

- Mt. Adams Resource Stewards' board meetings occur bi-monthly. Our next meeting is on January 4th. If interested in attending, send us a note and we'll get you a link!

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

- Notes from the Landing 2
- Increasing Stewardship Capacity 3
- Stewardship Photos 4
- Oregon Spotted Frog Recovery 5
- Fire Adapted Communities 6
- Monitoring 7



The View from Mt. Adams Resource Stewards

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Crafting a Vision for Camp Draper by Jay McLaughlin

One September morning this year a late model pickup slowly rolled by our office at Camp Draper. It was nothing unusual, as locals and hunters from time to time make the drive around the loop at the end of Draper Springs Road. But a few minutes later the pickup was back, coming to a stop alongside the walkway to our office. An elderly couple slowly emerged and I figured I'd take a break from deskwork and ask if they needed anything.

Opening the office door, I found them still a few paces from the porch, the man holding the woman's arm firmly for balance as her head tilted skyward and, mesmerized, her eyes traced the crowns of the surrounding pines. An adoring smile transfixed on her face, she repeated, "The trees, the trees...I remember the trees."

What ensued was one of those conversations you have where you count your lucky stars—better off for being present just at the right moment to intersect with another person willing to share some magical moment or period from their life. The woman, now living in an assisted living center near Vancouver, told stories of her beloved years in the 1940's at Camp Draper. Her mother was one of the camp cooks and the young girl delighted in the life of what at the time was a bustling logging and forest management operations camp. She told of the games she would play, running barefoot over pine needles amidst the hum of workers, trucks and railcars coming and leaving from Camp. Equally nostalgic, her husband told of his years working on the company logging crew. Before they left we strolled the office hallway where they delighted in seeing photos

old and new of Camp and forestry on the Klickitat Tree Farm.

It's moments like these that remind us just how fortunate we have been to rent office space in recent years at Camp Draper. It also reaffirms for us just how special Camp Draper is to many whose lives have intersected with the place. Its continued value as a center for forest management operations can't be overstated, with offices, a meeting room, a cooler for tree seedlings and ample storage space. The three remaining small houses on the property are all occupied.

That said, Camp Draper today is not what it once was. As forestry has changed, many of the old buildings weren't necessary and no longer stand or have fallen into disrepair. Ownership of



Members of MARS staff posing at Camp Draper in 2021.

surrounding forests fits with a different professional management structure that doesn't utilize Camp Draper to the extent it once did.

At the same time, MARS has grown dramatically in recent years, outgrowing our office at the Glenwood Grange and struggling to find dry space to store the vehicles and gear necessary to support our field crews. Whether our employees grew up in the surrounding area or moved here to take a job with MARS, housing is increasingly unaffordable and availability is a perennial challenge.

In 2021, Lupine Forests, LLC—a subsidiary of The Conservation Fund—purchased Camp Draper along with about a third of SDS's timberland ownership in the area. They contract with American Forest Management to manage the property. Their long term plans for Camp Draper are not clear at this time but we do understand that they intend to sell it in years to come.

Given the extraordinary role Camp Draper has played for communities like Glenwood and forestry in the Mt. Adams region and beyond, we believe there to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shape the future of Camp Draper. Through initial conversations and brainstorming with board members and staff, we have begun to develop a vision for the property that would restore Camp Draper's place as a vibrant center of local land stewardship for the 21st century. Beyond office space for MARS and other forest management entities, MARS sees tremendous potential for additional housing; facilities to support trainings and convenings, such as prescribed fire training exchanges, that MARS is planning; as well as the need to maintain current uses of the property while honoring the historic importance of Draper for communities and sustainable forestry. We'd love to hear your thoughts if you have them!

If Camp Draper is not a familiar landmark, it's located off the Trout Lake Hwy just west of Glenwood. For decades it was the center of forestry operations for the former Klickitat Tree Farm, which once included over 100,000 acres of timberland that was regarded as some of the best managed in industry circles.

