

The Future of Forest Stewardship Workshop & National Guild Gathering

A Forest Stewards Guild 30th anniversary event and convening of Guild members, partners, practitioners, researchers, and stewards

September 15-17, 2026 | Freeport, Maine

Goals

- Build a collective vision for the future of forest stewardship in the United States with ecological integrity as the north star.
- Share the spark that ignited the Guild in 1995 and reinforce the power of our community.

Outcomes

- Increased knowledge
- Stronger networks and connections
- Draft near-term actions and long-term objectives for the practice and promotion of stewardship that forges a healthy future for people and forests.

Pre-Workshop Webinars

The Forests and Forestry of Maine ([Link Here](#))

Join Guild members from Maine to learn more about the Pine Tree State.

SEPTEMBER 9 Family Forest Ownership Trends 2013-2023 ([Link Here](#))

Dr. Brett Butler will share insights from the National Woodland Owner Survey that tracks the demographics and opinions of the 11 million family forest owners.

Please note by joining us, you agree to appear in photos & video. Questions? zander@forestguild.org



Welcome Reception

Monday, September 14

5:00	Welcome Reception & Light Appetizers 5:00-7:00 p.m. Mast Brewing, Freeport Tap Room
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Day 1

Tuesday, September 15 | Wolfe's Neck Center for Agriculture & the Environment

Three concurrent working tracks	
Ecological Forestry • Stewardship for All • Stress and Disturbance	

Participants may choose among the three tracks during each working session and are welcome to switch tracks throughout the gathering.

8:30	Registration & Membership Hub
9:00	Welcome & Introductions Meadow Room <i>Welcome: Zander Evans, Forest Stewards Guild</i> <i>Two Perspectives on the Future of Forest Stewardship:</i> Maine State Forester Patty Cormier ; New Mexico State Forester Laura McCarthy <i>Building on the 9th American Forest Congress for the Future of Stewardship: Dr. Sacha Spector,</i> Doris Duke Foundation & 9th American Forest Congress Steering Committee
10:00	Working Session 1

Stewardship for All (SA1): Stewardship for Land Conservation

Flash presentations and discussion on how land trusts are stewarding conservation lands, regional challenges, and approaches to fostering stewardship with land trusts and other conservation owners.

Facilitator: Erika Rowland, Greater Lovell Land Trust

Outside Tent

Ecological Forestry (EF1): Indigenous stewardship & ecological forestry

An open conversation focused on concrete examples of how Indigenous stewardship and traditional ecological knowledge have been incorporated into ecological forestry and stewardship on non-tribal lands.

Facilitators: Brian Palik, Retired U.S. Forest Service & **John Galvan**, Jemez Pueblo Governor

Meadow Room

Stress and Disturbance (SD1): Forest Health Update

Experts will share updates on major forest health threats followed by conversation about responses.

Tony D'Amato: shifting balance between natural mortality and harvesting;

Cameron McIntire: Beech Leaf Disease;

Chad Hammer: invasive plants.

Forest Room

11:30	Guild introduction circles Long-time Guild members will lead small groups in introductions and connection.
12:00	Lunch Included catered lunch at Wolfe's Neck Center

1:00	Working Session 2
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Stewardship for All (SF2): Engaging Landowners in Stewardship

Lessons learned through programs such as Women Owning Woodlands, Fire Adapted Communities, and Forestry for the Birds. Flash presentation: Paul Catanzaro, University of Massachusetts: Tending Your Forest.

Facilitators: Mike Lynch & Sarah Hagan, Forest Stewards Guild
Meadow Room

Ecological Forestry (EF2): Science and Policy for Ecological Integrity

Discuss possibilities and problems with defining and measuring ecological integrity and work toward practical and policy opportunities to establish ecological integrity as the north star for management.

Facilitator: Susan Jane Brown, Silvix Resources

Outside Tent

Stress and Disturbance (SD2): Sustaining Ash Partnership Network

This session builds on the mission of the Sustaining Ash Partners Network (SAP-Ne) to promote collaborative approaches to ash preservation across the Northeastern U.S. and beyond.

