



## Annual Review 2018

# 2018

A year of growth, community  
building, and action —  
putting the forest first.

Guild Gathering attendees walk through redwood and Douglas fir forests, learning and discussing silvicultural challenges and solutions.  
Photo: Joel Bisson

# ANNUAL REVIEW



Participants walk to a site of prolific oak regeneration where prescribed fire has been used to manage for oak and various wildlife habitat. Photo: Colleen Robinson



Zander helping out to create defensible space around a home to reduce the threat of wildfire damage. Photo: Matt Piccarello

## Sustainable Growth

**2018** has been a year of growth for the Forest Steward Guild. Thanks to members, supporters, and staff across the country, the Guild is expanding and reaching toward

our vision, to establish ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry as the standard from coast to coast.

We've always had big aspirations; seeking to change how forestry is thought of and practiced across the country is a tremendous goal. At the same time, our work is tied to the constraints of the real world. Since the Guild was founded, it has been important that we be an organization rooted in practice. That is why Guild staff are actively engaged in project implementation and listening to the needs of our members with boots on the ground. Working with partners to thin a ponderosa pine forest, plant shortleaf pine, or develop a watershed management plan keeps us grounded. It's how we stay in touch with the practical constraints of ecological forestry such as making an intermediate thinning in a wetland forest pay for itself. By staying engaged in project implementation, Guild staff stays connected to our members and our mission.

As the Guild increases capacity in new regions, we actively search out new projects and new partners. When we assess each project, we ask, why is the Guild doing this work? How does it advance our mission? For some projects, the Guild steps up because there is no one else to do the work and we know the forest needs our help. For example, the Guild is doing more prescribed fire because fire-adapted forests are

in desperate need of more good fire. For other projects, we have an opportunity to offer a new way forward. The Guild has engaged on management and conservation of bottomland hardwoods because we saw the need for a fresh perspective: ecological management of private forestlands to complement preservation to avoid exploitation. Without the Guild, the conversation would be reduced to extremes with no middle way forward.

The Guild chooses some projects because they give us an opportunity to share the wisdom and experience of our members. A new project focused on adapting to the altered climate of northern forests will open two-way dialog among field practitioners and scientists. We have also taken on big administrative projects this year behind the scenes (though most of the benefits from these won't be realized until 2019). Tools such as a more user-friendly and efficient membership database, brand new website and member portal, and Find-A-Forester directory will all help support connections among our members and partners to tell our collective story of the forest stewardship profession.

Wherever the Guild works, we seek to push the envelope and set higher standards. We bring new science, creativity, and passion to our work and hope to inspire everyone to follow the lead of our membership in putting the forest first.

Zander Evans  
*Executive Director*



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Wicopy Woods is one of the first Forest Stewards Guild Model Forests. At a recent field tour, Guild members Jessica Leahy and Bob Seymour shared how their stewardship of Wicopy Woods builds on the legacy of Ron Locke, the previous owner. Photo: Amanda Mahaffey



## Northeast

The Northeast has always been a stronghold of Forest Stewards Guild activity. In 2018, our northeast region director, Amanda Mahaffey, marked her sixth anniversary of working for the Guild. In that time, the Guild has grown our breadth and depth by partnering on programs such as Foresters for the Birds, Women Owning Woodlands, the North Atlantic Fire Science Exchange, and the Rhode Island Woodland Partnership.

Our outreach to women woodland owners in Maine has grown into a demand for women's chainsaw safety courses, which empower women to steward their land in a hands-on manner. Our work in the fire community grew into an opportunity to facilitate Fire Adapted Communities learning between the Pine Barrens of New Jersey and Long Island. The Guild is pleased to see the Rhode Island Woodland Partnership's strategic plan being implemented through developing programs such as Forestry for Rhode Island Birds and a multi-state proposal on oak resiliency. Building on years of partnership with the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science, the Guild is excited to support the forestry community of practice for forest adaptation to climate change.

