

Forest Guild Success Stories

The Forest Guild is involved in a wide range of programs in support of our mission to promote ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry—excellent forestry—as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them.

Here are just a few success stories that have touched people, communities, and forests across the country:

Vermont Community Wood Energy Project When the community served by Mt. Abe High School in Bristol, Vermont, replaced their oil fired boiler with a wood fired unit, the Forest Guild teamed up with a number of partners to explore opportunities to provide the high school with a wood supply from sustainably managed lands. Known as the Vermont Community Wood Energy Project, this endeavor has a goal to help rural communities obtain a local, sustainable, affordable, dependable energy supply. The strategy involves four broad components that can be summarized by the acronym SELF: Sustainable production, Efficient use, Local sourcing, and Fair access. The Guild and its partners recognize a significant potential for private consulting foresters throughout the region to develop a roster of clients centered on supporting and supplying local, small-scale, community wood energy systems throughout New England.

Protecting Forests from Land Conversion and Fragmentation

In 2006, the Forest Guild released a report to help land trusts, government agencies, and the public gauge the effectiveness of conservation easements in ensuring sustainable forestry. (A conservation easement is a legal tool that places restrictions on land to protect its associated resources.) The report, *Ensuring Sustainable Forestry through Working Forest Conservation Easements in the Northeast*, analyzes three key New England easements and identifies eleven criteria that can be effectively used to evaluate current and proposed easements, thereby increasing the level of assurance that sustainable forestry will be achieved. Since its publication, more than 1,500 copies of the report have been circulated to land trusts and government agencies throughout the United States and the digital version of the report has been download more than 15,000 times. One of the report's practical values is for measuring the future effectiveness of forest conservation easements. For example, in the summer of 2007 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service used the report's rating system during testimony in Maine, regarding Plum Creek's Moosehead Lake development proposal, to show that the proposed Plum Creek easement was inadequate and needed to be altered.

Restoring Forests and Creating Local Business Opportunities

Over a period of four years in the ponderosa pine dominated forests of northern New Mexico, the Forest Guild, the Tres Piedras District of the Carson National Forest, the El Rito Youth Conservation Corps crew, and others successfully collaborated on a significant forest restoration project. The groups restored forest structure to 392 acres, contributed to the reintroduction of a surface fire regime to 6,000 acres, and processed slash on 936 acres of fire-adapted ponderosa pine dominated forests.

In addition, one of the best outcomes of this grant-supported project was the development of Herman Vigil's forest services contracting business. Mr. Vigil is a former handyman in the rural community of Mora, New Mexico. With the support and encouragement of Guild staff member Orlando Romero, Mr. Vigil hired, trained, and developed a professional crew of eight forest workers and now successfully contracts for New Mexico forest restoration work year round.

Promoting Better Health for High Fire-Risk Forests

Over the years, the Forest Guild's research has built a reputation for being fair, useful, and insightful. For example, *Modifying Wildfire Behavior: The Effectiveness of Fuel Treatments* continues to be cited in numerous publications by the USDA Forest Service, advocacy groups, academics, and most recently the Congressional Research Service. The report's authors, Henry Carey and Martha Schumann, conducted an exhaustive review of the scientific literature to create a balanced assessment of the effectiveness of thinning techniques to change fire behavior. The report has helped land owners, forest managers, scientists, and interested observers in evaluating proposals emerging from the National Fire Plan, determining treatments for specific forest areas, and focusing research agendas on the effects of thinning treatments. Read more information on the effects of thinnings on fire behavior [here](#) and for more information on the Forest Guild's latest research, [click here](#).