

2024

Embracing and enduring
change, together.

*Winner of the 2024 Guild summer photo contest. Old growth of
Tall Trees Grove in Redwoods National Park. By Ryan DeMasters*



Attendees of the 2024 Northwest Innovative Forestry summit during a field tour of sites on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest managed through Good Neighbor Authority agreements.

A Culture of Stewardship

The Guild is unique because of our tight connection between on-the-ground work in the woods and change at the national level. For 30 years, we have recognized ecological, economic, and social responsibility are intertwined. Members' efforts integrate these three perspectives for forests across the country. The triple bottom line has moved into the mainstream, just as ecological forestry has gone from the fringe to textbooks. The Guild played an important role in this transition, and we could be tempted to rest on our laurels – but we won't. There is too much to do. Too many woodlots need restoration. Too many watersheds are threatened by uncharacteristic wildfire. Too many communities disconnected from their wildlands. Too little recognition of forestry as an economic engine for rural communities. Too many preserves overrun with invasive plants.

There are too many challenges to solve individually which is why the Guild's interconnected approach is as relevant now as it was in 1995. The word stewardship summarizes our integrated approach and implies responsibility, active

engagement, and care into the future. The Guild's national network of members, staff, and partners advance the culture of forest stewardship based on ethical principles, best-available science, and diverse experience.

Zander Evans, Executive Director

The collective difference we make in and around forests is astounding. Our values, dedication, and purpose are reflected in healthy landscapes. "Gratitude" barely expresses our acknowledgement of the contribution your support makes. This work is only possible with your gifts, which reach far beyond the Guild. Please donate today at: ForestStewardsGuild.org/donate, by phone at: 608-395-4724, or by mail in the envelope provided.



P.O. Box 6058
 Santa Fe, NM 87505
 505-983-8992
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Pacific West

Hiring a second Pacific West Coordinator in April, based in western Oregon, is a highlight this year. This addition allowed the Guild, in a short period, to ramp up events and member engagement throughout the Pacific West.

With the *Forestry for Birds: Western Oregon Guide* from 2023 in hand, Guild staff held two Forestry for the Birds workshops in conjunction with Oregon State University Extension in the spring. Attendees left the events with a copy of the Guide and a better understanding of how to improve bird habitat through forest management practices.

We held a Pacific Northwest Guild Gathering at Zena Forest Products in Rickreall, Oregon in July. Focusing on hardwood management in Western Oregon, the event attracted forestry professionals from across the state. The day began with a field tour of the Zena Forest Products' forestlands and was followed by presentations on Oregon white oak restoration, emerald ash borer, Mediterranean oak borer, and red alder management.

The Guild continues to lead the expansion of the Northwest Innovative Forestry Summit (NIFS) while working collaboratively with the Northwest Natural Resource Group, the Intertribal Timber Council, Oregon State University's College of Forestry, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards, and Hyla Woods. Through this year's event, *Forest Horizons: Honoring the Past, Understanding the Present, Securing the Future*, we explored the past, present, and future of forest management in the unique area of the White Salmon and Klickitat watersheds.



Top Left: Forestry for the Birds event attendees in May 2024.
 Middle Left: Reflection circle at the 2004 NIFS.
 Bottom Left: NIFS 2024 discussion group, in Trout Lake, WA.

Right: Evidence of prescribed fire during a 2024 Northwest Innovative Forestry Summit (NIFS) field tour.






Attendees of the National Forest Stewardship Program Gathering on a field tour in Maryland.



Participants engage in small group scenario discussions led by Guild staff at the National Forest Stewardship Program Gathering's optional Women Owning Woodlands workshop.



The Guild's apprentice foresters (Phoebe Weinberg and Miles Plitt shown above) scope and treat invasive species through the Next-Gen Forest Project with TNC. Photos by: Loren Dowd/TNC

 **Northeast & Southeast**
This year, we welcomed a full, new staff in the east, while managing to continue successful programs and establish new partnerships. We are extending the scope and scale of our impact to be greater than ever.