These projects embody what the Forest Stewards Guild is all about – advancing forest stewardship through boots-on-the-ground collaboration and science-driven education. The Guild has been working to branch out programs deeply rooted in the Northeast into areas where the Forest Stewards Guild is greatly needed. We are driving change by facilitating meaningful, field-based learning exchanges and spreading the spark of forest stewardship across the landscape. In 2019 and beyond, we look forward to telling the story of our members and spreading the powerful message of why we believe in putting the forest first.



## Pacific West

The Guild in the Pacific West is working to adapt successful approaches and programs from the Northeast to the West Coast forests. For example, Guild Gatherings are a mainstay of the Northeast region, and this year we had a great set of field events in California and Oregon. Innovative Forestry Techniques attracted a wide range of professionals and students to learn about forestry practices in Corvallis, Oregon. Single Tree Selection Silviculture near Eureka, California included site visits over two days to observe and discuss management options for Douglas fir and redwood. These events are well-received, with participants offering valuable suggestions for the future and showing appreciation for the opportunities to network and learn. *Continued on Next Page*



Gap treatments at Oregon State University's McDonald-Dunn Forest.  
 Photo: Shannon Murray



*Continued from previous page* We are also working to adapt the Foresters for the Birds program to the ecology and social setting in Oregon. While the land use patterns, song birds of interest, forest ecology, and silviculture are all very different in Oregon than in Vermont where the program started, we feel 'seeing the forest through birds' is still a powerful tool to engage foresters and landowners around responsible forestry. The Women Owning Woodlands (WOW) program is another that is growing stronger by connecting across regions. Guild staff is working to share lessons learned from partners in Oregon with other WOW leaders from across the country. The strong interest of members, including a nascent student chapter at Oregon State University, is the energy behind all these programs. Thank you to Pacific West members who are working hard to establish these mainstays in their neck of the woods!



Processing logs into firewood on the Alquist Forest in CA (left). Photo: Joel Bisson  
A hike in Chip Ross Park's 83-acre oak restoration, OR (right). Photo: Shannon Murray

## Lake States

One area of focus this year in the Lake States was Foresters for the Birds. Due to a high level of interest, the Guild is building this effort in the Lake States off the terrific work done by the Guild and the Audubon Society in New England. The program seeks to protect forest songbird habitat, empower woodland owners to steward their land, and help ensure a sustainable future for the region's forests. Forest managers in the Lake States have a strong foundation in ecological forestry and interest in finding ways to meet the needs of the forest while producing valuable forest products.

Our work focused on scoping interest and feasibility and featured the Guild's most viewed webinar – with over 300 participants. We built crucial partnerships, identified funding, and hosted an initial meeting. The meeting was held in Aitkin County, Minnesota and showcased a variety of research projects and field practices. A big success was getting forest managers and bird biologists at the same field site to compare notes on what they saw as key needs from their individual focus area and potential methods for achieving outcomes that meet those needs. Another meeting is planned for February 2019 and we continue to look for



American redstart (left), Black and white warbler (right). Photos: Ed Zlonis

additional funding opportunities to ramp up this program. An exciting enthusiasm has been built around a blend of the art and science of silviculture with songbird habitat enhancement.

The Guild also played a key role in developing another Landscape Stewardship Plan, this time for the Snake River watershed covering 986 square miles in east central Minnesota. Landscape Stewardship Plans (LSPs) bring together a variety of stakeholders to address resource-based issues of mutual concern in a landscape. We are thrilled to be part of this critical work to create buy-in and provide stewardship guidance from which everyone can find their win.

## Southeast

The Guild advances our vision in the Southeast through implementing projects, supporting our members, developing strategic partnerships, and building a broader Southeast program. Ecological forestry is particularly attractive to family forest landowners in the region, who own most southern forests and prioritize nonmarket values as reasons for owning their woodland. In May 2018, the Guild's southeast regional coordinator, Nick Biemiller, completed a Master of Forestry degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and transitioned to working with the Guild full-time in Asheville, North Carolina.



