



TREMBLINGS

NEWSLETTER & BULLETIN BOARD

Vol. 10(2), May 2019

Partnering to preserve and restore healthy aspen ecosystems

MEMBER PARTICIPATION: The WAA is a science-based virtual community. Send us items of interest and we'll help spread the word. Contact Paul Rogers, Director: p.rogers@usu.edu.

Share *Tremblings* with your friends and colleagues.

New members welcome!

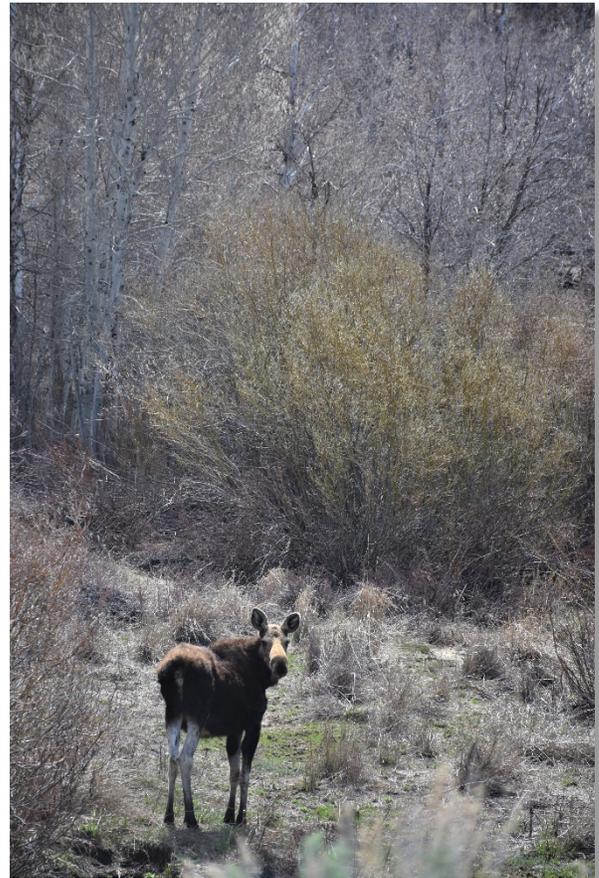
planning future endeavors with key players (agencies, private landowners, and NGOs) over the coming year. Contact [Emily Harkness](#), Heart of the Rockies coordinator, if you have interest in participating.

WAA HAPPENINGS

UTopia TV Airs Pando Documentary—A new twelve-minute documentary was aired April 7 on Salt Lake City's *UTopia* program (KJZZ). The episode chronicles the current situation at the Pando aspen clone in Utah, including die-off, herbivory, monitoring to date, and restoration actions planned. The producers did a nice job showing off the beautiful landscapes around and within Pando. You may view the show in its entirety at [UTopia TV](#).

How's WAA's Donation Program Going? Just over one year ago the WAA started an [online Donation](#) program to garner funds for administration, monitoring, outreach, and partnerships. The WAA receives no funding from Utah State University, but does get office space and some support. In the first year we have raised \$4,780 total, with the average donation being \$115, though we have several for \$5 and a high of \$840. Donors may be anonymous, individual, and institutional. Only give if you are willing and able, and at a comfortable level for you. Thanks to all who have contributed and to those considering a donation!

Aspen Featured at High Divide Collaborative—An April 24-25 meeting in Idaho Falls of the [High Divide Collaborative](#) showcased aspen issues and a new aspen subgroup within the collaborative. This region, a huge area ranging from Yellowstone to the Northern Rockies and central Idaho through southwest Montana, comprises a key ecosystem linkage in the western United States. The aspen subgroup is



A young moose utilizes a willow-aspen riparian corridor near Arco, Idaho. A mother and calf moose were spotted bedding down in a nearby upland narrow patch of aspen in a sage-steppe dominated landscape. Whether watered or not, aspen provide critical habitat for a wide range of wildlife on a daily basis (Photo: Paul C. Rogers.).

Send Your Flashy Photos—We'd like to post your best aspen photos on the [WAA Facebook](#) site. [Send us](#) pictures that are artistic, unique, ridiculous, or sublime.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Camping Cleanup at the Clone—We're dawning our gloves, packing our tents, and going to work at Pando May 23-25. [Pando Populus](#) and the WAA will team-up with volunteers and the USFS to repair fence, haul out trash, build trails, and enjoy the awesome scenery and each other's company. RSVP to WAA Director [Paul Rogers](#), if interested. A description of the event is found [here](#).