Board of Directors*Chair: Jim White**Jeanette Burkhardt**Bengt Coffin**Doug Comstock**Emily Jane Davis**Jim Dean**Karen Black Jenkins**Tom Reynolds**Nina Vinyard*Staff*Executive Director:**Jay McLaughlin**Monitoring and Outreach**Coordinator:**David Ryan**Stewardship Crew Project**Lead:**Lucas King**Fire Adapted Communities**Coordinator:**Sarah Allaben**Administrative Lead:**Mary Scott*

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Campbell, Emma Cardono,
Liam Donahue, DJ Garcia,
Erik Johnson, James Moore,
Jackson Nakae, Robert
Noddin, Craig Opp, Brian
Paul, Raven Romska, Kevin
Solano and Shelbie Sumpter*

*2022 Seasonal Forestry
Techs: Colton Troh, Miles
Valchar*

*Bullfrog Team Members:
Jamie Buchanan, Nate Byrd,
Mackenzie Cahill, Riley
Janquart, Leslie Macias and
Adam Yawdoszyn*

Notes from the Landing



I'm sure I am not alone in that snow has been on my mind a lot lately. When not battling its removal from my steps, decks and driveway, I find myself celebrating the first decent early season snowpack that we have had in some time. And while the thick blanket of white stuff has brought some of MARS's projects to a grinding halt and made others more challenging, it is also a reminder for me of how connected our work is to climate and weather.

During the long summer months, while visitors flock to area forests and economic activity associated with natural resource industries "makes hay", MARS has continued to amplify our best efforts to improve the health and resiliency of forests and watersheds across the Mt. Adams landscape and beyond. Science, history and common sense all point to a challenging reality – that today's "natural" forests are hardly natural at all and too often suffer from past forest and fire management decisions. As a result, we're faced with what some have described as an "epidemic of trees" – too many conifers of the wrong species that cannot be sustained without serious consequences, such as

devastating wildfires, for both forest and human communities. In 2022, our efforts to improve on that reality touched on projects from the slopes of Mt. Adams to the Wind River to Rowena. Lucas King, our stewardship crew manager, has grown our capabilities with chainsaw, chipper, drip torch and good 'ole rural innovation that counted on as many as 14 crew members working in our local forests at any given time. On the Mt. Adams Community Forest we completed over 60 acres of commercial thinning and three prescribed burns that we are confident leaves a better forest for the future. We added two key staff: Dave Ryan that heads up outreach and monitoring efforts that help to better inform our field work; and Sarah Allaben, who is leading coordination of our Fire Adapted Communities work among other things.

With the change of season, I am reminded of my long-time fascination with the science of snow and forests. Years ago, I stumbled upon a study from Colorado that looked at forest management strategies that maximized snowpack retention and duration to benefit irrigators. They found that small gaps in the forest canopy (less than 200' across) in the upper reaches of the watershed captured and held the most snow deeper into the runoff and irrigation season. Patterns of gaps and more heterogenous (versus continuous) tree cover is increasingly recognized as

being more consistent with historic conditions in many western forest types. Loss of natural forest patterns is thought to contribute to streams that historically ran year round that now run dry in the summer.

In 2022, we bid farewell to long-time MARS employee, Sharon Frazey, who departed for a job with WA DNR. One of Sharon's first projects for MARS back in 2016 was to assess snowpack retention in Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge forests in response to thinning and gaps we created. This was an especially important consideration for the refuge given the ecological value of small seasonal streams and wetlands and our belief that forest hydrology could impact them. Sharon's findings were similar to those that came out of the Colorado study, while also offering insights unique to mid-elevation forests. Our work on refuge forests along the BZ-Glenwood Hwy this fall benefits from these insights while also improving habitat for various species.

