



Spring 2020

# the Forest Steward

Volume 5, Number 1

*Celebrating  
a quarter-century  
of the Guild's positive  
influence on forested  
ecosystems.*

*A creek tumbles from the Rocky Mountains  
through forests that withstand mighty challenges.  
Photo by: Colleen Robinson*

**Forest Stewards  
Guild**  
*putting the forest first*

## INSIDE

- 2 The Guild nurtures what it creates
- 3 Diversity in the woods
- 4 Onward!
- 5 The Forest Stewards Guild at 25
- 6 The Guild creates career pathways
- 7 Putting the forest first in challenging times
- 8 Guild Gatherings and events



*Acorn storage at the Valonia State Tree Nursery  
All photo credits in this issue to the Forest  
Stewards Guild unless otherwise noted.*



# ■ The Guild nurtures what it creates

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## It's hard to wrap my mind around being in the 25th year of the Forest Stewards Guild. The core concept of the Guild is still so fresh and compelling.

Over the years, our growth has sometimes been slow but solid – like a ponderosa pine on an arid site in the Southwest. At other times it has been rapid – like a longleaf in the Southeast. In all, I am inspired and very proud of this organization we have built together.

When asked what makes the Guild unique, my first response is that we are values-based. Many groups orient toward a specific goal or activity. Membership in the Forest Stewards Guild starts with a personal identification with the values imbedded in the “statement of principles.” Acknowledging these values in the membership application process is the line-in-the-sand. In reading the principles, either you see yourself as a Guild member or clearly, you do not.

In 1995, we were amid the timber wars. Discussions of forestry practices tended to be polarized and contentious. Opening the first meeting of 35 people from around the country, who became some of the first in the Forest Stewards Guild, I had only the faintest intuition of how to launch. I recounted my disbelief, when in my first silviculture class, I learned that the way to “regenerate” a forest was to clearcut it. I told of my feelings of alienation working for the Forest Service and in professional meetings. I defined myself as a “long haired forester,” spending days on the land, listening to nature. Bill Howe from Collins Pine who followed me in the introductions couldn't have looked more different. My knees shook. But his story was remarkably like mine – a kind recounting of shared impressions. And so on around the table. All shared common values, experiences and feelings. It was solemn, and electric, it was what you might call a holy moment: finding strong commonalities where we might have expected conflict. That was the “spark” that continues to bring Guild members together year after year.



Henry H. Carey

In May 2000, I was at the Musgrove conference center on St. Simons Island, Georgia. A group sat in front of the wide screen TV watching an enormous fire rage through my home mountains. This was the Cerro Grande Fire that grew to consume 48,000 acres including part of the city of Los Alamos. The owner of the conference center waved a large hand at the screen and said: “Henry, can't you do something about that?”

The next year, with a grant from the conference center, the Guild brought together experts in fire ecology and behavior to lay the groundwork for a “fire adapted society.” Some of the presentations were by foresters from the Red Hills of Georgia where the flame of prescribed fire was preserved through the long, cold night of Smokey Bear. In these communities, seasonal burning was welcomed as an annual celebration, offering a model to the rest of the country. This meeting provided a foundation for the Guild's later efforts in fire hazard reduction and community wildfire protection, culminating in the wide range of programs offered today, (read about some of these on page six).

The gathering of experts, unique ideas, people willing to voice their challenges, and professionals willing and determined to support what they believe in – which is so much bigger than themselves – has always been the root of the Guild. And it always lights that spark among us.

# Diversity in the woods

Written by Barrie Brusila

## Addressing diversity in our silviculture and in our forest stewardship culture.

We all know what diversity in the forest means, right? We know that it's a good thing. We basically know how to achieve it silviculturally, despite the challenges of full implementation and the long-term time frame. But what about diversity in the population of humans who manage the forest? I'm talking about gender, age, and racial diversity. We know it's a good thing, but we have made slow progress. Through my forty years of practicing field forestry, I have noticed some positive changes, and some opportunities for change, in the human communities that steward the forest.

I see a connection between the slow progress in human diversity in the woods and larger societal influences such as (1) the traditions of science and math being primarily male, (2) an increasing disconnect between young people and the outdoors, along with a lack of exposure to forest-based careers, and (3) a dearth of role models beyond middle-aged and older white men. Sure, these are generalizations, but we still need to acknowledge their impact.

Gender diversity has improved, but there is plenty of room to grow. There are still far too few female field foresters. The presence of women working in government, land trusts, and conservation organizations has increased noticeably in the past 40 years. However, the presence of women involved in on-the-ground forestry work involving muddy boots and tree marking paint has, unfortunately, stayed stagnant at best.

