

Address Service Requested

Announcing Lifetime Membership

Next year, the Forest Stewards Guild will celebrate our 30th anniversary! Three decades of building connections across local woods to a national community. Creating partnerships and trust that have changed how we think of forest stewardship on a national scale and empowered individuals to turn that thought into action. The results are in our forests and all who depend on them. It's big. It's collective. It's our promise, contribution, and livelihood.

30 years is impressive! It is also just the start. Whatever challenges we've weathered together so far, the future presents more. We intend to grow our response and see it through.

We invite you to declare your role in our collective vision – for life. You make economically, ecologically, and socially responsible forestry the standard. Together, we make it known.

This membership season, if you can join or renew as a Lifetime Member (\$1,000), you show a level of commitment that will help inspire others. Our values can influence tomorrow more than we know. This is yet another way to invest in our vision.

All photos submitted by article authors or the Forest Stewards Guild unless otherwise noted.

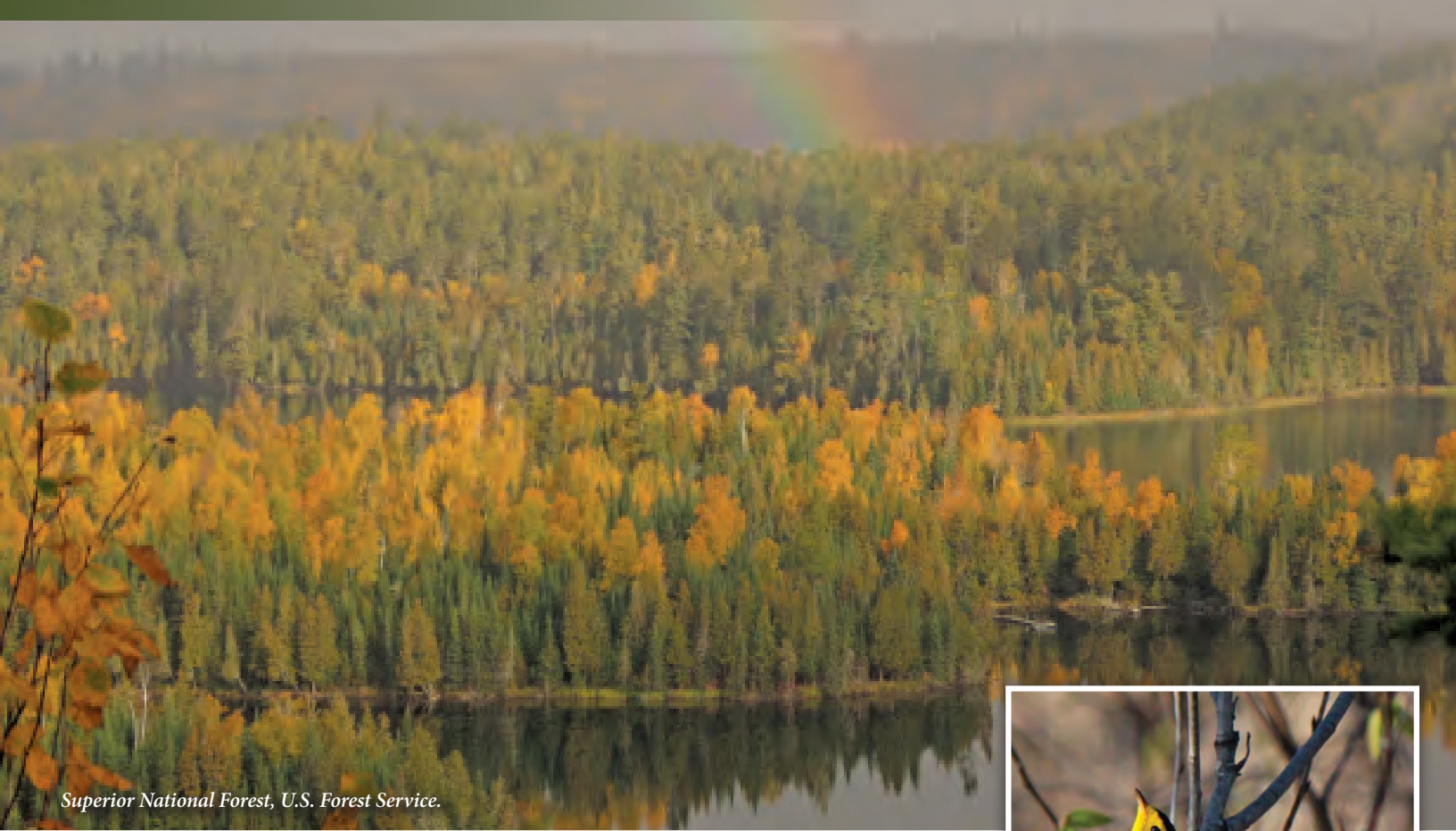


Spring 2024

the Forest Steward

Volume 9, Number 1

Highlighting how members uphold Guild values in the woods.