Snow, rain or shine, MARS has prospered in 2022. Our programs and reach have continued to grow. We had 26 folks on staff during the peak of our field season. We were thrilled to see so many wonderful friends and neighbors at the pig roast in September. And we're incredibly fortunate for the many partners and landowners that make our work possible. We look forward to seeing you in 2023! ~JM

Increasing Stewardship Capacity in the South Mt. Adams Region

By Lucas King

Mt. Adams Resource Stewards' All Lands All Hands Stewardship Crew can be a mouth-full to say, but it hardly captures the immense scope of critical stewardship work that the crew performs on our local landscape. This year our Stewardship Crew program employed 19 passionate, motivated, and skilled individuals throughout the 2022 crew season working on a myriad of stewardship projects.

The crew typically starts up their season in March with a couple weeks of training and then dives right into planting thousands of trees & shrubs for reforestation and riparian restoration efforts. While some of these planting projects are contracted directly with MARS, organizations like Underwood Conservation District partner with us to lean into our localized knowledge and diverse skill sets to bring projects full circle. For example, one year the crew might use their chainsaw capabilities to thin a stand of trees. That cut material is used to build Beaver Dam Analogs to retain water on the landscape longer into the summer season. The following year the crew will return to the site to plant native trees and shrubs to restore the riparian vegetation.

As the snow is melting from the upper elevations of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, the Stew Crew fires up their chainsaws to take on hazardous fuel reduction around homes on private lands in the South Mount Adams Landscape. This is called creating defensible space. The crew works with landowners, making plans to reduce fuel loading around their home. Reducing ladder fuels, removing unhealthy trees, and chipping or burning those materials makes the forest healthier and gives firefighters a much better chance of saving homes in the event of a wildfire.

While the crew is engaged in these projects, we also actively monitor fuel characteristics and weather forecasts to find opportunities for prescribed burning on our Mt. Adams Community Forest. Prescribed fire is one of the most important tools we have to improve forest health and reduce the effects of the many large catastrophic fires we have been increasingly experiencing over the last couple of decades.

As spring turns to summer, and some seasonal habitat restrictions are lifted, the Stewardship Crew moves into projects on state



Members of the 2022 MARS Stewardship Crew on Prescribed Burn.

and federal lands with partners like US Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and US Forest Service. These projects are primarily focused on ecological restoration, prescribed fire preparation, and hazardous fuels reduction, but can also include data collection, fence repair, and other technical work.

Every year around mid-July, large wildfires start popping up across the west. Available agency and private wildfire resources get scooped up, straining capacity. Restrictions on chainsaw use are employed to reduce risk. Because many projects we do require chainsaws, we change tack and continue stewardship work in the region through our partnerships with local contractors and fire departments by supporting fire suppression efforts. Currently there are limited avenues for nonprofits to directly support fire suppression efforts. We are seeking solutions to remedy that problem.

As soon as we can smell that first moisture that fall brings, another opportunity arises for prescribed burning on our community forest. While the fall rains are good for putting out large wildfires, it's challenging when conducting beneficial prescribed fires that reduce fuel loading for future summers.

One significant difference between wildfires and prescribed fires is the control one has when lighting them. The ability to choose time and conditions of burning, such as wind and moisture levels, helps alleviate fire behavior and smoke issues that are problematic in a wildfire.

The scope of work outlined below highlights a small portion of the work that the Stewardship Crew does in any given year.

