



Mt. Adams Resource Stewards

stew·ard·ship:

2: (*noun*) the conducting, supervising, or managing of something
*especially : the careful and responsible management of something
entrusted to one's care*

2019 NOTES



Mt. Adams Resource Stewards' stewardship crew pauses on a chilly fall morning while working to "liberate" an old ponderosa pine from competing vegetation that has grown up in the absence of natural fire cycles.

Fifteen years ago, in response to growing concerns about the health of Mt. Adams forests and what it meant for our communities, a group of us came together to plan for action. Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS) was formed to advance strategies that we believed would bring about the vibrant lands and communities we hoped for. The list of challenges was daunting, and included:

- ⇒ Landscape scale trends that could lead to the loss of working forests and associated public benefits.
- ⇒ The growing threat of destructive wildfire.
- ⇒ Barriers to a local workforce able to engage land stewardship needs and opportunities.
- ⇒ Absence of an organized local voice that could work with diverse interests and perspectives to get things done on the land.

Since those early days, we've worked on projects from Hood River County to the slopes of Mount Adams, from the Wind River to Highway 97. A decade and half in, we've learned a few things. High on that list is the lesson that the relationship between Mt. Adams communities and the land is constantly evolving. A future that honors the well-being of our natural systems, our history and diversity of perspective, and the quality of life we desire will not come about accidentally. We like to think—with the greatest humility—that one acre at a time, our efforts are moving us in that direction. We hope you'll enjoy our latest report on our projects.



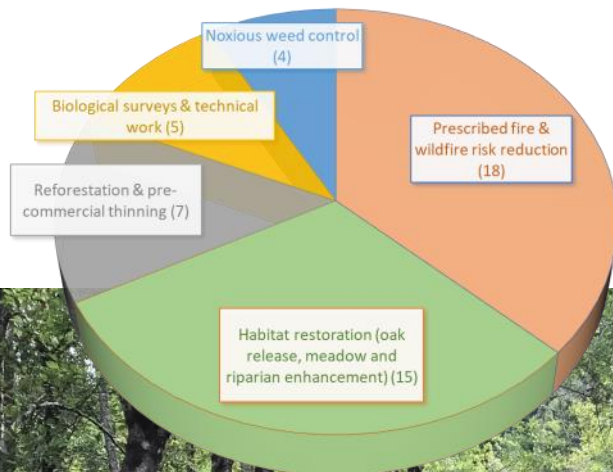
Breaking Trail: Volunteers showed up for our Fall 2019 Work Party to help improve and expand on a 1.5 mile trail on the Mt. Adams Community Forest Mill Pond Property, extending through our latest purchase along Outlet Creek to the boundary with Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Our hope is that this work and future improvements will result in a valued, multi-season foot trail for community members and visitors alike.

15 YEARS

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY FOR TODAY'S LAND STEWARDSHIP DEMANDS

Through the years, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards has worked to grow the stewardship workforce by hosting workshops designed to assist private contractors with new opportunities, and experimenting with a web-based platform to connect land managers and projects with service providers. In 2018, we launched our own crew, providing the necessary training and tools to meet the stewardship needs that partners and MARS regularly encounter on the land. With 49 projects completed in two years, we're excited by the future ahead.

49 PROJECTS BY TYPE, COMPLETED 2018-19



"The stewardship crew has been a valuable resource for us at the conservation district in our on-the-ground habitat projects. They bring serious tree-felling skills and an old-fashioned get-it-done work ethic. The guys are friendly, too! Working with them has been a real pleasure." - Dan Richardson, Watershed Resource Technician and Firewise Coordinator, Underwood Conservation District



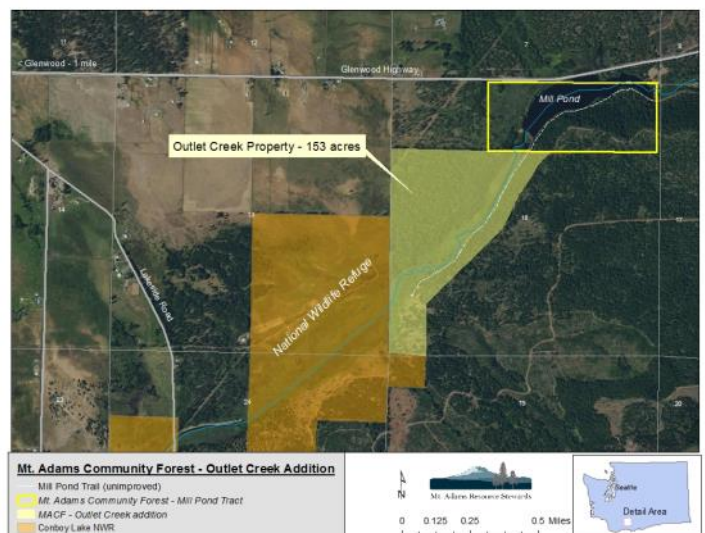
Crew members and partners pack chainsaws up a tributary to the Wind River for a fisheries enhancement project designed to enhance habitat through strategic placement of large woody debris in the stream channel. Photo credit: Brian O'Neill



GROWING THE MT. ADAMS COMMUNITY FOREST

In our early years, when we began discussing the idea of communities owning forests, it was a relatively foreign concept in the state of Washington. The idea of a small, non-profit organization marshalling the resources to succeed with such an idea seemed even more far-fetched. Still, we launched the Mt. Adams Community Forest Project. We visited successful examples in other parts of the country. We asked local residents for their ideas and input. And we put to paper a plan for managing a hypothetical community forest in an effort to blend the best of public and private sector approaches to land stewardship.

