

Forest Stewards



Annual Review 2023

2023

Our community forges solutions
that last on the landscape.

Northern Wisconsin forest in spectacular autumn color, nursing a seedling oak which is protected from deer browse. Nearby was the Northern Bird Network Conference: Forestry for Birds in a Changing Climate event.

ANNUAL REVIEW



Guild members explore, while learning from managers and researchers about Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change study sites in Northern Vermont.

Making Innovation Work in the Woods

The Guild is about synthesizing ideas into solutions. Initial inspirations often come on a walk in the woods or conversations over maps on a truck bed. Kindling inspiration to a full-fledged idea takes perseverance and the support of colleagues. Spreading good ideas across the country is the work of a network. The Guild hopes to play a supportive role in all these steps. We host Guild Gatherings to set the stage for inspiration – and have some fun! Webinars and reports are less fun than being in the forest together, but they're a great way to share thoughts, concepts, and hypotheses. Our project work is often proof of concept, demonstrations of what can work.

In this review of 2023, you'll read about how the Guild supports moving innovations into practice. This edition is exciting for me because I can see the connections between regional efforts. Prescribed fire expertise from the Southwest is contributing to training in Minnesota. The idea of using a bird's eye view of forest management to connect

with landowners sprouted in Vermont and is blooming in Oregon. The direct connection with landowners interested in shortleaf pine restoration in the east inspires new outreach revving up in the Southwest.

All of you are part of this. Your support, inspiration, practice, community, and knowledge results in healthy forests we can all enjoy.

Zander Evans, Executive Director

Your support created the Guild and keeps our community flourishing. Donations and sponsorships unlock federal investments with match. We rely on you to achieve our goals in education, training, policy, research, and advocacy. Please give today:

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Top: Maura Olivos of the Forest Stewards Guild leading a Forestry for the Birds Western Oregon workshop at Oregon State University Extension's Fall Tree School.



Left: Matt Distler, of Oxbow Farm and Conservation Center, speaking on assisted migration during the Northwest Innovative Forestry Summit's Washington Field Tour.

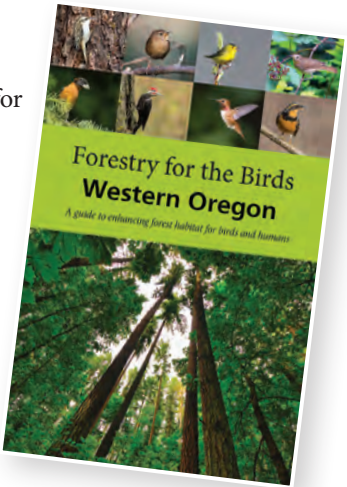
Below: A guide to enhancing forest habitat for birds and humans is a tool for natural resource service providers and forest caretakers.



Pacific West

The Guild has continued to lead the expansion of the Northwest Innovative Forestry Summit (NIFS) as a space for regional learning, knowledge exchange, and ongoing cooperation to foster ecologically based forest management strategies. Working collaboratively with planning team members from the Northwest Natural Resource Group, the Intertribal Timber Council, Oregon State University's College of Forestry, and Hyla Woods, Guild staff organized three events throughout autumn to highlight experimental forests and how they facilitate innovation and community within forest management and research. The events included: Webinar – From Experimentation to Innovation in the Forests of the Pacific Northwest; Assisted Migration at Oxbow Farm and Stossel Creek Field Tour; and H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest Field Tour. Due to wildfire activity, the Experimental Forest Tour was postponed with hopes of rescheduling for Spring 2024. Stay tuned!

After three and a half years, with the assistance of key partners, the Guild developed a Forestry for the Birds program for Western Oregon and published *Forestry for the Birds: Western Oregon – A guide to enhancing forest habitat for birds and humans* (the Guide). The Guide acts as a communication tool for natural resource service providers and forest caretakers. It focuses on the habitat characteristics specific to 12 focal bird species across eight forest types and long-term management at any stage or condition of a forest. With the Guide in hand, Guild staff successfully executed Forestry for the Birds workshops for private landowners, natural resource service providers, and the urban environment in Western Oregon throughout 2023.





