

UPCOMING
EVENTS

- **Mt. Adams Resource Stewards' board meetings** occur bi-monthly on the first Tuesday of the month and are currently held virtually via Zoom until further notice. Our next meeting is on February 2. If interested in attending, send us a note and we'll get you a link!

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The View from Mt. Adams Resource Stewards

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Mt. Adams Community Forest Surpasses 1,000 Acres Amidst Growing Uncertainty for Area Forests

If we were to have a motto that reflected what it's been like to build the Mt. Adams Community Forest Project, it might be "One Acre at a Time", or something that would draw from the tortoise and hare fable (where our efforts would be likened to those of the tortoise). After our first purchases in 2011 and 2014, 89 acres and 299 acres respectively, we dreamed of launching into much larger transactions that could really have an impact for our communities and the Mt. Adams landscape. It's not that we didn't try; and we were somewhat relieved when several 10,000+ acre forestland sales in our area went the way of a local timber company we expected to be around for the long haul.

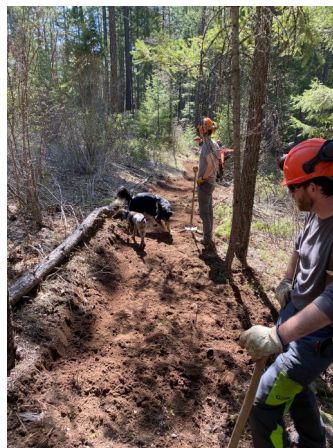
Lacking the ability to make that "big splash" in recent years, we instead focused on building around what we have. This past summer we completed the second of two purchases that added nearly 200 acres to our ownership around the Mill Pond. While our most recent purchase of 43 acres was our smallest to-date, it shored up access to the east end of the Mill Pond so that the public can access the trail when neighboring lands are closed due

to fire danger. The strip of land between the county road and the Mill Pond was also a part of this purchase. Keep an eye out for a survey requesting community input as to how we can best manage these areas.

We also completed our largest purchase to date in the spring thanks to a partnership with Columbia Land Trust. A 423-acre parcel dubbed the "Klickitat Rim Tract" is roughly halfway between the Mill Pond and the

truck shop on the west side of the Glenwood-Goldendale Highway. The property features well-stocked stands of second growth ponderosa, Douglas-fir and oak, including a few large, old trees. Old railroad beds are also prominent, harkening back to the logging days of early in the last century. Blacktail deer, especially in winter, and a healthy population of western grey squirrels are the most common inhabitants (not to mention ticks!). The property will be the focus of thinning work early in 2021 as our efforts target forest health improvements. We will also be planning a prescribed burn for this property. Given its proximity to the county highway and steep slopes, this work will factor into larger wildfire risk mitigation efforts for the area.

We don't plan to rest in 2021. We are currently working on an 800-acre addition to the community forest that we hope to release details on soon! And given recent news about Klickitat County's largest timberland owner, we anticipate that there will be many more conversations to be had about community-based efforts to protect working forests and the many benefits they provide.



Members of the MARS stewardship crew (and four-legged companions) construct a new segment of trail on the Mill Pond property.

Why Are Mt. Adams Forests Important to You?

A forest-lined trail? The value of working forests and products to our local and regional economy? Your favorite hunting grounds? Home to a cultural site? Or access to your favorite put-in for paddling a river? Intact, working

forests remain the foreground and backdrop of much of Mt. Adams and the Columbia River Gorge. For now. We will be sending out a web-based survey soon to help us understand what you value about forests in the

area and specific places where a community forest strategy could be considered as a tool to protect and promote locally governed forests managed for multiple uses. We look forward to your feedback!

Notes from the Landing



If there's ever been a winter when I wished I were a big 'ole black bear, hibernating away in a hollowed-out tree, this is it! It might be kind of nice to go to sleep and emerge in, say, April?

Jokes aside, as I find my peace walking forests we own or manage, I sometimes wonder: where would a black bear den for the winter? Whether it's the Mt. Adams Community Forest or Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge, the tally of trees large enough for a bear to ride out a winter pale in comparison to the number of very old, large stumps from trees cut decades ago. In fact, most of the trees that would provide a suitable winter home for local bruins that often excavate dens beneath large root crowns or burrow into a hollow trunk are limited to

national and state forests in the area.

I am certainly not advocating that all of Mt. Adams forests be dedicated to growing large, old trees (whether they might ever serve a hibernating bear or not). But trends in the forest industry across the Pacific Northwest have gone in the opposite direction: growing trees for shorter or reduced periods of time or what foresters call "harvest rotations".

The age of a forest is correlated with many things: from the growth rates of trees; to how much water makes it to the forest floor and ultimately a stream channel; to what lichens and mosses are present in a tree's canopy, maybe fixing nitrogen, and contributing to important nutrient cycles.