Classic Guild programs like Women Owning Woodlands (WOW), Seeing the Forest for the Queers (SFQ), and ecological forestry have continued to grow and succeed. In September, Guild staff Chanda Littlefield and Colleen Robinson led a workshop at the USDA Forest Service's multi-regional meeting for strategizing underserved landowner support. The workshop focused on women landowners and introduced attendees to perspectives that many had not previously considered, thanks to a staff and landowner panel. Then, opportunities to brainstorm and "workshop" ways to serve and engage landowners amid

specific, common scenarios brought small groups together in valuable discussion and networking.

Sarah Hagan, our Southeast Program Manager, works to ensure SFQ continues to create an important meeting space for foresters and allied natural resource professionals to build community. A new calendar of events offers regular opportunities to discuss, contribute, learn, and support these voices in our field.

The Guild and several partners hosted workshops for forest stewardship practitioners and landowners as part of a Bird-Friendly Forestry in West Virginia effort. The spring and autumn workshops offered attendees their own copy of the recently published *Bird Friendly Forest Management Silvicultural Guide* which was developed through this strong partnership.

On the ecological forestry front, the Guild recently launched the Sustaining Ash Partners Network (SAP-Ne), with leadership from our Northeast Program Manager, Rachel Swanwick. The network aims to connect landowners, resource managers, agencies, Tribal Nations, and anyone working to preserve ash for their ecological and cultural significance throughout the Northeast.

Our engagement with the North Atlantic Fire Science Exchange has continued without interruption. In August, Polly Weigand, the Guild's new Fire Projects Manager, played a lead role in coordinating the second annual Northeast-Midwest Rx Fire Workshop in Albany, NY. The workshop gathered fire managers from WI to ME to share their successes and lessons learned in returning fire to its role in fire dependent forests, while also protecting communities from uncharacteristic threats from wildfire.

We laid important groundwork for the expansion of the Guild's workforce development initiatives. In partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service we successfully hosted another season of interns at the Sand Hills and Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuges in South Carolina and North Carolina. Both from Clemson University, Robert Ashman and Thomas Moyd, were learning and working alongside professionals in the field. In Vermont and Maine, the Guild partnered with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Long View Forest to hire three interns. Miles Plitt, Myra Traves, and Phoebe Weinberg worked with foresters from Long View to mitigate invasive plants and add deer protection on private family forest lands. The trio also wrote management plans and treatment summaries, giving them experience with the full scope of forest management. In 2025 we look forward to building on our field and youth crew experience with new crews in Virginia and West Virginia in partnership with TNC, the Virginia Department of Forestry and the National Park Service.

A significant new project for the Guild in the east involves our growing partnership with the National Park Service (NPS). After signing an agreement in 2023 for work in parks in western PA and WV, the Guild signed two additional agreements in 2024 to implement forest resilience projects in up to 27 NPS sites from Virginia to New Hampshire. The Guild will add capacity to implement forest resilience projects that will help ensure forests, which also play an important role in our nation's history, will be there in the future to help tell the story.

With so much progress made in 2024, the Guild team in the east is excited to enter 2025 with the wind at our backs and having settled into our new roles.



Site visit to Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Park to plan for forest resiliency projects with National Park Service staff.



Left: The Guild's apprentice forester, Miles Plitt, checks the final installation of a tree tube at a private family forest property in Massachusetts through the NextGen Forest Project with The Nature Conservancy. Photo by Loren Dowd/TNC



Right: The Guild's team of apprentice foresters (Miles Plitt, left and Phoebe Weinberg, right) and supervising forester (Otis Wood in grey) map where they are going to install tree tubes to protect native regeneration from deer browse through the NextGen Forest Project with The Nature Conservancy. Photo by Loren Dowd/TNC





Lake States

The Guild has played an integral part in expanding ecological forestry concepts in Forestry for Birds programs throughout the country. We are continuing this momentum in the Lake States through our work with the Northern Forest Bird Network and support for several Forestry for Birds initiatives in the region. In particular, our Lake States Coordinator Christian Nelson is nearing completion of the Forestry for Minnesota Birds guidebook in close collaboration with a strong steering committee representing a variety of interests and organizations.

The Guild also continues to increase awareness, acceptance, and application of prescribed fire in our fire-adapted plant communities. This involves service on the Minnesota Prescribed Fire Council, for which our Lake States Director Michael Lynch is currently the chair.