The holistic, forest first approach to forestry has gained wider acceptance through the work of the Guild over the last twenty-five years. Forty years ago, when I began practicing forestry in Maine, it was less accepted. Foresters and environmentalists

were seen as separate, antagonistic groups. This antagonism could be found throughout the country. In contrast, the Guild has always supported people of all related disciplines who approach their work more inclusively. There always seems to be a higher proportion of women and young foresters at Guild meetings than at any of the other forestry meetings I attend.

I am so pleased to see regeneration (younger people) and the diversity of interests and skills they bring to the forest. I'm glad that they have the Guild for support, networking, learning, and power as they begin their careers and put the forest first in these changing times and climate. I'm confident that the Guild will continue to evolve, supporting the practicing forest professionals with boots on the ground. They are the roots of the forestry profession and the Guild. Just like forests, our human

communities and professions are better at what we do, and can make a bigger difference, when we are diverse.



Barrie Brusila



Barrie shared do's and don'ts of working with a logger at a Women and Our Woods workshop at Hidden Valley Nature Center, summer 2016.





# Onward!

Written by Robert Perschel

4



Robert Perschel

“Simply put, if we fail on climate, we fail on everything,” wrote Larry Kramer,

President of the Hewlett Foundation, adding that all charitable foundations should support work on climate change.<sup>1</sup>

It is now quite clear we have run out of time and the world must respond to climate change immediately and in a

variety of ways. Each sector and discipline must transition and orient itself toward this existential threat. It is no different for forestry. The uncertainties for on-the-ground forest management are huge because we cannot reliably predict how forests will respond to climate change nor how to manage within ecological chaos. Yet the protection, health and productivity of our forests – the globe’s natural capital – is essential to any kind of climate success. Therefore, as foresters we need to do absolutely everything we can to minimize the damage and maximize the productivity and ecological services - including wood products - that can be supplied to society in a time of climate emergency.

We’ll need to find new ways to protect our forest base and decide which forests to leave alone as wildland reserves. But more importantly, in the critical 30-years in front of us that will make or break the future of the planet, we will have to redefine and implement the kind of forestry that can meet the short-term challenge. Old standards, built on historical analogs and yielding carbon results over long timeframes, will not serve the short-term challenge sufficiently. And remember, if we don’t succeed on the short-term challenge “we fail on everything.”

We will have to analyze what we have considered sustainable practices, and hone the options down to those that can consistently keep high carbon stockings in the forest while producing more renewable products for a growing world population that will include

2.3 billion more people. We have to offer forest-based solutions for the new urban structures that will house these 2.3 billion inhabitants and the billions more that are destined to flock to urban areas. Supplying this demand with concrete and steel will cook the planet. The only solution to the building problem is through excellence in forest management and engineered wood building products. Foresters are the key to that change. **Doesn’t this sound like what we have been pursuing and preparing for over the past 25 years?**

After 25 years of learning from each other and becoming better at what we do in the woods, the Forest Stewards Guild is well positioned for this challenge. The Guild has been pushing for forests and forestry to be part of the climate solution for more than a decade. The Guild’s research and policy has been influential in the field since our 2007 paper on Climate Change, Carbon, and the Forests of the Northeast and our Policy Statement the following year. The kinds of forestry Guild members practice are suited for this too. We need to make some tweaks and be more definitive of the links between our practices and climate adaptation and mitigation, but the essential base and principle of practice already exist, forged through our interactions with each other and our dedication to the forest. It is time to re-define what is meant by sustainable forestry in a time of climate emergency. Who knew in the 1990’s that the Guild was being prepared for such a monumental challenge? The world is asking for solutions and we can deliver them.

<sup>1</sup> “Philanthropy Must Stop Fiddling While the World Burns,” Chronicle of Philanthropy, January 7, 2020.

A fir tree in Downeast Maine is one example of trees approved for use in structural cross-laminated timber.

Photo by Lauren Owens Lambert.



Cross-laminated timber, made by glueing small pieces of wood together in perpendicular layers, provides a more sustainable alternative to steel and concrete, whose production processes churn out greenhouse gases. It is also strong enough to replace these materials in taller buildings.

Photo by Charlie Reinertsen.



# The Forest Stewards Guild at 25:

## On the vanguard of stewardship in professional forestry

Written by Robert J. Hrubes, Emerita

In December of 1995, I was invited to a meeting in Santa Fe hosted by Henry Carey of The Forest Trust. There I found myself in a gathering of like-minded souls, the nature of and extent to which I had never experienced in my professional career. Over two days, I came to understand that I was not the only round peg in a profession of square holes. That realization was a source of inspiration that remains strong, today.