Superior National Forest, U.S. Forest Service.

Forest Stewards
 **Guild**

- INSIDE** 2 A Guild defined
- 3 Good fire on Usal Redwood Forest
- 4-5 Inspired to empower women
- 6-7 Community based forestry in Washington
- 8 Announcing Lifetime Membership



Wilson's warbler, Gunflint Trail, Superior National Forest. Photo by Ed Zlonis

P.O. Box 6058
 Santa Fe, NM 87505
 505-983-8992
 ForestStewardsGuild.org



Guild members join a field tour during a Guild Gathering outside of Asheville, North Carolina in 2021.

Directors

Zander Evans - Executive Director
Eytan Krasilovsky - Deputy Director
Esmé Cadiente - Southwest Region Director
Sam Berry - Southwest Assoc. Director
Mike Lynch - Great Lakes Region Director
Erika Rowland - Eastern Director

Staff

Rhiley Allbee
 Judi Beal
 Rachel Bean
 Krista Bonfantine
 Sarah DeMay
 Cody Dems
 Fallon Grafe
 Dana Guinn
 Sarah Hagan
 Gabe Kohler
 Chanda Littlefield
 Maggie Mansfield
 Collin McElroy
 Alyssa Denae Mineau
 Christian Nelson
 Mateo Pomilia
 Colleen Robinson
 Carlos Saiz
 Cora Stewart
 Shawn Swartz
 Dakota Wagner
 Polly Weigand

Board of Directors

V. Alaric Sample, Chair
Amber Ellering, Secretary
Käärsten Turner, Treasurer
Bill Bradley
Tony D'Amato
Sandra Denyce Jones
Ann Duff
John Fenderson
John Galvan
Peter Hayes
Brenda McComb
Rick Morrill
Mary Snieckus

The Forest Stewards Guild is a modern embodiment of the ancient meaning of a “guild.”

Arising in 13th Century

Europe, the word ‘guild’ meant brotherhood, association, service, offering, payment, tribute, compensation, and sacrifice.

Over 200 years, it evolved to mean an association of scholars, a trade society, or an economically oriented fraternity, and the dues paid to such associations.

In France, the Universitas Guild were the scholars that formed the university. In England during the Middle Ages, guilds were local trade associations of craftsmen, organized to protect their common interest and to ensure quality, reliability, and price equality in products and services. This led to standardization and apprenticeship training. Guilds strongly influenced the government and established trade halls such as London Guildhall, which became London City Hall.

‘Guild’ members are by historical definition, dues paying practitioners of an association which supports their profession and provides a platform for their vision,

values, and passion. Guilds agree upon principles and standards for their services and products that set them apart. The Forest Stewards Guild is well named.

Through our declaration of commitment to our six core principles and to each other, we form a community of practice outside the norm and often ahead of our time. Together, we support learning and our practice. We provide the foundation to forward critical policy. We foster the next generation with training and mentorship. We contribute dollars and effort to maintain the Guild structure through which we express our values and make a collective difference. We feel honored to find belonging here based on aligned values in a diverse community.

It’s a privilege to contribute to this vision that is so much bigger than any one of us but impossible without every one of us. This edition has three personal stories from Guild members who put our values into practice. There’s more to come!

Good Fire on Usal Redwood Forest

Karen Youngblood, Forest Conservation Specialist, Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc

Good fire promotes forest health and fire resiliency.

It creates opportunities for community collaboration, capacity building, and honoring the Indigenous members of our community who use traditional ecological land practices. At Usal Redwood Forest, we experienced the unifying power of fire last fall when our forestry team of six dedicated foresters, biologists, and conservationists implemented our first prescribed burn in a shaded fuel break (an area thinned to reduce fire spread).

Usal Redwood Forest is 50,000 acres in northern California that was degraded and fire prone by over a century of intensive timber management. Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc (RFFI) purchased it in 2007 with the vision to restore and manage the forest for the local community's benefit. RFFI invests in ecologically and culturally sound land management to support this vision, forest health, and resiliency.

