

Community Forestry

The Guild views community forestry as the management of forests with the express intent of benefiting neighboring communities. These include initiatives in landowner collaboration, forestry cooperatives, and public and private forests managed for community benefit. The Guild recognizes the following characteristics of community forestry:

- Community forestry begins with protecting and restoring the forest.
- Residents have access to the land and its resources and participate in land management decisions.
- Resource managers engage the knowledge of those living closest to the land in developing relationships with the forest.
- Forestry is used as a tool to strengthen communities.
- Cultural values, historical use, resource health, and community economic development needs are considered in management decisions.
- Decision making is open, transparent, and inclusive.

The Forest Guild's community forestry program is grounded in rural, forest-dependent communities. The Guild's rural development strategy includes business assistance, support to the growing forest restoration sector, forestry training for youth, and research that leads to public policy recommendations.

Rural economic development in forest-dependent communities is a difficult undertaking in today's political, environmental, and economic climates. The twin challenges are to create economic opportunities that are environmentally and culturally acceptable; and to develop the business infrastructure and human resources necessary to capture these opportunities.

Technical Assistance to Forest-Dependent Communities and Businesses The Guild provides direct technical assistance to communities in forest worker training, forest product business development, and collaboration with land management agencies. Productive working relationships and increased community capacity benefit everyone—and restore degraded forests.

Forestry Education The Guild supports youth education and the development of future forestry leaders. The Guild works each year with state and federal agencies to employ and train young adults through the Forest Guild Youth Conservation Corps. The program, established in 1998, has a strong track record of helping corps members gain the skills and experience needed for them to develop into community leaders and natural resource management professionals. The Guild also conducts ecological and social monitoring and education for local schools and community youth programs.

Support to the Forest Restoration Sector The Guild has provided support to communities through forest planning and workforce development. For example, the Guild has collaborated in the development of several community wildfire protection plans and provided support to forestry crews on topics ranging from basic fuels reduction to assisting with prescribed fires.

Forest Guild Community Forestry Projects ^

- Collaborative Forest Restoration

Through the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP), the Guild has expanded forest restoration in New Mexico by providing multiparty monitoring and other technical assistance to communities and by implementing forest restoration projects including:

- Collaborative Forest Restoration Program Map
- Tres Piedras forest Restoration Project
- Bluewater Lake: Piñon-juniper restoration
- Santa Cruz and Embudo Creek CFRP: a multi-jurisdictional forest restoration project
- Valle Grande II (#23-04) Socioeconomic Monitoring Report
- Forest Guild Youth Conservation Corps

Each year, the Guild provides youth training and an introduction to natural resource management through the successful New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps program. Seven youth crews working on five national forests receive theoretical and field training in forest management and restoration, fire history and ecology, watershed health, wildlife, and group dynamics. [More](#)

- Vermont Town Forests Project

A collaboration of more than 30 of Vermont's leading public and private non-profit organizations, including the Forest Guild, came together to establish the Vermont Town Forests Project. The Vermont Town Forests Project aims to help communities fully capitalize on the potential of town forests to support community and ecological goals. The Vermont Town Forests Project provides Vermont communities with a toolbox of resources to help enhance the use and management of these important places. As part of this project, the Forest Guild has teamed up with a number of partners to explore opportunities to supply the Vermont Community Wood Energy Project at Bristol High School with a wood supply from sustainably managed lands.