Looking back over the past 25 years of active involvement in the Guild, two intertwined concepts or ethical principles rise above all else. These define the Guild and the ethos that I have strived, through actions and career decisions, to promote and practice:

- Stewardship as the central paradigm of resource management, and
- The “first duty” of professional foresters and allied resource professionals is to forests and their future.

Back in the early and mid-1990’s the explicit concept of stewardship of natural resources was esoteric and certainly not a part of the professional foresters’ lexicon. The world has changed, since. “Stewardship” and its concept are now almost SC’s focus on environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest management. The Guild’s relationship with the FSC is multifaceted, but most substantively manifested through individual Guild members - foresters and allied resource professionals. Of the foresters who gathered in Santa Fe in December of 1995, more than 80% became involved in the expansion of the FSC in North America. Many in leadership roles within the FSC, certification bodies, or certified forest management companies. The Guild as an organization continues to support FSC as a member of FSC, through the certification of the Guild’s forestland, and by engaging on FSC policy and initiatives.

In 1997, the Forest Stewards Guild was formally created by nearly 70 Founding Members who gathered at the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina. Almost all the attendees in the 1995 meeting in Santa Fe were in Asheville, joined by others who shared their values, felt the “spark,” and who felt compelled to create and sustain an organization committed to forest stewardship. And the wider circle of Founding Members expanded and fortified the intertwined relationship with the FSC.



100% FSC Certified lumber, labeled. The FSC trademarks provide a guarantee to consumers that the products they buy come from responsible sources. Photos above by: Forest Stewardship Council.



Guild members gather at The Leopold Center in Baraboo, Wisconsin in 2016. This article’s author is shown third from the right in the front row.





# The Guild creates career pathways

Written by Jennifer Mueller and Eytan Krasilovsky

6



Natalie Fyffe, GulfCorps alumni and AFWFB crew member, on a prescribed burn at the Joint Base San Antonio in Texas. Photo by Ben Suerig, Bureau of Land Management.



GulfCorps cadre, representing prescribed and wildland fire professionals from the Guild, The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Service, USFWS, the State of FL, and contract sawyers. We aim to continue our progress towards reflecting the diversity found in the US population.

Over the last 25 years, the Forest Stewards Guild has worked to develop career pathways for youth and young adults in forestry, wildland fire, and natural resources. This is hard work. It is closely tied to our organizational mission, values, and culture among members, staff, and partners. Melding career pathways with our diversity and inclusion values is on the forefront of creating a new culture in the conservation world.

Since the mid-1990s, our work to develop the next generation of forest stewards was rooted in the Forest Stewards Youth Corps (FSYC) in New Mexico which hires and trains rural New Mexican youth aged 16 to 19 years old for a summer program of conservation projects on lands managed by the US Forest Service. In 2018, this was expanded to include the ongoing FSYC Fall Fire and Fuels program for 18- to 25-year-olds. Already, program alumni have secured wildland fire jobs with the State of New Mexico, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service.

The suite of programs and efforts currently happening at the Guild include both our time-tested pathways, as well as some new additions:

- FSYC Summer and Fall,
- Forestry and wildlife interns with US Fish and Wildlife Service,
- Southwest Region interns,
- Prescribed Fire Module,
- GulfCorps Trainings, and
- Air Force Wildland Fire Branch crews.

With the creation of the Guild's Fire Management program, we have expanded our efforts to create an 'ecosystem of fire practitioners.' Across all the programs, the Guild is actively implementing a wildfire career pipeline using hands-on training and stepping-stones of successive supportive employment to build an inclusive and diverse generation of fire practitioners, while simultaneously boosting prescribed fire capacity. In 2018, the Guild began a multi-year training partnership with GulfCorps. GulfCorps focuses on training underserved and underrepresented youth to prepare them for careers in natural resource management. In 2019, the Guild and assisting

partner organizations trained over 110 first-year fire practitioners with GulfCorps, pioneering interactive and hands-on training methods while still upholding the highest standards. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is reflected in both the student population as well as the instructors.



GulfCorps students getting hands-on in chainsaw maintenance.



GulfCorps students training in communications and land navigation.

Photos by Mikah-Hakim Lewis, Exquisite Productions.