We also work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to deliver training geared towards conservation professionals who work directly with landowners to plan stewardship.

Lastly, we want to thank our members and partners that made our annual Lake States Guild Gathering a success. This event was in the beautiful Northern Highland region of Wisconsin and focused on managing mature forests for old-growth characteristics. It was wonderful to see personal connections made or rekindled here and the conversations that enrich our passion for land stewardship.

We look forward to hosting additional Lake States Gatherings in 2025. 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 the forest first.



Lake States Guild Gathering field tour attendees visit a canopy gap within the Managed Old-growth Silviculture Study research sites in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.



Lake States Guild Gathering field tour attendees visit a prescribed fire study plot in the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point's Treehaven forests.



Southwest

2024 was a significant year for the Guild's Southwest Region, which has built strong landscape and community connections over three decades. This year saw growth in our staff, impact, and ability to advance the organization's mission. Whether training youth, protecting communities from wildfire, monitoring forest changes with drone imagery, or supporting restoration and community-based plans, we prioritized equity, transparency, and collaboration. Open communication with partners, funders, and communities is key to building the trust needed to write wildfire protection plans, train youth, or conduct prescribed burns in at-risk neighborhoods.

We welcomed new staff members Andrew Pearson, Luz Salinas, Elijah Small, Christi Bode, and Lily Bruce, all of whom have made outstanding contributions. Our seasonal technicians, Zoe and Taylor, worked hard to collect critical forest and stream health data across northern New Mexico.

The Forest Stewards Youth Corps Winter Fire Crew burned 788 acres of piles despite challenging conditions, and the All Hands All Lands Burn Team supported 3,182 acres of beneficial fire. A FSYC Summer crews video will release this year!

Our community fuelwood initiatives provided essential resources for households while improving forest health. Additionally, a timber marking crew is preparing more acres in the Zuni Mountains for restoration treatments. These accomplishments are a testament to the collective dedication of the Southwest Region staff and the Guild business team.



Forest Stewards Youth Corps crews build "trash racks" to slow water, debris, and prevent erosion in sensitive landscapes.



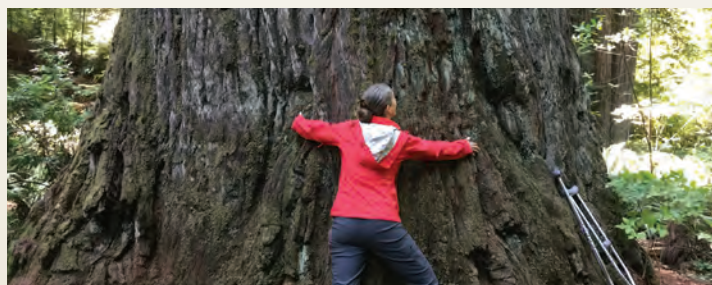
Forest Stewards Fall Fire & Fuels Youth Corps members manage burn piles to reduce fuels in forests threatened by wildfire.

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Helping sustain and create our good work

Your investments help us match federal grants, pilot essential programs, and tell the stories of everyone's ongoing support and impact in this community. Thank you.

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Hugging a giant sequoia tree in Sequoia National Park in California.
Photo by Colleen Robinson, entered in the Guild's 2024 Summer Photo Contest.

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30 years a community's legacy continues

Our community is nearly 30 years strong! Guild members, partners, and supporters can see their efforts reflected in thousands of reforested acres, miles of improved watersheds, millions of wisely invested federal dollars, and more resilient ecosystems. We've educated diverse groups of community members to prevent and better prepare for wildfire, hosted hundreds of youth and landowner programs, and helped foster growing cooperation among cultures, across the country. We need you to help share and expand the impact of these stories! Please join events coming up in our anniversary year, and plan to host your own, whether it's via zoom, over coffee, or in the woods. Watch for details on the events below and many more in the coming year and we'll see you there!

Learn more at <http://www.ForestStewardsGuild.org/events>

- Guild Gathering in northern California
- Guild Gatherings in the Lake States
- A virtual retreat
- The Guild's national anniversary celebration
- *Your* event (reach out to membership@forestguild.org with ideas and details for us to share)