



Forest Guild 2008 Report to Membership and Accomplishments Summary

January 2009

Dear Forest Guild members and friends,

2008 demonstrated that the Forest Guild and its members are needed now more than ever. Three interrelated issues – climate change mitigation, biomass utilization for energy generation, and conservation of healthy working forests – present us with opportunities to answer major challenges with lasting solutions. At the same time, we know that forests are at risk from the adverse effects of climate change, inappropriately scaled biomass utilization schemes, and forest management overly focused on short-term gains.

2008 saw the Guild and our members repeatedly at the crossroads of developing and employing solutions to these challenges. We are sustainably managing working forests, improving the socioeconomic outlook of forest-reliant communities, identifying successful approaches and guidelines for biomass removal, and helping determine the role of forests in regional and national climate change policy.

The key to wisely achieving our forests' potential is through forestry that recognizes the forest's intrinsic value. Led by on-the-ground foresters, our members always have and will continue to put the forest first. Now more than ever, and with more partners than ever, the Guild is needed to practice and promote "excellent forestry"—forestry that is ecologically, economically, and socially responsible and sustains forested ecosystems and the communities that depend upon them.

Promoting Excellent Forestry, Guided by our Strategic Plan

The Guild's successes in 2008, summarized below, have largely focused on the abovementioned challenges and solutions and are consistent with the goals laid out in our Strategic Plan. Together, we are making a difference.

Our first goal is to **demonstrate excellent forestry as the standard for professional management** and to facilitate and support its practice. Our 2008 activities in pursuit of this goal included the following:

- Sponsored eleven meetings and field tours in ten states (CA, FL, ME, MA, MI, NH, NM, OR, VT, and WA) to demonstrate and foster an exchange of ideas centered on excellent forestry.
- Expanded our online Ecological Forestry Resource Center to include 10 new eco-regional forestry guides and augmented existing guides based on member input and new publications. This effort melds the best available science and professional wisdom of Guild foresters to define and increase the use of ecological forestry across the country (www.forestguild.org/ecological_forestry.html).
- Assumed the leadership role of the Conservation Forestry Network, which sponsors ecological forestry workshops around the country. The Guild helped prepare for and promote ecological forestry workshops in three states (TN, WV, and WI).
- Exposed a broader audience of professionals to excellent forestry through presentations at Land Trust Alliance rallies, to collaborative coalitions, and on college campuses; through visits to congressional offices and expert testimony before Congress; and through distribution of news releases that led to multi-media coverage of our work.

- Led the organization of the New Mexico Forestry and Climate Change Workshop, which provided foresters and other professionals with information about climate change's projected impacts to incorporate into their management decision making. The Guild also worked with the Pacific Forest Trust and the University of California Cooperative Extension to organize and present a workshop on carbon credits and conservation easements in California.
- Operated the 2008 Forest Guild Youth Conservation Corps, which provided forestry-based training and employment for 52 participants from rural communities in New Mexico. The crews completed a total of 18,720 hours of forest stewardship work and natural resource management training on six U.S. Forest Service districts.

We also made groundbreaking progress in our efforts to **identify and promote policies and practices related to climate change and biomass utilization that facilitate and support excellent forestry**. Our accomplishments included the following:

- Published *Climate Change, Carbon, and the Forests of the Northeast* (in December 2007) to review climate change impacts, present practical forest management strategies, and make carbon policy recommendations. This report has been downloaded from our website over 24,800 times (www.forestguild.org/Publications.html#RP).
- Took leadership positions to promote climate change and carbon sequestration policies that recognize and encourage excellent forestry. This included establishing a Guild Climate Change and Forests policy statement; chairing the Northern Forest Alliance's Climate Change Working Group; providing input regarding the role of forestry carbon offsets and credits in the Northeast's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative; and participating in the multi-stakeholder Forest-Climate Working Group that concentrates on national climate change policy.
- Collected 45 biomass removal case studies and published *Synthesis of Knowledge from Biomass Removal Case Studies* (in October 2008) to present the themes, strategies, and lessons learned from these examples. This report has been downloaded from our website more than 19,850 times (biomass.forestguild.org).
- Published *Assessment of Biomass Harvesting Guidelines* (in January 2009) to examine the guidance states have provided to address biomass harvests and to offer recommendations for revision of existing or creation of new biomass guidelines. In the first week after release, this document was downloaded nearly 4,000 times (www.forestguild.org/Publications.html#RP).

Last but not least, we carried out numerous activities to **practice and promote forestry that benefits land-based communities and forest workers, restores ecological processes, and supports multiple forest values**:

- Provided a variety of forest planning, restoration, monitoring, and collaboration assistance services to numerous pueblos, land grants, communities, and forest restoration partnerships in the Southwest.
- Coordinated forest restoration treatments on over 2,500 acres in New Mexico.
- Published guidebooks to help communities create effective wildfire protection plans and implement wildfire preparedness actions, collaborative forest restoration, and fuels reduction projects in the wildland-urban interface.