Facilitator: Rachel Swanwick, Forest Stewards Guild, Tyler Everett, University of Maine, and Tony D'Amato, University of Vermont

Forest Room

2:30	Break
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3:00	Working Session 3
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Stewardship for All (SF3): Welcoming All Stewards

Share best practices for welcoming and supporting all stewardship and expanding Guild membership and community.

Facilitator: Sarah Hagan, Forest Stewards Guild

Outside Tent

Ecological Forestry (EF3): Markets to Support Ecological Forestry

Explore timber, carbon, water, recreation, and other markets that can support stewardship, including an update from the national Markets Matter convening.

Facilitator: Mike Lynch, Forest Stewards Guild

Meadow Room

Stress and Disturbance (SD3): Beneficial Fire

Explore cultural burning, prescribed fire, and managed wildfire as essential tools for resilient ecosystems and communities, with practical and policy mechanisms for expanding beneficial fire.

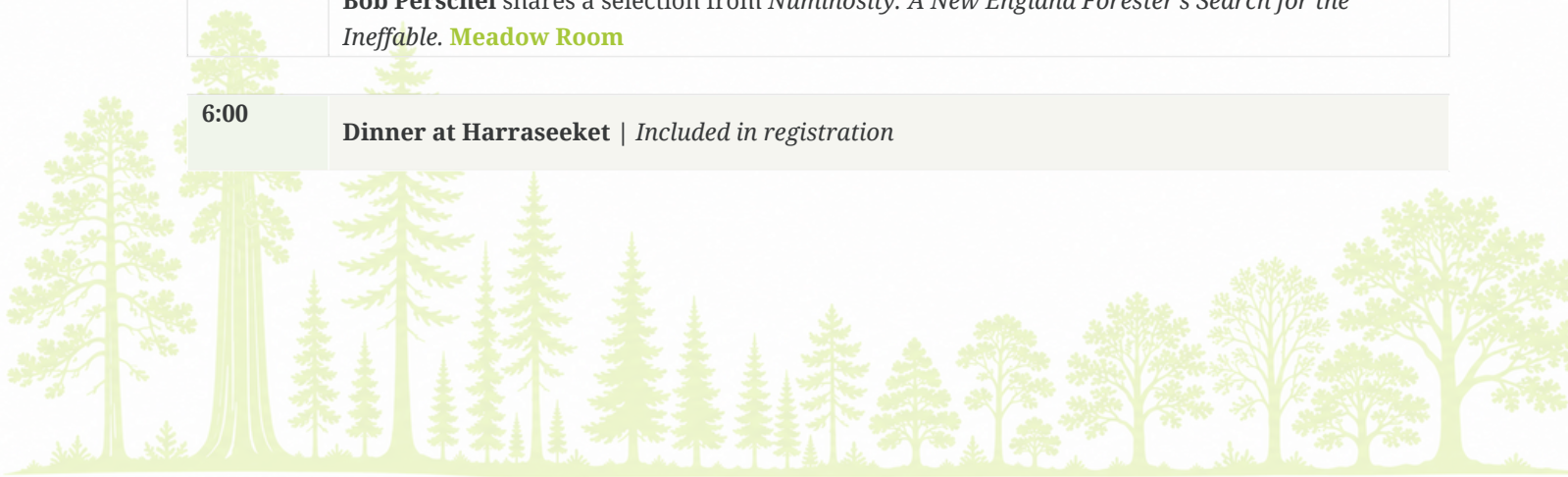
Facilitators: Esmé Cadiente & Eytan Krasilovsky, Forest Stewards Guild

Forest Room

4:30	Day 1 wrap-up and report out Meadow Room
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5:00	Working sessions adjourn Bob Perschel shares a selection from <i>Numinosity: A New England Forester's Search for the Ineffable</i> . Meadow Room
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6:00	Dinner at Harraseeket <i>Included in registration</i>
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Day 2



Wednesday, September 16

7:30 **Breakfast at the Harraseeket Inn** | Banquet room, *Included in registration*

8:00 *Welcome to Maine* video address from **U.S. Representative Chellie Pingree**
Co-creation conversation for the New Era of Forests campaign: Nicole Okoth, Purpose Campaigns LLC.