NAFEW Comes to Flagstaff—The [12th North American Forest Ecology Workshop](#) will be held in Flagstaff, AZ June 23-27, 2019 and the WAA will be there with our traveling exhibition table! This biennial conference features the practical intersection between research, management, and restoration across the continent. Featured topics will include wildlife, climate change, disturbance ecology, social science/forest policy, and forestry applications.

Idaho Aspen Grove Dedication—The city of Salmon, Idaho will hold a dedication ceremony on July 23 at the Sacajawea Interpretive and Educational Center. Salmon High School senior Kelsey Stansberry took the lead on designing interpretive materials for this project with input from [Salmon Valley Stewardship](#) and the WAA. Information signs celebrate aspen forests, as well as describe their ecological value to communities. Nice work Kelsey; nice work Salmon, Idaho!

Aspen Workshops 2019—

- **Utah** June 19-20: Summit County aspen workshop will examine aspen issues and science at the borderlands between public and private land. Preliminary planning is underway. The group will be visiting private and public forests near Kamas and Coalville, UT. For details, contact [Dusty Morgan](#), Utah State University Extension Specialist.
- **Nevada** July 16-18: Camp Success, near Ely, NV. We will specifically address issues related to Great Basin aspen ecology with an emphasis on climate, fire, pathogens, and herbivory. We anticipate participation from USFS, BLM,

NRCS, USGS, NPS, state wildlife, state forestry, NGOs, and citizens. **The waiting list for this training is full.**

- **Wyoming-South Dakota** Sept 17-19: Deadwood, SD. The 8th annual Aspen Days will move to the Black Hills region, with Wyoming and South Dakota sharing the program. Contact [Shelly Deisch](#), South Dakota Game, Fish, & Parks for further information. The event is co-sponsored by Wyoming Game & Fish and the WAA.
- **Other Aspen Events in Your Area?** Contact the [WAA Director](#) and let us know your plans.

COMMENTARY

Minnesota Aspen Through A Westerner's Eyes

Lars C. Snyder, Instructor Naturalist, Camp Widjiwagan, Ely, Minnesota



Aspen of the Upper Midwest, growing amongst a large array of deciduous hardwoods such as birches, oaks, hazelnuts and maples, provide an example of stunning resilience. In Ely, Minnesota, gateway to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, there are over a million acres of wilderness along the Canadian-U.S. border. One only finds glimpses of the aspen stands, however. These 80-foot tall trees are stunning examples of how quickly an area that has historically been fire-deprived and heavily logged can regenerate into beautiful and diverse ecosystems. Aspen regeneration was primarily caused by fire until the mid-to-late 1800's. These aspen grew so fast and so thick they were actively logged and replaced with pine. The idea seemed great even by today's logic; the old growth had been taken and it only seemed right to replace it with the more valuable trees. In February 2019, I moved to Ely. I expected the abundance of water and long winters to support healthy aspen stands. I found that the aspen here actually suffer a great deal. When I asked those I met about the species and its sudden die off, the common response was



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aspen don't belong here in large numbers. However, as part of a U.S. Forest Service's attempt to regenerate aspen, an agency fire engine captain told me they are having more trouble re-generating aspen after burns than they once did. Rather than aspen, red maple and oaks have become the dominant pioneer species.

I have called many places home from New Mexico to Alaska. Where I did not live, I was lucky enough to visit while fighting fire with the Forest Service. Right or wrong, my thinking naturally reverts to efforts I saw folks use to manage the aspen in the West. Best management practices such as fencing off ungulates, when possible, as well as burning some areas where conifers are increasing in dominance over aspen seem like good places to start. But, my current home is not the West. When I walk out the door of my cabin, which sits on a south-facing slope on Burntside Lake I see the towering mature aspen with black bark almost to the crowns and rotted trunks that weaken the aspen to the point of being regularly wind-felled. This striking die off, accompanied with advancing conifer succession and heavy ungulate browsing, leads to an overall pattern supporting a trajectory of dwindling aspen cover and commensurate decreased biodiversity.

The Superior National Forest is temporarily my new back yard and I would like to share my love of the aspen with forest visitors. Even though modern-day aspen are faced with hurdles, the Upper Midwest setting may serve as migratory refugia for aspen under a changing climate. Further management, research, and communication with the public must be done to effectively revive the regions populations or they will likely continue to follow the current pathway of loss.