2022 Stewardship Crew Projects:

20 Homeowner Wildfire Risk Assessments

600+ acres of prescribed burn prep

7500+ trees planted

Constructed 50+ in-stream Beaver Dam Analogs or Log structures

130 acres of Timber Stand Improvements

20+ acres of private landowner hazardous fuel reduction

45 acres of prescribed burning on Mt. Adams Community Forest

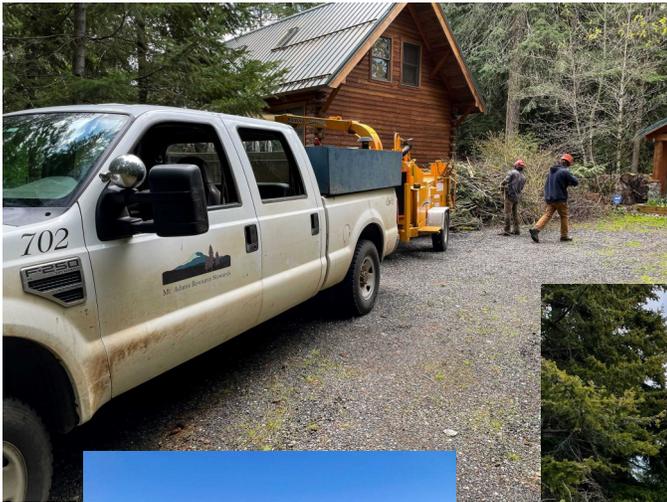
100+ acres supporting prescribed burning on partners land

40 acres of Oak Habitat Enhancement

Chipping work at 50 private landowners in Klickitat, Skamania, and Hood River County

15,000 feet of critical community fuel breaks

Stewardship Crew at Work



Bullfrog Team and Local Landowners Aid Prospects for Oregon Spotted Frogs

By Nate Byrd; Photo by Leslie Macias

The Glenwood valley is an ecologically unique and special place. It's a place of spectacular views, strong working traditions, and an incredibly rich ecosystem. Elk and deer graze the fields and roam in mixed conifer forests, innumerable ducks and geese forage across the seasonal wetlands of Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge, flying squirrels hide high in tree branches, and ranchers work the land in a tradition going back over 100 years. Hidden in all this beauty is one species that has called the valley its home for millennia, the Oregon spotted frog. This valley has historically held the largest and most genetically diverse population of Oregon spotted frogs in their entire range. Sadly, due to habitat loss and the introduction of invasive species, that range has dwindled, and populations have declined.

When these frogs were listed as a federally threatened species in 2014, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS) entered into an agreement with the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Glenwood valley ranchers to implement a coordinated resource management plan that would protect the frogs while protecting ranchers from regulatory burdens.

One major factor affecting Oregon spotted frogs is the American bullfrog. These bullfrogs are native to the eastern and southern United States, but not the Pacific Northwest. Where they exist outside their native range, they are voracious predators that pose significant threats to biodiversity and ecosystem health. They are listed in the top 100 most damaging invasive species on the planet by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Bullfrogs damage ecosystems in two main ways: competition and predation. They reproduce at astonishing rates (females can lay between 10,000 and 20,000 eggs) and quickly outnumber and outcompete other amphibians. With fewer predators and parasites outside their native range, their survival rates increase. Because they will eat anything they can fit their mouths around, they are incredibly destructive predators. Oregon spotted frogs, small rodents, birds, snakes, tree frogs, and many other species have been found in the stomachs of Glenwood valley bullfrogs. Since the bullfrogs were introduced to the Glenwood valley in the 1950s, they have outcompeted and preyed on Oregon spotted

frogs for decades.

In 2020, MARS expanded its partnership with USFWS to further protect the Oregon spotted frog population by creating the Bullfrog Removal Action Team (BRAT). This six-person crew of seasonal field technicians work towards one goal: protect the Oregon spotted frog by eradicating invasive bullfrogs from the Glenwood valley.

Due to the isolated nature of the Glenwood valley watershed, complete bullfrog eradication is possible. Successful eradication of bullfrogs is a win for everyone: increased Oregon spotted frog numbers will help the species itself but could also lead to the removal of its protected status, not to mention restoring natural ecosystem balance and increasing biodiversity!

MARS responded because we don't want threatened species to translate into threatened livelihoods, and we want to protect ecosystem health in the Glenwood valley.

Now, with the project wrapping up its third season, we've produced some notable results. The crew removed 18,951 bullfrogs in 2020, 38,203 in 2021, and over 13,500 in 2022. The 3-year total count is 70,600 bullfrogs removed in the project.