Forests are inherently far more complex than we historically understood them to be. One of the best quotes from one of my favorite podcasts of 2020, Timber Wars (which I highly recommend!), was offered up by U. of Washington forestry professor, Jerry Franklin. In describing a plantation of trees, Jerry says, "...This bears the same relationship to a forest that a cornfield or a wheatfield bears to a prairie."

With many private forests in the Mt. Adams region at a crossroads, I fear decision-makers in the not-too-distant future will be deciding between "cornfields" and housing developments. Unfortunately, our modern economy still does a terribly inadequate job of accounting for the complexities of forests and prairies and the myriad ways by which people benefit from them. That said, I remain hopeful that our efforts at MARS, through the Mt. Adams Community Forest as well as partnerships that deploy our efforts on other lands, can continue to grow, while elevating a dialogue around such important considerations that will have far-reaching consequences for the future of Mount Adams country.

~JM



2020 attempt at a socially-distanced team photo...Growth under challenging circumstances!

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Bullfrog Team Members:

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Partnership with Conboy Lake NWR Expands with Bullfrog Removal Project

By Robyn Reeder

The Glenwood Valley is special for a number of reasons. Its proximity to Mt. Adams and the spectacular vistas rank among the top. It's a place where sustainable forestry was pioneered in North America and cattle drives that are straight out of western folklore continue to this day. The vast marshes that yield camas, now largely encompassed within Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge, remain an important part of the homeland of the Yakama people. The combination of geography, historic land use and water also supported the Northwest's largest population of a rare amphibian that has been disappearing across much of its historic range: the Oregon spotted frog.

When the Oregon spotted frog, one of the Glenwood Valley's more unique and threatened inhabitants, was added to the federal list of endangered species in 2014, Glenwood Valley ranchers and Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS) proactively responded by entering into an agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The agreement outlined voluntary actions landowners would take by working with USFWS to implement a coordinated resource management plan for the frog in exchange for regulatory protection. Water management was identified as an issue - even before current challenges associated with the loss of Hellroaring irrigation water. Another significant threat to Oregon spotted frogs is a major competitor and predator that was introduced to the Glenwood Valley decades ago: the American bullfrog.

To combat this threat, MARS expanded its partnership with Conboy Lake NWR by creating the Bullfrog Removal Action Team (BRAT). The goal is simple: remove the bullfrog population from the Glenwood Valley over the next five years. The reason? To restore the Oregon spotted frog population here, where success could eventually lead to removal of protected status and associated regulatory burden for land owners whose livelihoods intersect with spotted frog habitat. Recovery of the Oregon spotted frog will not occur in the presence of such a prolific, destructive species that thrives in the absence of the natural controls (predators, parasites, etc) found in its native range in the eastern and southern



A Glenwood Valley Oregon spotted frog.

United States.

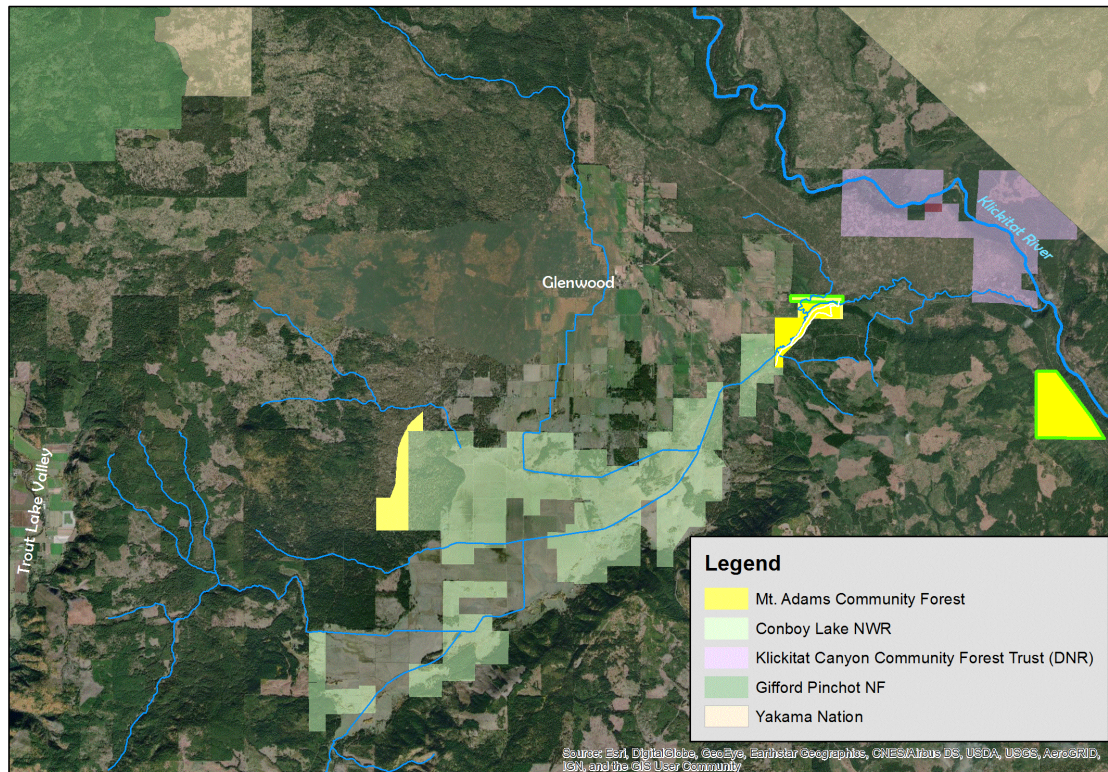
Bullfrog removal also addresses the threat they pose more broadly to ecosystem health. As was noted by a couple of landowners MARS worked with this field season, when bullfrogs moved onto their property, other species disappeared - such as spotted frogs, salamanders, and even some of the predators, like kingfishers, that target smaller prey. Bullfrogs are regularly referred to as one of the 100 worst invasive species in the world (currently ranked #79, right before the European house rat, according to the IUCN!), because of the serious destruction they cause to places where they have been introduced.