Conservation agency and non-profit staff visiting a prescribed burn site (above) and another site that had been treated several times with prescribed fire (behind), both at Camp Ripley in Central Minnesota.



Lake States

The Guild has played an integral part in expanding the Forestry for Birds concept throughout the country.

Thanks to funding from the Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Joint Venture we were able to hire Christian Nelson as our Lake States Coordinator to lead the development of a Forestry for Birds program in Minnesota. This is a great step forward on a program that Guild staff and partners have been working towards for several years.

The Guild continues to work with the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape to increase prescribed fire awareness, interest, and capacity in that region and throughout the Lake States. We supported this partnership by holding two landowner Learn and Burn events this year and a three-day training geared towards conservation professionals who work directly with landowners to plan stewardship. Through this program, our role in the Minnesota

Prescribed Fire Council, and the dedication of many members and partners we are seeing prescribed fire becoming increasingly identified as a stewardship tool for Lake States land management. This was highlighted in late August when the Northeast-Midwest Prescribed Fire Science and

Management Workshop came to Madison, Wisconsin. Guild staff were asked to present at this conference, and we were pleased to see the level of attendance and regional interest in prescribed fire.

We co-hosted several Lake States meetings this year and were pleased to see so many Guild members at the events. We look forward to hosting Lake States meeting(s) and Guild Gatherings again in 2024. These meetings rely on you as members and supporters to host, sponsor, and suggest learning events to keep our community strong and grounded in putting innovation into practice. Contact membership@forestguild.org with your input.



Northeast

It's exciting to see how the Northeast program of the Guild has grown over the past decade and especially over the past year. Where we once had a one-woman office, we now have four staff hard at work supporting and inspiring forest stewards across a range of programs. Each person brings her own innovation and gifts to Guild, and the end of the year is a wonderful time to look back and celebrate.

Maddie has grown and led Seeing the Forest for the Queers (SFQ) with heart, skill, and purpose. Much like the early years of the Forest Stewards Guild itself, SFQ provides a safe space for folks with different perspectives to connect. Their work reminds us to exemplify Guild values of open-minded listening so that we might continually learn from the diverse backgrounds and voices at work in the forest.

Maggie's background as a consulting forester, ecologist, and strong writer has been invaluable to growing the reach of the Guild in our region and nationally. Maggie's leadership with the Women Owning Woodlands national network has enabled the Guild to build connections between women landowners and foresters in the Northeast and well beyond. As our work ramps up to sustain ash of the Northeast, Maggie will increasingly turn her skills towards supporting a community of practice from Wabanakik to Akwesasne.

Erika has jumped in with both feet as our Eastern Director, growing our work in forest climate adaptation and building opportunities for the Guild to launch field crews implementing climate adaptive treatments in the forests of the eastern U.S. While this year is just the beginning, we are thankful to have years of Guild experience in the Southwest and Southeast in supporting the rising generation of forest stewards.

With all this capacity in the realm of forestry, Amanda's work has turned increasingly to fire-related projects. From her Deputy Director perspective, Amanda has been able to link fire science, prescribed fire, and community wildfire protection in the North Atlantic with the momentum around these topics across the U.S.

This region has enjoyed several events to gather Guild members and friends this year. Social hours and our Guild Gathering at NorthWoods Stewardship Center gave us opportunities to do what the Guild community does so well...sharing, supporting, inquiring, and inspiring one another. The Northeast-based staff are excited to collaborate with Guild members and friends to advance ecological forestry across the many avenues of forest stewardship.



Participants at a New England Women Foresters Collaborative in Vermont. Gathered is an intergenerational community of women, femme, and nonbinary students, professionals, and practitioners.



Participants at a field tour with the Guild and NAFSE at the Massabesic Experimental Forest examine a hemlock branch for frass left by the hemlock wooly adelgid.