This year also marked a significant moment in Oregon spotted frog recovery. Each spring, egg mass surveys are conducted throughout the valley to estimate the spotted frog population. Egg mass numbers have declined by 88% in total since 2016, and roughly 40% annually since 2019. However, 2022 marked the first year since 2016 that the decline in egg masses halted (Figure 1). This season also saw a large increase in spotted frog observations in the field (Figure 2). Another exciting part of the 2022 season was seeing a greater diversity of amphibians throughout the valley. Our sightings of Northern red-legged frogs increased this year, and we even saw our first Cascade frog!

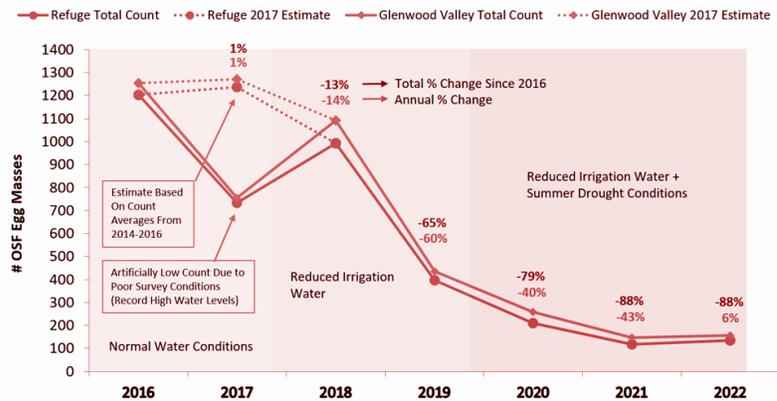
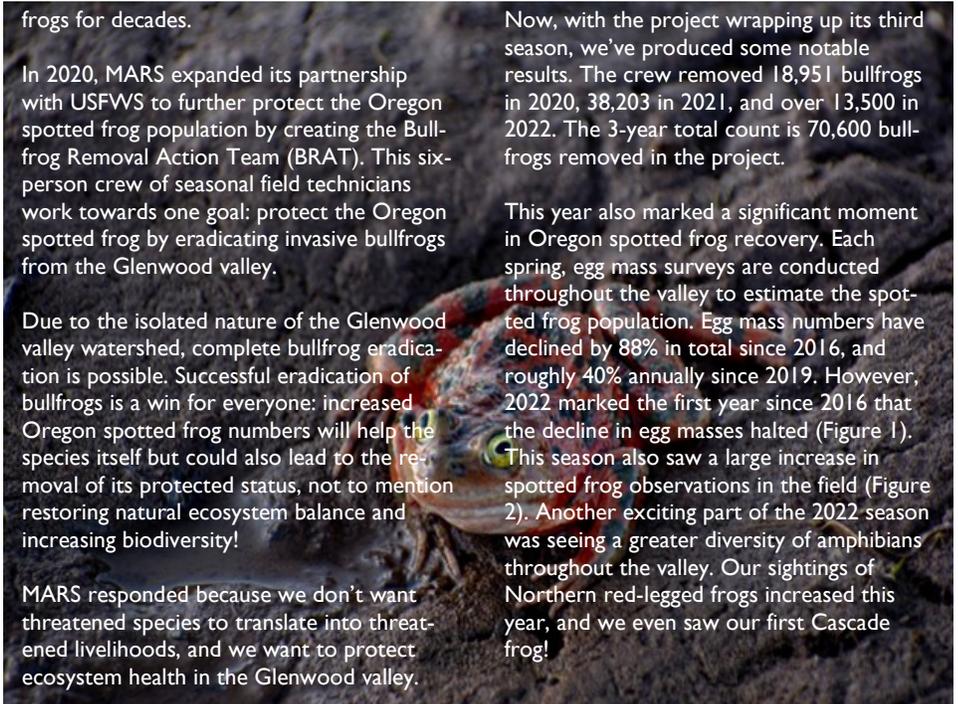


Figure 1. Graph showing Oregon spotted frog egg mass survey results since 2016. Note that bullfrog eradication work began in 2020. Credit: USFWS.

