose only to serve the interests of our members and not society at large?’ I think we need to consider that question carefully as we think about how to do both of those things.”

The question of professional diversity has also sparked an ongoing dialogue among members. The early Guild was largely comprised of men and women with marking paint in the back of their trucks, and this commonality was a source of unity. As Morgan puts it, even today “the Guild is about excellent forestry, stand by stand and tract by tract, across the country. As we grow we must always keep in mind our commitment to serve the needs of the field forester.”

But as the organization and our mission have evolved, so has the breadth of experience in our membership (See survey results, page 8). The acceptance of all professionals who care for or protect forests is now organizational policy, and raises questions about the possible impact of a changing identity. For founding members though the idea is generally welcomed. “Opening membership to other disciplines is really a good idea. We have to broaden our viewpoints in order to survive,” offered Blencowe.

Although some founding members have or will soon be stepping away from formal positions of leadership, they continue to impart their vision and energy to the Guild, and remain optimistic for the work that remains to be done.

“We now have new staff and very active new members who were not present at our founding” observed Snieckus. “This transition is healthy – it says that the original mission was robust enough to live beyond us as individuals. That change is necessary and for the good.”

The vision still closely held by many is that of a Forest Guild viewed as the “go to” organization on questions concerning the policy and practice of ecological forestry. Our unique challenge is to build the capacity to meet that challenge, while maintaining the “spark” of the Guild, that sense of energy that was expressed so well in the 1996 prayer circle. ■



1996 - Sugar Hill, NH
Founding member,
Ross Morgan.

“The Guild is about excellent forestry, stand by stand and tract by tract, across the country. As we grow we must always keep in mind our commitment to serve the needs of the field forester.”

- Ross Morgan

“*Silvicultural practice is essentially a local consideration, varying in important details from forest to forest.*”



DEFINING OUR FORESTRY *Guild Launches Ecological Forestry Initiative*

By Alexander Evans

Alexander Evans

is the Research Director for the Forest Guild. For more information contact zander@forestguild.org or 505-983-8992 x 36.

at the 10th Annual Forest Guild meeting (December 2005, Santa Fe, NM), Dr. Jerry Franklin’s keynote address on forestry embracing the role of natural disturbance sparked renewed enthusiasm to capture and share the Guild’s vision of ecologically responsible forestry. Building on that enthusiasm, the Guild has launched the Ecological Forestry Initiative, or EFI. The goals of EFI are to utilize the shared professional wisdom of Guild foresters, in collaboration with other ecological organizations and leading academics, to advance the practice of ecological forestry.

The challenge of defining “ecological forestry” has attracted thoughtful foresters with diverse ideas as long as the profession has existed. Even the name “ecological forestry” is guaranteed to generate as many different opinions as there are professionals in the conversation. Some Guild members say “forestry” does not or should not need a modifier, while others suggest variations such as “ecologically-based forestry”, or “naturalistic silviculture.” There is a long history of similar names, all of which describe the type of land stewardship the Guild seeks to promote. The label changes but the ideas behind good land stewardship are consistent.

Our effort to define ecological forestry builds on past efforts within the organization exploring the philosophy of ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry. The Forest Stewards Guild’s “Tenets of Forestry” project launched in 2001 was one such example. Many other authors from John Muir to Jerry Franklin have added to the discussion.

A review of writings on ecological forestry from the 17th century to the present reveals common themes that span different eras, different disciplines, and different continents. Here are a few:

- *Forests have intrinsic value (this should sound familiar to Guild members!)*
- *Humans have a right and need to extract products from the forest at sustainable levels*
- *Silviculture is most effective and beneficial in the long-term when informed by natural processes*
- *Foresters should plan for the long term, ensuring that forests can continue to meet the needs of future generations*
- *Forestry is implemented at the stand scale, but should both recognize sub-stand diversity, and be in balance with the larger ecosystem*
- *The social and economic context within which forestry is practiced requires meeting the needs of stakeholders and forest-based communities to the extent possible*
- *Both science and place-based experience are essential elements of ecological forestry – and the role of a forester with in-depth experience in a particular landscape cannot be duplicated*

The application of ecological forestry principles; the detailed management practices; and prescriptions that bring those principles to the ground-level must all be specific to an ecoregion. Foresters of all stripes grasped this principle early on, as noted by R.C. Hawley in his 1929 *The Practice of Silviculture*, “Silvicultural practice is essentially a local consideration, varying in important details from forest to forest.” A central role of EFI will be describing the detailed application of ecological forestry principles within ecoregions across the United States. For this the project will rely heavily on Guild members and their place-based experience.