While the bullfrog has some endearing qualities, they are known to conquer ecosystems where they are not native in two main ways: competition and predation. Because bullfrog females can lay an enormous number of eggs (10,000-20,000), their population quickly dwarfs that of other amphibians. With greater numbers, they can easily outcompete other native amphibians for resources such as food and space. Bullfrogs are also excellent predators. They will eat anything they can fit in their mouths. Through stomach content analysis of Glenwood Valley bullfrogs, their diets have been found to include diving beetles, toadlets, tree frogs, baby birds, small rodents, and Oregon spotted frogs. It is difficult to see the true destruction bullfrogs are causing in our valley. It is slow. The animals being affected by bullfrogs are ones we often overlook and pay little mind to. But the consequences could be vast. Over the course of twenty years of surveys for Oregon spotted frog egg masses each spring, we are seeing, and

documenting the demise of a species that was documented within the earliest museum records for the Glenwood Valley from the early 1900's.

For the next four years, MARS will employ 6-8 seasonal field technicians to remove bullfrogs from the Glenwood Valley. During our 2020 field season, 6,700 adult bullfrogs and over 10,000 tadpoles were captured. Ask any of our technicians: it's a pretty fun gig! And bullfrog legs are delicious. This team will also do much more than just remove bullfrogs. They will learn about the valley we live in, grow to understand it intimately, and observe all of those animals we pay little mind to. The team will integrate into and provide benefits for the community on and off the job. This season we worked with several local landowners to remove bullfrogs from their properties and identify new potential bullfrog sites, and we took the grandchildren of a Glenwood local out on a bullfrog hunt. We attended Mud Fest, purchased an unhealthy amount of Claude's fried chicken, and climbed Mt. Adams. In our first year, the project benefited the local economy through wages and other contributions totaling nearly \$130,000. Next season, depending on the state of COVID-19, we hope to host an Invasives Species cook-off, and get more Glenwood locals out on bullfrog hunts with us.

MARS responded to this situation because we don't want threatened species to translate to threatened (human) livelihoods. Many of our successes in the forest have been the result of win-win partnerships and collaborations between groups that, at times, have been at odds. The Bullfrog Removal Action Team and our partnership with Conboy Lake NWR is another step in that direction. Yet we also recognize that we won't succeed without the Glenwood community. So come join us on a bullfrog hunt, or let us know where and when you see bullfrogs around the valley. If you're interested in working with BRAT, or have any questions or comments, please reach out to Robyn Reeder or Jay McLaughlin.



Mt. Adams Community Forest and Surrounding Lands
(green-ringed parcels indicate 2020 purchases)



(Clockwise from top):
An updated map of the Mt. Adams Community Forest showing latest purchases (highlighted in green); a load of bark beetle killed pine salvaged from the community forest and headed for the mill; and the view from the top of the Klickitat Rim Tract (our largest purchase to-date) looking toward Grayback Mountain.



MARS Launches Endowment to Ensure Sustained Stewardship

The Mt. Adams Resource Stewards Board of Directors moved in 2020 to establish an endowment to support long term stewardship efforts and operations of the organization. After careful consideration of three different investment management options, the Board selected Trimaran Capital and Felton Jenkins to assist MARS with the process. A growing community forest, future land acquisition opportunities and increasingly complex daily operations were all justifications for why we made this important decision that we believe will contribute to the long-term financial health of our organization and what we are able to bring to the communities we work in.