Our growing concerns of climate change and elevated wildfire risk in our region inspired our recent extensive shaded fuel break planning and implementation. Our primary prescription for shaded fuel breaks has been to thin trees from below, reduce ladder fuels and understory vegetation, while maintaining canopy of the largest, most fire-resilient trees. A Forest Health Project funded by Cal Fire in 2021, gave us an opportunity to create a 350-acre shaded fuel break and plan our first prescribed fire we called the Learn Burn.

The Learn Burn site started as an 11-acre ridgetop stand of Douglas-fir and tanoak located in an overgrown shaded fuel break created 7 years prior. The site was surrounded by truck and tractor roads. Our objectives were to experiment with fire as a tool for maintenance of a shaded fuel break, to assemble a local burn team, and to reintroduce good fire on Usal Redwood Forest. In 2022, URFC staff attended a Cultural Fire training event in a nearby

rural community led by Diana Totten of Wintu heritage, and Kai Ostrow. Diana is a Cultural Advisor, Fire Trainer, and retired Division Supervisor. Kai is a Burn Boss program graduate, Fire Trainer, Briceland Fire Department Firing Boss, and Fire Management Specialist. We hired them to provide expertise, support, and to develop the Burn Plan for the Learn Burn in 2023.



The Learn Burn site.

A few months before the burn, we all toured the 11-acre site. Our first big lesson was selecting the burn area. As land managers planning our first use of fire in a young, dense forest, our primary concern was safety and access. We hadn't fully considered aspect, slope, size, and necessary fuel load. Ostrow advised us to expand our long, narrow, overly prepped ridgetop burn site to include the adjacent, south facing, densely forested slope. This would give the fuel, gradient, and temperature to carry fire through the forest.

Our Learn Burn Plan grew to 46 acres.

Ostrow and our staff assembled a Learn Burn team including several community fire department crews, members of Humboldt and Mendocino County Prescribed Burn Associations, the Wailaki Fire Crew, our forestry staff, students from Cal Poly Humboldt's fire club, and Cal Fire. On November 1st, between unseasonable rains, Burn Boss Ostrow orchestrated this fire team. Together, newbies to retirees moved fire successfully and safely along the slope.

After the fire, Totten commented "With a cultural view of the burn day, we accomplished historical milestones. For the first time in many years, members of Wailaki descent were using fire as a tool of our ancestors on the land now called Usal Redwood Forest. Our spiritual and physical connection to the land runs deep. This day brings such great joy as we feel once again connected to our ancestors and the spirit of the land and everything living in it. So, even though this burn was not considered a cultural burn in name, it has huge cultural significance to the Native people. As we work together in the future we hope to keep the Native people involved and strengthen the working relationship we have started in a very positive way."

Our Learn Burn and the fantastic Burn Boss team taught us the process of putting fire on the forest. It enabled us to forge partnerships with local fire practitioners who we will continue to learn from and work with to create a more fire resilient region. Perhaps most importantly, we learned the profound significance of fire to the Indigenous people not only as a tool for land management but a practice for cultural preservation. The positive experience of our Learn Burn has eased our trepidation to use fire in the forest. We are planning our next shaded fuel break project of which 500 acres will be managed with cultural and prescribed fire.



A Guild member inspired to empower women

Written by Barbara Breshock

4



Field tour at Calvin Price State Forest, part of the WV Women Owning Woodlands (WOW) weekend workshop.



Barb Breshock & Amy Cimarolli, co-coordinators for the WV WOW program. Photo by Mary Hufford

I grew up in the suburbs, in housing developments that were once farms and woods.

This was in Ohio, so the flat land made it easier to clear all the trees before development began. I wondered, were there going to be any trees left? Walter Cronkite's Sunday evening story about modular homes fueled my concerns. Science always interested me, and I knew from an early age that I wanted to work outside. I turned 13 the year of the first Earth Day, not that I needed any encouragement, but it certainly supported my way of thinking. I had a high school biology teacher, Mr. Keller, who had been trained as a forester and fostered my interest. I also found that the woods were really my element during wilderness camping trips with my high school co-ed scout group.