WAA Creates

"WAA Creates" showcases artistic aspen-related contributions. We encourage fiction, folklore, poetry, drawings, paintings, photography, and other artistic expressions. [Send your stuff](#) to share with WAA readers.

P.T.'s Prophecy

Dawn light
Forest crests ridge
Sun ray parting
Doe lifts her gaze
New day ablaze

Air taunts leaf, leaves
A tremble, a quake
Forest flickers to life
Dapple gang blitz
Ballroom blooms lit

Swaying smilacina
Penstemon promenade
Breezes ignite
Gallery's floor
Understory encore

Midday comes, stuns
High noon bedding
Insect masses
Parade beneath
Ex twittering leaf

Roots grope at daylight
Meadow recoils
"A sucker born every minute"
Subterranean reach
Forest edge breach

Dusk draws in
Quivering tapers
Campfire voices
Dim with night
Pale boles hold fast the light

Paul C. Rogers
Logan, Utah

Rogers is the Director of the Western Aspen Alliance and occasional poetic pretender.



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RECENT ASPEN PUBLICATIONS

- Bishop, M., T. J. Furniss, K. E. Mock, and J. A. Lutz. 2019. Genetic and spatial structuring of *Populus tremuloides* in a mixed-species forest of southwestern Utah, USA. *Western North American Naturalist* 79:63-71.
- Bretfeld, M., S. B. Franklin, and R. K. Peet. 2019. Long-term understory vegetation dynamics of mixed aspen forests in Rocky Mountain National Park, USA. *Journal of Vegetation Science*.
- Clement, M. J., L. E. Harding, R. W. Lucas, and E. S. Rubin. 2019. The relative importance of biotic and abiotic factors influencing aspen recruitment in Arizona. *Forest Ecology and Management* 441:32-41.
- Hart, S. J., J. Henkelman, P. D. McLoughlin, S. E. Nielsen, A. Truchon-Savard, and J. F. Johnstone. 2019. Examining forest resilience to changing fire frequency in a fire-prone region of boreal forest. *Global change biology* 25:869-884.
- Jarolimek, J., and K. Vierling. 2019. Thermal environments within aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) tree cavities during summer: Implications for breeding and roosting cavity users. *Journal of Thermal Biology* 81:41-48.
- Jean, S. A., B. D. Pinno, and S. E. Nielsen. 2019. Trembling aspen root suckering and stump sprouting response to above ground disturbance on a reclaimed boreal oil sands site in Alberta, Canada. *New Forests*:1-14.
- Johnson, L. B., and E. Q. Margolis. 2019. Surface Fire to Crown Fire: Fire History in the Taos Valley Watersheds, New Mexico, USA. *Fire* 2:14.
- Kweon, D., and P. G. Comeau. 2019. Relationships between tree survival, stand structure and age in trembling aspen dominated stands. *Forest Ecology and Management* 438:114-122.
- Long, C. J., J. J. Shinker, T. A. Minckley, M. J. Power, and P. J. Bartlein. 2019. A 7600 yr vegetation and fire history from Anthony Lake, northeastern Oregon, USA, with linkages to modern synoptic climate patterns. *Quaternary Research*:1-9.
- Rhodes, A. C., C. Fitch, and S. B. S. Clair. 2019. Ungulate Herbivory Is Correlated with High Aspen Suckering Density but Reductions in Aspen Growth Rates and Recruitment. *Rangeland Ecology & Management*.
- Sealey, L. L., B. Y. Amichev, and K. C. Van Rees. 2019. Quantifying Cumulative Effects of Harvesting on Aspen Regeneration through Fuzzy Logic Suitability Mapping. *Soil Science Society of America Journal*.
- Sealey, L. L., and K. C. Van Rees. 2019. Influence of skidder traffic on soil bulk density, aspen regeneration, and vegetation indices following winter harvesting in the Duck Mountain Provincial Park, SK. *Forest Ecology and Management* 437:59-69.
- Walsh, E. S., K. T. Vierling, E. Strand, K. Bartowitz, and T. W. Hudiburg. 2019. Climate change, woodpeckers, and forests: Current trends and future modeling needs. *Ecology and Evolution* 9:2305-2319.
- Weninger, A., T. Hollingsworth, and D. Wagner. 2019. Predatory hymenopteran assemblages in boreal Alaska: associations with forest composition and post-fire succession. *Écoscience*:1-16.
- White, A. M., and J. W. Long. 2019. Understanding ecological contexts for active reforestation following wildfires. *New Forests*:1-16.

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