9:30 **Half-day field trips**
Participants choose one; departure from Harraseeket Inn

Bliss Woods Preserve

Explore ecological forestry balancing climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, sustainable timber production, and community values within an 86-acre community forest managed under New England Forestry Foundation's Exemplary Forestry principles.

Bus #1, Green

Austin Cary Forest

Explore active forest management for resilient forests, integrating sustainable silviculture, wetland protection, biodiversity conservation, research, and adaptive management.

Bus # 2, Yellow

Baxter Woods

Examine stewardship of one of southern Maine's few remaining old-growth urban forests, including biodiversity, invasive species, public use, recreation, and environmental education.

Bus #3, Blue

12:00 - 12:30 **Return to Wolf's Neck Center for lunch** | *Included in registration*

1:00 *Finding Hope in a World Worth Saving* | **Outside Tent**
Ethan Tapper, forester, ecologist, bestselling author, digital storyteller, and Guild member from Vermont, shares his experience and insights from engaging the public in stewardship.

2:00 **Working Session 4**

Ecological Forestry (EF4): Stewarding Old Forests in a Changing Climate

Build on the Guild's Position Statement on Stewardship of Old Forests and Trees and work of Guild members across the country to advance tools, techniques, and policy for old forests.

Facilitator: Kristen Pelz, Guild Membership and Policy Council

Meadow Room

Stewardship for All (SA4): Workforce Development

Highlight successful strategies for engaging students, creating apprenticeships, supporting early-career stewards, and identifying action opportunities for workforce development.

Facilitator: Matt Piccarello, Forest Stewards Guild

Outside Tent

Ecological Forestry (EF5): The Potential Power of a Center for Ecological Forestry

Explore the potential and pitfalls of a Center for Ecological Forestry as a community of practice for mentorship, learning, professional development, and operationalizing ecological forestry.

Facilitators: Brenda McComb, Oregon State University (retired); **Susan Jane Brown**, Silvix Resources; **Peter Hayes**, Hyla Woods

Forest Room



3:30	Break
4:00	Working Session: Conversation to Action Ecological Forestry: Advancing stewardship and ecological forestry Meadow Room Stewardship for All: Outreach and engagement actions Outside Tent Stress and Disturbance: Action items by region Forest Room
5:00	Convene & close - Meadow Room <i>Connecting across tracks and looking forward to the next 30 years - Zander Evans</i>
5:30	Adjourn working sessions Cold drinks courtesy of Maine Beer Company.
6:00	Catered BBQ dinner at Wolfe's Neck Center Included in registration

Day 3

Thursday, September 17 | Full-day field trips | Bag lunch provided

Buses depart Harraseeket Inn promptly at 8:30 a.m.

North Field Trip Option

Maine TREE's Holt Research Forest:

One of Maine's premier long-term forest research sites, integrating ecological monitoring and sustainable forest management. The visit highlights long-term forest change, biodiversity, watershed function, silviculture, and science-based decision-making.

Bald Head Preserve - *The Nature Conservancy*

Explore collaborative stewardship of a diverse coastal landscape where forests, salt marshes, granite bluffs, and riverfront habitats are managed for biodiversity, resilience, and compatible public use.

Bus #1, Red

South Field Trip Option

Maine Audubon's Gilsland Farm: A

65-acre sanctuary along the Presumpscot River estuary with forest, meadow, orchard, pond, and salt marsh. The visit will highlight ash protection from emerald ash borer, including insecticide injection and seed collection.

U.S. Forest Service Massabesic

Experimental Forest: A 3,676-acre experimental forest with a long history of white pine research. The tour will visit recent treatment areas and discuss planned treatments - including prescribed burning - to improve wildlife habitat, restore oak-pine forests, and promote early-successional habitat.

Bus #2, Grey

North Field Trip Option

Bald Head Preserve - *The Nature Conservancy*

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Maine TREE's Holt Research Forest:

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Bus #3, Orange

4:30	Buses return to the Harraseeket Inn
6:00	Dinner on your own <i>Choose your own adventure with friends in Portland!</i>

Thank you for celebrating 30 years of the Forest Stewards Guild.