My guidance counselor did me a big favor when he told me I should be more spe-

cific than biology when choosing a college major. Aptitude tests and the Occupational Outlook Handbook led me to believe forestry would be the right fit, and it was. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Forest Resource Management at WVU, got a job with the WV Division of Forestry, and never looked back. I had the opportunity to work with wood industries as a service forester in the northern panhandle for a few years and then the dream job came up – managing three state forests in the southern WV mountains. I did that for about 15 years until I was put in charge of all the state forests. I did that for another 15 years before being promoted to Assistant State Forester in charge of the Landowner Assistance Program. This really removed me from field work – but I found out I liked putting on training sessions. I provided day long continuing education events for foresters who practiced in WV to maintain their Registered Professional

Forester credentials.

I retired after 39 years with the agency, and they still support my work with the WV Women Owning Woodlands (WOW) program. We have also received great support from the Forest Stewards Guild, who applied for and managed a grant for us and I am grateful for the ideas and learning opportunities the Guild provides.

Amy Cimarolli, another Guild Member from WV, got me interested in Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) – a women teaching women program sponsored by DNR agencies across the nation that focuses on hunting and fishing activities. We taught forestry and map & compass classes as part of the weekend workshops. This showed us there was a need and desire for a program

like Women Owning Woodlands. We both were involved in BOW for more than ten years and experienced the benefit of women teaching women and learning together.

I attended a meeting of landowner assis-

tance program managers and saw a presentation by Yale about their research and the WOW program. This really spoke to me. It married my experience with BOW with my desire to provide knowledge of forest management to others. I was also planning to retire soon and so the timing seemed perfect – because while working full time, my plate was already too full.

About six months before I retired, Amy and I put on the first WOW weekend workshop in West Virginia. It was well received, but then Covid-19 hit. We struggled to reach more women landowners, but word of mouth, a Facebook page, and being able to put on some one-day field trips helped us expand our reach. We've also partnered with various agencies and groups to put on events and promote each other's events. We have a growing email list and I try to share all sorts of learning opportunities with the group. In November of 2023, Amy and I were invited to present at the WV Women in Agriculture Conference. This has been a great way to reach more women woodland owners, as most farms in WV have some woods.

I have 25 acres of my own woods that I've managed for over 30 years. I started with TSI (timber stand improvement), used some of the trees cut for this to grow shitake mushrooms, and have dealt with most of the common invasive species. I have also dabbled with growing medicinal herbs. I share some of my projects and what I'm observing in my woods with the WV WOW group – especially via photos on our private Facebook page.



Map at the workshop, for landowners to pin their land location.

Persistence is key, whether dealing with non-native invasive species (NNIS) or recruiting women landowners and spurring them to action. I appreciate the women who don't want to use any pesticides to control NNIS. I grow an organic garden and wish to have as light a touch on the land as

possible, work with natural processes and at the same time, leave the land in better shape than it was when I borrowed it from the next generation. However, my experience of managing the State Forests has shown me, to be effective and not burn yourself out, judiciously applied chemicals can be your friend.

Our training has been a mixture of what we, as professional foresters, think the landowners should know about, and what the landowners themselves suggest as topics. We try to include hands-on learning activities, such as inoculating logs with shitake mushroom spawn and building mason bee nest containers. We also have done activities that help the landowners discern what on their land is important to them. We've had presentations by various organizations that show options for land management projects from wildlife to forest farming. We try to keep it fresh and build upon what we have presented in the past, without leaving newcomers feeling lost.

I have always felt passing on knowledge is important. The type of knowledge I gained over 40 some years of forestry work is something that many women landowners don't have access to, don't know how to access, or don't know they should access - they mostly don't know what they don't know.

I especially enjoy fulfilling the Guild's vision of education and empowerment to landowners. Knowledge is power. We try to instill confidence in the landowners we work with, so they can make decisions about their property and have a plan to move forward.



A landowner shares her vision in an exercise designed to help landowners discern what is important to them on their property at a WV WOW weekend workshop.



WV WOW weekend workshop - drilling oak log to inoculate with shitake spawn.



Community-based forestry: connecting fore

Written by Jay McLaughlin, Executive Director, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards

6



Smoke from a low intensity underburn rising above the year's first controlled fire on the Mt. Adams Community Forest.



Thick, protective bark on an old growth Douglas-fir on the edge of a Mt. Adams Community Forest burn unit.

