

Partnering to preserve and restore healthy aspen ecosystems

MEMBER PARTICIPATION: The WAA is a virtual science-based community. Send us aspen-related publications, management plans, and media mentions 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! [Sign up here](#)

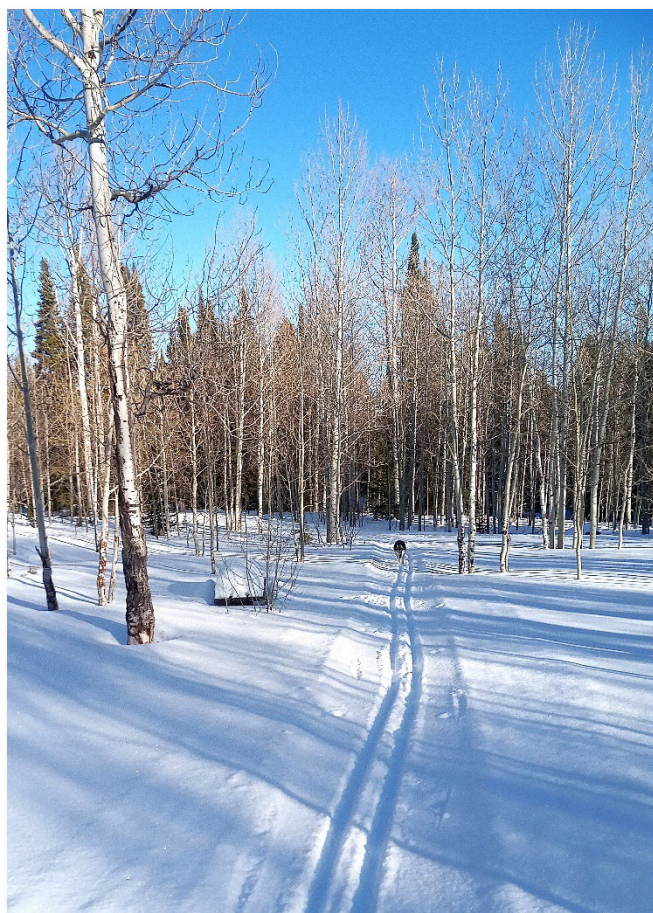
WAA HAPPENINGS

2025, Last Year for the WAA?—We're reaching out to the entire WAA community to help us with a 'big lift' in 2025. Director Paul Rogers, will be retiring at the end of this year and the future of our mission is very much in question. In the remaining 11 months, however, Rogers and USU's Quinney College of Natural Resources will be investing maximum effort into identifying potential funding sources—particularly philanthropic entities, though all options will be explored—to power the next phase of the WAA. If you value accessible aspen conservation science and have ideas about how we can achieve this lofty goal, please contact [Paul Rogers](#) with your suggestions.

Gratitude for Federal Partners—The WAA has collaborated with state and federal government agencies since our inception. Many of our state cooperators are fueled by federal dollars. Through these partnerships our mission has also benefitted from federal research grants. We appreciate the services you provide, as well as your top-notch expertise. Thank you, BLM, NPS, NRCS, USFS, USFWS, and USGS professionals for your contributions to sustainable aspen ecosystems!

Scottish Aspen, Stressed to Seeding—A [recent article](#) in *The Guardian* chronicles the great pains conservationists will take to get aspen to produce seed. In the United Kingdom aspen are so uncommon that cross pollination is rare. So, protected "torture chambers"—clipping, freezing, bole scarring, limiting nutrients and water, etc.—are set up to stimulate the fertility process.

Seed collection, greenhouse planting, and (ideally) colonization of remote landscapes are the ultimate objectives. Like many locations globally, an overabundance of domestic and wild ungulates have taken their toll on aspen stands at-large in Scotland.



Two tracks and a canine companion traverse a beautiful January afternoon through quaking aspen high in the Bear River Range of northern Utah. Past research suggests that aspen stands accumulate more snow and retain it later into the spring than conifers due to the lack of crown interception and high reflectivity of the exposed snow surface. That may be true, but we enjoy the fresh air, light powder, and brilliant blue skies, too! (Photo: Paul Rogers)

New Clues On Pando's Age—A team of scientists are zeroing in on giving Pando an age estimate using somatic mutations within the genetic code. While numerous questions remain, and the age range is quite wide (at least to the human eye), an article in [Nature magazine](#) suggest that Pando is from 16,000-80,000 years old. This research has further ramifications for understanding within (giant) organism evolutionary history.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Quaking Aspen Seminar, Boise State University: WAA Director, Paul Rogers, will be presenting “What’s Up With Western Quaking Aspen?” Feb. 26 at 12:00 p.m. MST. If you’re in the area, drop by for the HES/MEM seminar series in Micron Engineering Center 114. Otherwise, attend via [video conference here](#) (passcode HES-MEM). It would be great to see our WAA membership represented!