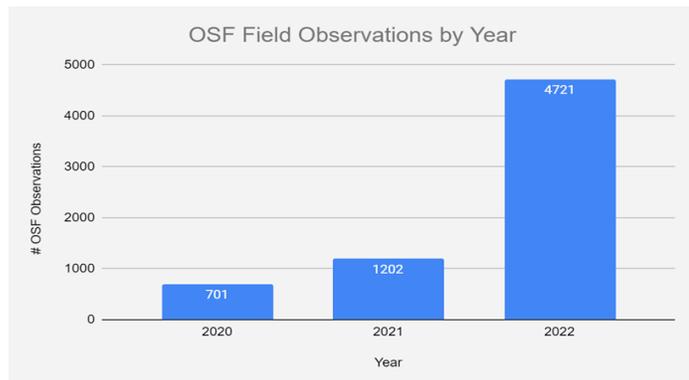


Figure 2. Graph showing the increase in spotted frog observations from the beginning of the project to present day, representing a 573.47% increase since 2020.

Fire Adapted Communities: Bringing People Together for Resilient Lands

By Sarah Allaben

Here in Mt. Adams country, everything starts to look like fuel in the dead, dry heat of late summer: densely-stocked conifers, bone-dry underbrush and leaf litter, houses, businesses, schools. This landscape evolved with fire, both human and lightning-ignited. But the risk of severe wildfires reaching our communities feels increasingly, eerily tangible in an era of climate change.

Luckily, there are data-driven actions we can take to live more resiliently in fire-prone ecosystems. Wildfire risk mitigation is often a “win-win-win” pursuit: it reduces the chance of damage to homes/infrastructure, promotes the health of forests left overcrowded from a century of fire suppression, and boosts rural economies with contract work opportunities. The real challenge is bringing together the myriad people that live, work, and play in this region, and in arming them with the knowledge and funding necessary to carry out mitigation work. Enter MARS and my new position as Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator.

After completing an AmeriCorps term helping rural Oregon communities impacted by the 2020 Labor Day fires, I joined the MARS team in August. Let me tell you—if you ever move to a new area

and want simultaneous crash courses in local ecology, geography & land ownership, community dynamics, and regional partnerships, look for a job in wildfire mitigation. This work inherently requires the “all hands, all lands” approach that MARS champions.

Among the hands & lands we’ve engaged this year: over 40 Trout Lake and Glenwood residents, who received property assessments to identify individualized wildfire risk factors in the critical “home ignition zone.” We have also worked closely with the Fire Adapted Community Trout Lake (FACT) volunteer group to coordinate and secure funding for educational programming and community-wide slash disposal services.

On a broader scale, MARS led a regional effort to apply to the US Forest Service’s new Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) program, collaborating with Underwood Conservation District, numerous private and industrial landowners, and other entities to propose priority hazardous fuels reduction work throughout western Klickitat County. MARS also assisted Yakama Nation in submitting their own application for complementary fuels work within Tract D of the Yakama Reservation. CWDG represents one of several recent large federal investments in wildfire mitigation, and MARS intends to continue engaging with the program

through subsequent funding cycles over the next 4 years. As of this writing, notification of grant award status has not been announced. We’ll keep you posted.

In addition, MARS remains an active member of the Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, connecting with other mitigation practitioners across the state to share resources and best practices. MARS has particularly arisen as a leader in prescribed fire implementation. Coordinating with state and regional partners, we are exploring possibilities to support prescribed fire workforce and skills development to establish “good fire” as a safe and effective wildfire mitigation tool on public and private lands alike.

In a highly fragmented landscape of ownership and management, the risk of severe wildfire in the Mt. Adams region is a reminder that our rural communities and surrounding public and private forestlands are still inextricably connected. Wildfire doesn’t abide by property lines, nor will it be sufficiently addressed by patchwork, postage stamp treatments on a vast landscape. What’s truly needed is a cross-boundary effort that spans from residents’ front doors to the remote acres of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Easier said than done, of course. But MARS is well-positioned to be the local, on-the-ground organizer that pulls these people and efforts together.