The endowment also provides supporters an additional way by which MARS's work can be supported. Donating appreciated stock shares directly to MARS is also very tax-efficient for the donor. Please contact Jay if this is an option you are interested in exploring.

Community forestry, a healthier forest ecosystem and local economic development are important long-term goals. We need your help!

Stewardship Crew and the Search for Purpose

By Casey Tane

You know those historic photographs of old time West Coast logging crews you see in local history books and on the walls at long time local businesses? The ones immortalizing purposeful looking pioneers dripping with stoicism and grit? There is almost always a misery whip and spring boards propped against a tremendous virgin tree, a half built trestle, or a steam donkey of some sort ticking away in the background. The subjects of these photos always appear to me as though they've paused their work just long enough to organize according to some photographer's desperate attempt to squeeze the enormity of their grueling task into the frame. You can see in their faces that just the second that shutter has slid open and snapped back shut they will be right back at it, letting the chips fly. There are, of course, many reasons these old images are so iconic. Partially it's their depiction of a landscape that only just barely exists anymore (tracts of monstrous old growth timber); and partially it's the glimpse they provide us of a way and a time many people wistfully romanticize. A time when the task was singular and the purpose clear. This axe, those trees, from now until payday and then repeat. As someone who has always enjoyed working in the woods I have always envied that look of clarity and purpose on the faces of these woodsmen.

These days things aren't so simple and it seems the task and its purpose is hardly ever quite so obvious as it once was. Today land managers and foresters face big questions and complex problems without obvious solutions. The combined effects of an imperfect regulatory process, past timberland management, climate change, manipulation of natural disturbance regimes including over-suppression of fire, and an ever expanding wildland/urban interface (WUI) have resulted in declining productivity in many forests throughout Mt. Adams country. That is true whether you choose to define productivity with a volume measurement, or a species count.

I think it can be said that we have moved beyond an era in which our forest industry can afford to focus solely on harvest. The bonanza created by thou-



Stewardship Crew members taking a moment to lighten the mood during the dog days of summer.

sands of years of tree production in a self-regulating, intact ecological system is a check that has already been cashed. We have moved into an era in which future harvests and our ability to ensure the safety of those residing in the WUI cannot be assured without significant stewardship work. By its very definition much of this work is not profitable, at least not in the short term, and most of it is not glamorous either. Thinning and hand piling to reduce density in an over stocked stand of young ponderosa pine won't make anyone rich and lacks just about all the sex appeal of hand falling out ahead of a yarder crew on a mature stand of high value fir.

Enter the MARS stewardship crew. Headed into its fourth year the crew program at its core is founded on an intent to capture that same spirit of purpose and place-based identity seen on the faces of those original woodsmen. Our tasks are seldom as obvious as we'd like and our projects frequently involve multiple partner agencies, funding sources, and landowners. In addition there frequently is not a straightforward way to achieve the big goals such as re-introducing frequent low intensity fire to this landscape. All this complexity can quickly add up into what feels like uncertainty and nothing makes hard labour harder than wondering if what you are doing will make a difference or if it is even a step in the right direction. Thankfully, our projects nearly always include some monitoring component to ensure that even if our efforts prove fruitless in the near term we can be assured that future iterations will be able

to draw on them for the lessons learned. So, though it is fair to say our task is varied, our purpose at least is clear. Namely, to work in service of the USFS, WA DNR and private land owners as a labour resource who calls Mt. Adams country home and is always ready to pick up our chain saws, and our hand tools, our increment borers and our diameter tapes. That our sweat might be that initial step in returning to a natural disturbance regime or that our data collection might help demonstrate to the public exactly how warranted a public lands timber sale really is.

Casey Tane has served as MARS' Stewardship Crew Lead through the past two field seasons. He recently accepted a position doing tree falling in areas burned by wildfire in Oregon and California. We're grateful for the many talents Casey brought our program and wish him the very best!



MARS stewardship crew lead, Casey Tane, aging a tree core during a stand exam assignment.



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Mt. Adams Resource Stewards was founded in 2003 to pursue, “a healthy, productive and sustainable economy, community and landscape in the Mt. Adams Region.” This vision is implemented through a mix of economic and community development, education and conservation projects—all with the goal of continuing the tradition of local people connected to the land.

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Thank you for your support!!!

We hope that before 2021 passes, we'll be able to join in person, raise a glass, and celebrate the many things that you have helped us accomplish in our 16-year history. Recognizing that the pandemic has negatively impacted the livelihoods of many, we felt that it was not the year for any kind of a fundraising campaign. Still, the generosity of many has shown through. You know who you are and we thank you for your unsolicited and tireless support!

An very large and hollowed out, old Oregon white oak on the Mt. Adams Community Forest, Klickitat Rim property.