- Successfully transferred the Guild’s Forest Worker Safety Certification Program, which has reduced high workers’ compensation insurance costs for hundreds of New Mexico forest workers, to a long-term home with the New Mexico Forest Industry Association.
- Continued work on community wood energy projects in Bristol, Vermont, and the Mahoosuc Region of Maine and New Hampshire to improve forest health, support local forest businesses and workers, reduce heating costs and fossil fuel usage, and combat climate change.
- Researched and supported planning and management decisions that emphasized excellent forestry approaches for the Weaverville Community Forest in California.
- Ongoing participation in the “Restore the Mendo” educational campaign (www.restorethemendo.org) to promote controlled burns and forest restoration on the Mendocino National Forest in California.
- Ongoing participation in the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition to promote balanced conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing public lands and rural communities in the West (www.sustainablenorthwest.org/programs/policy/rvcc).
- Organized partners in the Southeast to develop a regional plan of action to improve conditions for migrant forestry workers.

Improved Communications and Organization

We improved the Guild’s communication outreach efforts in 2008 as well. Thanks in part to the pro bono efforts of The Marshall Plan, LLC, a Santa Fe-based public relations firm, we were able to gain a higher media profile for the Guild’s work by issuing ten news releases, gaining coverage in over two dozen news stories, and publishing two guest editorial columns.

Last but not least, we took several actions in 2008 to make the Guild a stronger organization.

- Grew the total Forest Guild membership from 552 to 688.
- Launched a new, better-organized, and higher-functioning Guild website in early 2008.
- Added four new members to the Forest Guild board, bringing the total number of members to 13 and increasing its diversity. New board members are:
 - **Bill Bradley**, partner of the law firm of Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan and based in New York City. His practice is focused on tax and tax litigation, particularly related to timberland transactions.
 - **Kathryn Fernholz**, professional Forest Guild member and executive director of Dovetail Partners, a Minneapolis, MN-based nonprofit that provides authoritative information about the impacts and trade-offs of environmental decisions.
 - **Laura McCarthy**, a professional member of Forest Guild, worked in various staff capacities with the Forest Trust and Forest Guild for eight years, including Policy Program Director, and now works for The Nature Conservancy of New Mexico.
 - **Arturo Sandoval**, founder and president of VOCES, Inc., a communications and organizational development consulting firm headquartered in NM. He has been active for more than 30 years in community, cultural, environmental, and civil rights efforts.

- Updated the Guild's by-laws to better reflect the current-day Guild.
- Set up a liaison system to improve communication between the Guild's two governing bodies: the board of directors and the Membership and Policy Council (MPC). A member of the MPC now participates in all Guild board meetings.

Outlook for 2009

Guild staff, board, and member volunteers are enthusiastic about building upon our 2008 accomplishments in 2009. We believe that our Strategic Plan—and the goals identified above—will continue to provide a good road map for the Guild. We are hopeful that opportunities exist for a renewed commitment to natural resource stewardship with a new Administration and Congress; through the proposed federal economic stimulus package; and through legislation, policies, research, and management decisions affecting our nation's forests, forestland owners, and managers. Decisions will be made in the next couple of years regarding approaches to climate change and energy use that may affect our forests for decades to come; we will pursue all possible opportunities to positively impact those decisions.

We also will not lose sight that the Guild is a learning organization. With your help, as our membership grows, and as we learn from our work and dedication to the long-term health of the forest, our collective body of knowledge grows, too, and becomes more sought after and influential.

I would be remiss to talk about 2009 without addressing the current economic recession that our nation is gripped in. The recession will impact the Guild as well, as our funding base of foundations and donors has been negatively impacted by the market crash. During this period, your support is more important than ever. The actions that you as a member can take include:

- Renew your membership on a timely basis and participate in Guild meetings and events.
- Recruit new members, which are critical to our long-term viability and to our mission of practicing and promoting excellent forestry.
- Identify local funding opportunities in your community or region for Guild activities such as training and education. If you bring these opportunities to my attention, Guild staff can work to develop and submit project proposals.

Lastly, after considering input from Forest Guild staff and members, the board has decided that our next national meeting will be in 2010 somewhere in the Pacific West. The recession was chief in the decision to not put on a national meeting in 2009. However, we are focusing on catalyzing and supporting Guild regional meetings around the country—in the Northeast, Southeast, Lake States, Southwest, California, and Pacific Northwest. Please consult our website calendar and *Across the Landscape* for upcoming meeting announcements.

As always, thanks for your involvement and continued support of the Guild's efforts to practice and promote excellent forestry.

Sincerely,

Howard Gross
Executive Director