In 2020, the Guild's blossoming relationship with the Air Force Wildland Fire Branch (AFWFB) allowed the Guild to hire nine new seasonal employees at three different Air Force installations and support them in both professional and personal development. Three of these Air Force Guild employees are GulfCorps alumni, providing the next steppingstone to these budding stewards. We aim to keep recruiting from GulfCorps and FSYC as we continue our partnership with the AFWFB. The next foreseeable step is a detail or employment with the the Guild's Prescribed Fire Module for the right candidate. Simply put, this ecosystem of firefighters provides the manifestation of 'Good Fire, Good Jobs.' All of these efforts are only possible through the work of Guild staff, engagement from our partners, and invaluable support from our funders. The Guild is deeply invested in nurturing the next generation of forest stewards.





Above: Forest Trust staff in the early 1990s. Left to right: Melinda Mars, Rich Schrader, Martha Schumann Cooper, Laura McCarthy, Shirl Crosman, and Henry Carey. The message to the right by Colleen Robinson and Zander Evans.



Guild members gather at a working forest in New Hampshire in 2019.



Above: Guild members gather at the Oregon State University forestry cabin to learn and innovate together.

Below: A familiar circle of Guild members sharing the “spark” of ideas, questions, techniques, and comradery at the Aldo Leopold shack in Wisconsin, 2016.



# Putting the forest first in challenging times

Although this is a year of great pride and celebration for the Guild on our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are aware that we have entered a new era ushered in by Covid-19 – and so far, it isn’t celebratory. Around the world people are suffering, feeling grief, experiencing loss, and trying to make sense of it all.

Here at the Guild, we are adapting while at the same time working to serve the current needs directly and indirectly, personally and as an organization. We don’t know exactly how the global pandemic will play out. What we do know, is that the forests, and all who depend on them, still need a voice, an advocate, and careful stewardship.

The pandemic is changing many parts of our lives, but one thing that will remain the same is the need to put the forest first. By doing so we serve so many, so far beyond the boundaries of the forest. But how do we do our work in the woods and engage landowners with social distancing in mind and very real risks to human health? Are there ways to balance peoples’ desire to get outside to recreate with the risks of Covid-19 spread for rural communities and land stewards? How do we prepare for the inevitable wildfire season while maintaining a safe distance? The Guild and partners are grappling with these questions and we would love to learn from you – our members and supporters.

The Guild was founded on our ability to support and inspire each other. We’ve always learned from each other’s challenges, ideas, innovation, dedication, and persistence. While the heart of Guild Gatherings has always been walking together in the woods, we hope our virtual gatherings and webinars help keep us connected and inspired. Thank you to all who have creatively and bravely tried new things to make that sharing a success. Please continue to do so, because as a community, we depend on each other and the forests depend on us.

If we can practice now, how to responsibly and thoughtfully put the forest first in the midst of human suffering and sudden, unprecedented challenges, we will find ourselves using these muscles we build as our climate changes, our forests face more pressure from land conversion, and people become more vulnerable to a world where our natural resources are at greater risk.





*Address Service Requested*

## **Guild Gatherings and Anniversary Celebrations!**

Registration and event details online at [www.foreststewardsguild.org/events](http://www.foreststewardsguild.org/events)

This year, we are hosting many virtual events and hope to gather in person in late summer and autumn to celebrate 25 years of Guild forestry, our community, and simply being together.

### ► **Celebrating the roots of Guild forestry – a 25th birthday event!**

**Date:** August 20 - 22 **Location:** Asheville, North Carolina

Join us in Asheville, North Carolina as we come full circle to host a national Guild Anniversary Gathering in one of the states where the Forest Stewards Guild idea was nurtured into being. We will hear from natural resource professionals from across the Southeast about how ecological forestry has changed and shaped the landscape, get your boots on the ground and visit a handful of local forest sites, and revisit and remember our history while sitting around a bonfire. Come share the spark of Guild forest stewardship with us this summer!

### ► **Innovative Forestry Summit - and another 25th birthday event!**

**Date:** Autumn...to be determined **Location:** Corvallis, Oregon

Join us in Corvallis, Oregon to soak in the possibilities in a hub of Guild forestry. At 25 years old, it is natural to look ahead to exciting new experiences and challenges that will shape the next stages of life. Here, we will do this as we envision the future of Guild forestry in light of all we know, and have, and share together. Stay tuned for more details!

### ► **Webinars! So much to learn...**

**Dates:** throughout April, May, and June

From virtual chainsaw safety primers, to topics in an ongoing Forestry Adaptation Series, to virtual Guild Gatherings where members can support each other in times of social distancing...take a look at all that is available online through the Guild at the events webpage listed above.

**Stay tuned for more event opportunities and, as always, let us know where you'd like to see or host the next Guild Gathering!**