Southeast

The Guild's Southeast Region team finished up two projects in 2023 that we have been working on for several years. The first was a project focused on shortleaf pine restoration on the Cumberland Plateau, and the second was centered around wildlife forestry in bottomland hardwood systems in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley.

Over the course of the shortleaf pine project on the Cumberland Plateau the Guild and collaborators increased capacity for prescribed fire and shortleaf pine restoration in Tennessee and Kentucky by training individuals in the use of prescribed fire using state and federal standards. In addition, we supported shortleaf pine restoration on public and private lands by conducting prescribed burns, establishing shortleaf pine, enhancing shortleaf pine ecosystems, and supplying private landowners with shortleaf pine

restoration plans. Finally, we educated landowners, practitioners, and others in the importance of prescribed fire through interpretive signage for high-use trails and hosting two workshops and a webinar.

The project in the bottomland hardwood forests of the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley managed and enhanced natural stands for the benefit of wildlife species. The Guild leveraged the state lands managed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries that exemplify wildlife forestry concepts to create two demonstration sites. We performed outreach to private forest landowners and practitioners, engaged forest landowners and natural resource professionals through workshops and trainings, prepared forest management plans for private landowners, and implemented enhancement activities on private and state lands.



Wildlife Forestry on lands managed by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.



Tennessee Burn Manager Course at the University of the South.



Southwest

2023 was an amazing year for the Southwest Region characterized by continuing our long-standing commitments to uplift communities in forest management and their access to wood products, as well as more broadly ensuring that collaboration, transparency, monitoring, and adaptive management are the standard. We also worked hard to support and train the next generation of forest stewards, and carefully worked to reintroduce fire to frequent fire forests. This year the organization welcomed Judi Beal, Dayl Velasco, Alyssa Denae Mineau, Juan Lemos, and Dana Guinn who each bring passion for the forest, leadership, and diverse skills and perspectives to help us meet our mission and goals.

The Forest Stewards Youth Corps (FSYC) summer and fall seasons provided impactful experiences and training for youth and young adults in New Mexico. This program continues to be a cornerstone of the Southwest Region built on our longstanding partnerships with the USDA Forest Service, Pueblo of Jemez, the New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps, and many others. A highlight in 2023 was when FSYC provided surge capacity to Hermit's Peak Watershed Alliance's post-fire watershed work after they were impacted by the devastating 2022 wildfire season.

Across the state to the west, Juan Lemos was hired to support community access to fuelwood in the Zuni Mountains landscape as part of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) project. Juan began with the Guild on our seasonal tree marking crew and now helps maintain and increase community fuelwood access. Southwest staff are looking ahead to 2024 when we plan to implement a large Community Wildfire Defense Grant around Santa Fe and initiate a riparian forest and watershed restoration program in the Rio Chama Collaborative Forest Landscape.



Sam Berry, serving as firing boss, instructs Jemez Pueblo Corps Member Elias Lucero on torch use and firing patterns, fall 2023.



Members of the Rio Chama Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project discuss wildlife corridor management complexity with a biologist from the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

Stewards Circle

Helping sustain and create our good work

Stewards Circle donations are a key part of delivering on our mission. Gifts at this level help us match federal grants for new initiatives, and pilot essential programs in changing times. Thank you for this steady support that keeps us strong for forests and communities.

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Resilience supported by a community working for forests

This year, we hosted many opportunities for Guild members to gather formally in program events and informally during social hours. We launched our Communicating Forestry series, led by and for Guild members. Steady themes in 2023 were climate, collaborations, demonstration sites, and sharing our work. There's more to come. Stay tuned, and please support our efforts as you can!

Upcoming events...register and learn more at <http://www.ForestStewardsGuild.org/events>

- November 16: Keeping Forests as Forests – Tax programs and other incentives for the Georgia landowner
- November 2023 - May 2024: Maine Forest Climate Change Initiative Webinar & Field Tour Series
- January and February 2023: Communicating Forestry Webinar Series installments

The Southwest Region's All Hands All Lands Burn Team reduces fire risk at a summer camp in ponderosa pine forests.