In 2011, we had the good fortune - with the generous support of many of you - to purchase our first property: Glenwood Valley's Mill Pond. In 2014, we added a two-mile strip of forest along the Glenwood-Trout Lake Highway adjacent to Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Last Spring, with a loan from the Conservation Fund, we purchased 154 additional acres adjacent to Outlet Creek and our Mill Pond property. Over the next several weeks we anticipate closing on two additional purchases that will grow the Mt. Adams Community Forest to over 1,000 acres (stay tuned!).





The latest addition to the community forest along a meandering Outlet Creek includes intact riparian and upland forests (above; photo credit: Jacob Anderson) and a hiking trail that passes by several large, legacy trees over five feet in diameter (right) and ends at a meadow adjacent to Conboy Lake NWR.



Equally exciting is the role MARS has played in elevating the idea of community-owned forests around the Pacific Northwest. A 2018 report identified 20 active efforts to establish or expand on community forests around Washington. Several of these communities have reached out to MARS to learn from our experience, and the report used Mt. Adams as a case study to assess the economic impacts of our work.

The Mt. Adams Community Forest has not only allowed us to demonstrate a novel approach to land ownership and stewardship, but it has served as a launchpad to other places on the Mt. Adams landscape where our experience is increasingly valued. We look forward to working with surrounding communities to explore their priorities around working forest conservation and community-based management.



Products from MARS-managed forests make their way to various local uses, such as this home being constructed by Cascade Country Cabins.

Researchers from the University of Washington found that between 2014 and 2017 the Mt. Adams Community Forest generated the following socio-economic benefits:

- \$1.7 million in revenues generated for supporting living-wage jobs and forest stewardship efforts
- \$8 million in countywide economic benefits
- 59 months of FTE employment opportunities in Klickitat County
- 23,444 metric tons of carbon dioxide stored

EXPANDING THE STEWARDSHIP “FOOTPRINT”

With fifteen years of land stewardship experience to ground us, the list of partnerships and new opportunities to address land management needs continue to grow.

In 2018, we renewed our 5 year agreement to implement forest stewardship activities on Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge. This year, in partnership with the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and the South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative, we began a multi-year effort to restore forest health to the south slopes of Mt. Adams with support from Washington Dept. of Natural Resources. We are exploring additional ways for MARS to partner with the Forest Service to increase the pace and scale of restoration on the national forest. We also remain optimistic that the state’s version of a community forest in the Klickitat Canyon will involve MARS and yield future benefits for our communities and the landscape. As policy makers and agencies around the West call for an “All Hands, All Lands” approach to address alarming trends in our forests, we are growing a noteworthy example right here at home.



Paths intersect: coyote and wintering black-tail deer tracks cross on the Mt. Adams Community Forest. Winter snows serve as a fresh canvas that provide another dimension to the story of the many things we manage for. Our forest stewardship and broader work represent an intersection of management to sustain the flora and fauna of Mt. Adams and the values of our communities.



Members of the South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative discuss a forest thinning project with a Forest Service representative (photo credit: James Baker). MARS serves as fiscal sponsor for much of the collaborative’s work.



A FIRE ADAPTED MOUNT ADAMS

We've all heard it: fight fire with fire. And we are doing that as we grow MARS's capabilities around prescribed fire. But it's far more complicated than that. In some ways, a century of putting fires out has contributed to today's larger, more intense fires. As we work with our communities to adapt to current realities we engage a number of strategies with the goal of reducing the negative impacts of wildfire to our homes, communities and things we care about. Through the Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network we share best practices. Support from the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation and Coalition and Collaborative's Action and Implementation for Mitigation (AIM) Program has helped to train our crew and support the time necessary to engage land managers and owners in project development and design. We're currently coordinating with Washington DNR and Underwood Conservation District to connect landowners with cost-share funding to implement defensible space projects around their homes, while planning strategic locations that could buffer populated areas from an approaching wildfire.



Crew at work reducing fire risk near Glenwood

Stewardship Notes—Winter 2019



Mt. Adams Resource Stewards

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WANTED: Are you passionate about Mt. Adams communities and landscapes? Committed to collaborating with diverse perspectives? Willing to dedicate time and resources to a growing land stewardship organization? Contact Jay McLaughlin or Board Chair, Jim White to discuss applying for a vacant board position.

IN MEMORIAM



With heavy hearts we said farewell to long time friend and board member, Teunis J. Wyers, this August. Teunis's passion for community and the guidance he brought our efforts are truly missed. We look forward to honoring him with a worthy memorial in the year ahead.