As a member of the Forest Stewards Guild, the idea of “putting the forest first” has long been central to my personal ethos. And yet, Guild members know the response to any such proclamation would be quite different in the small logging town I call home in the foothills of Washington’s Cascade Range versus a distant city where the nearest forest is an urban park. Harkening back to the “owls versus jobs” debates of the 1990’s, putting a forest first in the Pacific Northwest could easily be construed in some communities as sacrificial of rural, forest-dependent livelihoods and the position that timber had come to occupy as an engine of industrial growth in the region.

In 2004, under the shadow of Washington’s second highest peak, a group of community members and stakeholders came together to explore another way of leading with the forest. We launched a non-profit organization, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS), that espouses “community forestry” (which means different things to different

people and places) as central to our work. The bargain, from our perspective, is that as the forest goes, so does our community. Accordingly, it’s incumbent upon us to invest in stewardship of our forests to advance the well-being of both ecosystems and forest-tied communities. In other words, “putting the forest first” does not diminish our ability to sustain or even flourish as a rural community; instead, it is our greatest opportunity. The Guild community recognizes this too. It is increasingly clear that demonstrating this nuance to people outside of our field is more effective than the words themselves.

Since those early years, MARS has grown to be the largest employer in our small town. Fully staffed during the field season, we’ll have as many as thirty employees laying out stewardship projects, taking chainsaws to fuel breaks and timber stand improvement efforts, dragging drip torches, and assisting with the recovery of native species through invasives control programs. We’ve developed a continuous forest inventory program for

local forests with over 200 plots installed to support our best efforts at adaptive management. We are the fiscal sponsor for a federal lands collaborative group and have developed master participating agreements with three national forests in our operating area. Our partnerships with national organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, have helped us to bring “good fire” through pre-

sts and people in southern Washington

scribed burning back to our landscape. This led to us organizing the first prescribed fire training exchange (aka TREX) for southern Washington, and more quick hitting “Learn and Burn” events. And we are standing up one of Washington’s first prescribed burn associations (PBA’s). MARS also supports two federal agencies with staffing to overcome administrative and hiring barriers to make progress toward shared objectives. Through these various efforts, we have contributed to what we feel is a powerful demonstration of what community-led “all lands” or “cross boundary” management can look like while effectively growing the case for what some call the stewardship economy.

Of similar significance is the impact that the growth of our own forest ownership, the Mt. Adams Community Forest, has had on MARS’s success and long-term outlook. While comprised of just over 1,800 acres, it’s a place where we have drawn a line to head off the ever-creeping sprawl of homes and cabins into fire-prone forests. It is a place where we can most freely hone our skills, experimenting with different silvicultural techniques and expanding on our knowledge of local ecology to manage for more resilient forests and communities. Years ago, a colleague working on community owned forests suggested that we include

community forests within the concept of “anchor institutions”, used by some in a rural context to refer to schools, community centers, and other local assets of critical value to a place and its people. I’m convinced that he was onto something, as the Mt. Adams Community Forest anchors nearly all MARS does.

Community-based forestry comes with its own challenges. Federal and state agencies are still figuring out how to work with us. Non-profits are learning how to play best together. There is work to be done with segments of the more traditional environmental community that, in some instances, is still getting comfortable with the idea that timber towns might be an untapped source of environmental stewards. Lastly, in our limited experience, tribes can be understandably resistant to collaboration, especially when as sovereigns they have an elevated relationship with land management agencies, as well as a history and depth of knowledge that when shared has too often been abused by non-tribal beneficiaries of such information.

Thankfully, we have been able to count on the experience of others. A growing body of research looks at international examples of what has and has not worked well with long standing, locally led approaches to

natural resource management. And organizations across the country have employed community (based) natural resource management principles for decades, from the community forests of New England to groups like the Watershed Center and Wallowa Resources in the West. The overlap with Forest Stewards Guild Principles and work on a national scale makes them an important ally.

Community forestry isn’t easy to explain to people that don’t spend a lot of time thinking about connections between the well-being of forest ecosystems and the human communities so closely intertwined. Throw in the humility required of any of us working in this field, or the respect and deference owed to tribal communities, and any kind of value proposition can quickly become confused. But as results begin to stack up – in terms of jobs, dollars in local economies, training opportunities, healthier forests, rebounding native species, and acres in forestry “forever” protected through community-owned and managed forests – I am convinced it is an approach that merits more attention. Our work brings people of different persuasions together. Power dynamics shift. We listen to one another. And as a result, good things are happening on the landscape.



Celebrating a successful “Learn and Burn” on the Mt. Adams Community Forest.



Loading out a truck with logs from a thinning on the Mt. Adams Community Forest.