Natural resource professionals and forest landowners learn about the bird habitat benefits of ecological forest management in bottomland hardwood forests at a Foresters for the Birds workshop in coastal North Carolina in late spring 2018. Photo: Amanda Mahaffey

In the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee and Kentucky, we have brought together key stakeholders to increase capacity for the restoration of fire-dependent shortleaf pine ecosystems. We have supported demonstration forests at the University of the South and Berea College, engaged 156 private forest landowners, hosted two education and outreach events, and developed shortleaf management plans for approximately 5,200 acres of private forestland. These activities promote the integrity of forest ecosystems and human communities dependent upon their resources, while engaging a broader audience in forest conservation and management. As this project continues, we

hope to help decrease the barriers to prescribed burning for family forest landowners by hosting learn-and-burn events that increase familiarity, comfort, training, and experience with fire.



Shortleaf pine sprouts back from dormant buds along a basal crook in the stem. Photo: Nick Biemiller

We remain engaged in advancing science-based, ecological management of bottomland hardwood forests in the Southeast through our participation in the Science Working Group of the Wetland Forest Initiative, and through education, outreach, and training. We helped set sustainability guidelines for wood sourcing by participating in Enviva's Bottomland Hardwood Taskforce and helped facilitate a Foresters for the Bird's training in bottomland forests with Audubon

North Carolina. The Guild's value-proposition of ecological forestry is a rallying point in the Southeast for this hot-topic issue and provides an opportunity to maintain or enhance the ecological integrity and stability of bottomland hardwood forests, while provisioning the supply of wood products and supporting vibrant forest economies.

## Southwest

The southwest region continues to grow with new staff and expanded projects. The recent issue of *Forest Steward* did a great job of highlighting the Guild's work to bring more good fire to the southwest, but we are engaged in a wide range of other projects. Our Forest Stewards Youth Corps engaged 57 young adults in forestry, fire, and natural resource conservation learning projects on Forest Service lands. We continue our decade long partnership with the Cibola National Forest in the Zuni Mountains with continued collaboration, common stand exam monitoring, and stream habitat monitoring support. In several important landscapes we are supporting ecological



Youth Corps members recognized for going above and beyond show off their new backpacks donated by REI. Photo: Esmé Cadiente

monitoring including forest and meadow restoration and road decommissioning. We are working with American Forest Foundation to encourage unengaged landowners in high priority watersheds to consider active forest stewardship. In addition, we continue to support long-time Guild member Rachel Wood on a collaborative effort to add value to wood generated from forest restoration efforts from federal lands. Our fire adapted communities work continues to grow as we learn and adapt from our national partners and innovate new approaches locally. Our longstanding partnership with the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network builds upon previous efforts and a new partnership with the American Forest Foundation will reach thousands of forest landowners via direct mailings. The Santa Fe office is an exciting place to be right now as we work to achieve the Guild mission and vision and adapt it to our current and future potential conditions.



Each year the Forest Stewards Guild trains youth to become the next generation of forest stewards. Photo: Esmé Cadiente



The Forest Stewards Youth Corps members work to improve a recreation area. Photo: Esmé Cadiente



# Stewards Circle

Providing essential support for our work

Stewards Circle members give generously to help fulfill our mission. Thank you for being our leading circle of support in 2018.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
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# Guild Gatherings



Engaged participants of a CA Gathering (top). Photo: Joel Bisson  
Discussion at OSU's McDonald-Dunn Forest (center).  
Photo: S. Murray  
SAF/Guild social in Oregon (bottom). Photo: A. Mahaffey

The Guild supports these events with event sponsors who help finance the logistics, and Guild members and partners who dream up the opportunities and offer to host. If you'd like to highlight responsible forestry examples or needs in your area, please let us know at [membership@forestguild.org](mailto:membership@forestguild.org). We'll help you fine tune the details, promote the event, and take registrations. Only together, we can keep planning these exceptional gatherings!