Ecological Forestry Initiative, continued on page 11

A NEW ENGLANDER'S VIEW

The Forest Guild's Southwest Program as a Model for Other Regions

By Mike DeBonis

as a forester working in Maine, I thought I had a pretty clear understanding of what the Forest Guild was all about. I viewed the Guild as a progressive membership-driven organization that supported foresters and promoted good forestry. When I recently moved to New Mexico and began working as the Guild's Southwest Region Director, I learned that the Guild is engaged in a range of hands-on projects as well. I believe this organizational model combining membership with active programming can provide inspiration for the growth of the Guild in other regions.

The Guild's Southwest program is built on 20 years of experience developing and managing forestry-related programs with a wide range of partners in the region. While they are uniquely tailored to local circumstances, I believe that initiatives such as the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), collaborative forest restoration program, the effort to lower workers' compensation insurance rates for forest workers, as well as our long history of community forestry, public policy and conservation land management experience, can serve as models for similar efforts in our other Guild regions.

For example, the Forest Guild YCC employs local youth doing hands-on restoration and management work on National Forest Ranger Districts for 9 weeks during the summer. The YCC program is an opportunity for the Guild

to take an active role in developing future natural resource leaders. This program is anchored by our strong partnerships between the Forest Guild, USDA Forest Service, and the New Mexico State Forestry Division. Through this program, youth learn about their natural surroundings, receive hands-on training from natural resource professionals and participate in an accredited education program.

Lessons learned by the Guild in the Southwest can serve as a model for replicating the YCC program in other regions. Similar initiatives could include the development of guidelines for multiparty monitoring of ecological and social factors, creation of data and tools for prioritizing restoration treatments, and strategies for removing barriers to biomass utilization.

Whether you're in New England, the Lake States, the Southwest, or elsewhere one of the attributes that makes the Guild special is the sharing of information and ideas. In our experience, adding even a small program component to the Guild's presence in a region can greatly strengthen our influence and profile as we build new and stronger relationships with partners. While not all of the Guild's work and experience in the Southwest directly relates to other regions, by working together and sharing success stories, we can grow a stronger national organization. ■



2005 YCC crew multi-party monitoring in the bosque.

For more information on the Forest Guild's work in the Southwest, please contact Michael DeBonis, Southwest Region Director 505-983-8992 x14 or mike@forestguild.org. Southwest program information is also available on the Forest Guild's website www.forestguild.org

Ecological Forestry Initiative, continued

In addition to gathering information on ecological forestry, we are equally committed to disseminate it. In order to encourage the wider application of regionally specific treatments and the philosophy of ecological forestry, EFI will support seminars, field meetings, and an online Ecological Forestry Resource Center. The web-based Resource Center will provide literature reviews with an emphasis on demonstrations; showcase tools such as illustrative management plans, case studies, mapping tools, and calculators; and importantly, capture and distill the professional experience of Guild foresters.

The success of EFI will hinge on the willingness of Guild members to share their experience, suggestions and insights. Initial materials and background on EFI, including a paper exploring the history and definition of ecological forestry, are available on the EFI website at: http://forestguild.org/ecological_forestry.html. EFI is a member driven project. As such, we value your suggestions and welcome your collaboration, and we are grateful for any directed financial support. ■

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WISDOM

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MEMBERS SURVEY

Some early results from the Forest Guild Professional Members Survey

- 38%** of respondents are self-employed
- 24%** are employed by non-profits
- 18%** are employed by government agencies
- 65%** of respondents have direct land management responsibilities
- 60%** of those with direct land management responsibility primarily manage lands in non-industrial private ownership
- 53%** identified themselves as field foresters
- 10%** identified themselves as ecologists, botanists or biologists
- 19%** of respondents are involved in forest policy or advocacy
- 11%** are involved in forest certification or auditing
- 46%** of respondents identified "Access to the knowledge and experience of members" as their most important benefit of Guild membership
- 65%** of respondents rated "Demonstrating excellent forestry on private lands" as our most important program activity