MARS partnered with FACT (Fire Adapted Community of Trout Lake) to bring a chainsaw training course for local residents with the hope that they will safely put skills to use creating defensible space around homes to reduce the threat of wildfire (photo by Lucas King).



MARS Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator, Sarah Allaben (center), assessing conditions during a test fire preceding a prescribed burn on the Mt. Adams Community Forest. Carefully managed controlled burns such as this are one of several tools to make our communities safer from wildfire (photo by David Ryan).

Monitoring on MARS

By David Ryan

In spring of 2022, MARS hired David Ryan as the new Monitoring and Outreach Coordinator. Building on the work of the previous coordinator, the monitoring program has prioritized two areas of interest, forest fuels monitoring and forest inventory. In addition to these focal points, we continue to monitor project level work on a case-by-case basis with appropriate protocols.

Top priority monitoring highlights of this past year include:

Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) -We are very excited to have received support from the Alice C. Tyler Perpetual Trust to grow our CFI program. This program establishes permanent plots across all the Mt. Adams Community Forest (MACF), it will also expand our use of drones as an important monitoring tool. Upon complete installation of the CFI, MARS will have one of the most robust forest monitoring programs in the region. As part of the adaptive management process, this monitoring is important to help us track changes over time and ensure that we continue to learn and manage our forests responsibly and in accordance with our goals.

Prescribed (Rx) Fire - MARS continues to spearhead Rx fire in the region as one management tool to ensure healthy forests and healthy communities. Monitoring of pre-burn and post-burn conditions expands our knowledge of the effects and effectiveness of Rx fire and allows us to share our learning and help others understand and implement Rx fire treatments. One example from our Pine Flats parcel showed approximately a 60% reduction in fuel loading following a prescribed burn conducted there in spring of 2022 (see figures below).



Photo by Ellis Baril

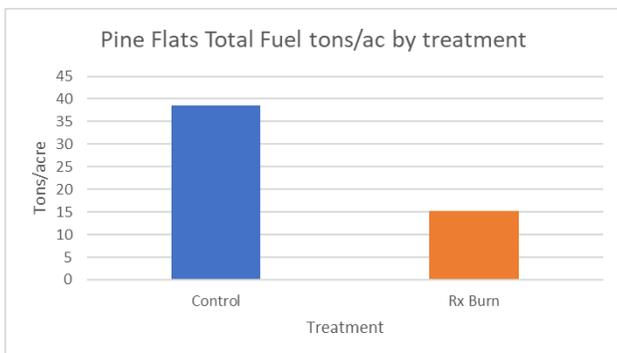
Other highlights from our Monitoring and Outreach program include:

Beavers! - MARS participates with the Wishpush Working Group. This effort recognizes the benefits and challenges of beavers on the landscape. The group works on education and outreach regarding beavers and how to live with them. We are also developing a local beaver relocation program to help alleviate issues with “nuisance” beavers by safely trapping them and relocating them where their ecological benefits are wanted.

Conboy Lake NWR – MARS continues to partner with the Conboy Lake NWR. Monitoring forest conditions, snow pack, and other project level conditions.

Projects, projects, projects – MARS partners with several stakeholders and landowners in the region on a wide variety of projects including fuel breaks, chipping, and ecosystem restoration projects such as beaver dam analogs (BDA), Oregon white oak restoration, and invasive species removal. MARS monitoring supports these at a project-by-project level as needed.

Control Total Loading	
38.53	tons/ac
Rx Burn Total Loading	
15.2215	tons/ac
tot. load difference	23.3085
Tot. load % change	60.5





Mt. Adams Resource Stewards

Camp Draper

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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 could not do the work we do without the partnerships and tremendous support from a variety of agencies, foundations, corporations and individuals. Thank you to all for their investment in locally led land stewardship that maintains and enhances our quality of life in the Mt. Adams region and beyond!