Thank you for all who hosted, sponsored and attended our 2018 Guild Gatherings. Stay tuned for more details on events coming up in the new year, including Bottomlands and Birds in Wisconsin, Learn-and-Burn events in the Southeast, another SAF/Guild social, and more!

**G**uild Gatherings are an opportunity for professionals, partners and enthusiasts of responsible forest stewardship to come together to exchange vision, ideas, techniques, concerns and resources. In 2018, twelve gatherings, representing every guild region in the nation at least twice, drew hundreds of people to learn and explore. Guild Gatherings are built from the inspiration of members, staff and partners and they are diverse. This year's events included a range of settings, purposes and formats.

A social at a local pub during the Society of American Foresters national convention was a place for interested people and like-minds to meet and mingle when they otherwise might not have gathered from different parts of the country.

Hands-on workshops, such as Build Your Own Leopold Bench feature a sustainability component in the materials used from a Guild Model Forest, a history lesson with the Leopold background that was shared, and skills building with the actual bench creation.

Field tours to demonstrate forestry techniques, explore management possibilities, or feature specific sites included destinations from Washington to Maine.

Full-blown learning exchanges, gather professionals from many disciplines to share their piece of the larger responsible stewardship context, so people can see outside their own "corner of the world." Here we share concerns, solutions and dialogue with those who already make sustainability a success, and those whose role in that success is still needed. Skills building happens here too, as opportunities exist to try on "a new hat," if only for a session.

Participants continue to rave about these opportunities to connect, engage and expand understanding. Comments from this year include:

## *The best thing about this event was...*

*"The opportunity to meet and talk to industry employees on multiple levels (experienced, new hires, consultants)."*

*"I really enjoyed engaging with the participants. I also liked seeing all the different management and property styles."*

*"Being able to discuss forestry with industry, small woodlot owners, academics, and scientists all at the same time."*

*"Networking while learning novel forestry concepts"*

*"Personal and professional contacts made... conversations shared... sense of purpose and belonging created by the presentations, conversations at the event."*

*"Group cohesion and discussion; being able to reach across the forester/wildlife divide and seek common goals."*

## *One thing I learned at this event was...*

*"There are companies implementing practices that address the concepts and goals of California's Forest Practice Act of 1973."*

*"I gained more nuanced understanding of gap creation and how this can be implemented in a way that makes the most sense."*

*"Forestry done in a mindful way can produce timber and create excellent songbird habitat."*

*"For me the biggest take-away was reinforcing the need for active management of our ecosystems and public lands."*

*"LOTS. I have been a field forester for 25 years. It was good to see what we have been doing is good for the birds also. Very good discussions on different ways to approach management of a site."*



## Membership and Policy Council – your voice at work



A tree towers above as it just begins to show signs of autumn color in a Virginia October. Photo: Colleen Robinson

In 2018, the Guild Membership and Policy Council, made up of Guild Professional Members nominated by members, got a lot busier and more visible. Below is a snap shot list of the work they've done this year, though each item involves so much more than what meets the eye.

### **The MPC reorganized into four subcommittees:**

- Membership and outreach subcommittee, whose work will include welcoming new members and working to invite new forest stewards to join us.
- Student engagement subcommittee, who drafted a tool-kit to assist students in forming chapters and getting involved with the Guild.
- Policy review subcommittee, who revised the 1999 policy on Stewardship in Natural Forests.
- Membership process and strategy subcommittee, who is taking advantage of the new membership system to analyze memberships up for renewal and membership composition. This way, the Guild can better connect to and serve members and potential members.

The MPC also provided nearly monthly contributions to our electronic newsletter, *Across the Landscape*, to keep members more in touch with their representative council. They reached out to members who hadn't renewed to encourage them to continue to support the Guild. Finally, as the year draws to a close, the MPC developed a list of MPC nominations for next term.

Thank you to all who serve on the MPC, those who have nominated representatives, and all Professional Members who vote during our annual MPC election.