‘Watershed Moment’ Events (update): This important contemporary look at place-based issues and solutions centered on the theme of recognizing limits facing the American West. Here are the known event dates in the coming months: Jackson Hole History Museum, Jackson, WY Feb. 27, 2025; Utah State University, Logan, UT Feb. 28; Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute Conference, Denver, CO March 6-7; and Community Library, Sedona, AZ, April 19. Additional book release events are anticipated in Tempe, AZ, Durango, CO, Moab, UT, Boise, ID, and Cody, WY. Check with your local bookseller or consider scheduling an event in your area. Additional information can be found at: <https://awatershedmoment.com/>.

Summer 2025 Aspen Workshops: There are no aspen workshops currently scheduled for 2025. This may be your last chance, so let’s set something up! Please contact [WAA Director](#) Paul Rogers about potential workshops.

COMMENTARY

Bridging Conservation Science with Native Meaning

James Calabaza. Indigenous Lands Director; Trees, Water & People



Last fall, I had the privilege of collaborating with the Western Aspen Alliance and other partners to carry out a 3-day workshop focused on quaking aspen genetics, fire ecology, and co-stewardship. Held at Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory (Gothic, Colorado), the workshop brought together academics, NGOs, federal agencies, and Tribal members to share diverse perspectives on aspen’s significance and management futures.

As the director of the Indigenous Lands Program at Trees, Water, and People (TWP), I found the workshop to be a great model of how Western sciences, Indigenous cultural perspectives, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) can be used in collaboration. I am from Kewa Pueblo, New Mexico, where we have strong cultural ties to the aspen that grow in high-altitude landscapes of north-central New Mexico. The Western scientific perspective on the ecological role of aspen, though, was newer to me, as I’ve primarily worked with mixed conifer species. I came away from the workshop with a much deeper understanding of aspen’s relationship to fire, its genetics, and ongoing challenges amidst climate change. Though there is still a lot of work to be done around aspen management and learning, I’m encouraged by the depth and breadth of research addressing this key species.

As much as the Western scientific perspective and research deepened my understanding, alongside other Tribal attendees, I believe our sharing of Indigenous cultural knowledge grounded participants in aspen’s broader significance. We opened the event, held upon the ancestral lands of the Ute people, with a prayer from a Ute Mountain Ute Tribe member, reminding us of critical cultural and historical context. My colleague, Michael Martinez, also shared his experience growing up in the Jicarilla Apache Tribe and Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, where aspen play a crucial role in cultural events and

ceremonies. For us, conserving aspen is not only about quantitative metrics and scientific understanding; it's about cultural practices of Native peoples across the continent who've coexisted with aspen for millennia.

One Tribal partner shared a perspective that speaks to so many of these connections. He said "aspens are like us, as Natives. A lot of people didn't want aspens, didn't see value in aspens, and just like us, they were pushed out of the landscape or neglected as a primary species to retain in forest systems." The 20th century witnessed normalization of fire suppression, facilitating of fuels build-ups which sharply contrast with Native aspen (and forest!) practices where active burning fostered rejuvenation and diversity. In a time where Indigenous communities are stewarding ancestral lands and exercising their sovereignty, quaking aspen are coming back too. Aspen are showing us their inherent fire resilience, playing a key role in the landscape, as we show our own resilience as peoples.

We closed the event with a ceremony amidst the breathtaking mountain views of Gothic, reflecting on the nexus between Western scientific research and Native cultural practices. Each attendee spoke with an aspen branch in hand, offering prayers, encouragement, words of knowledge, thought, and action toward future co-stewardship of the species. And together, we threw that branch into a communal fire, watching the aspen—and our words—return to the earth.

WAA Creates

"WAA Creates" requests diverse aspen-related art from across our membership. We encourage fiction, folklore, poetry, drawings, paintings, photography, and other artistic expressions. [Send your stuff](#) to Tremblings.

untitled

(oil on canvas)



Kati Gyulassy
Park City, Utah

From the artist: *Beneath the soft layers of snow is a quickening in the belly of the soil, pregnant with a promise of change, movement, life. Tender but resilient, unseen but emerging, veiled in greys, blues, and browns, it comes from beneath.*

See more of Kati Gyulassy's work at [KG Fine Art](#).



TREMBLINGS

NEWSLETTER & BULLETIN BOARD

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RECENT ASPEN PUBLICATIONS

A word on Open Access: The Western Aspen Alliance strongly supports open access publishing (CC-BY). Articles with hyperlinks below are available for download and sharing following [Creative Commons](#) rules for attribution.

Belyaev, T. A., Z. Y. Nagimov, I. V. Shevelina, K. B. Abishev, and A. V. Demidova. 2024. Variability of the taxation indicators of aspen trees on the trial areas of the state forest inventory in the conditions of the Perm region. Forests of Russia and economy in them 3:36-42.

Cardoso, J. C., L. Wu, M. Schneider, and C. A. Nock. 2025. Tree rings reveal mixtures of aspen and spruce exhibit greater drought resilience in a planted field experiment. Forest Ecology and Management 578:122461.

Cotterill, G. G., P. C. Cross, E. K. Cole, J. D. Cook, M. C. Meeachran, and T. A. Graves. 2025. Evaluating elk distribution and conflict under proposed management alternatives at the National Elk Refuge in Jackson, Wyoming. Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, U.S. Geological Survey. [SIR 2024-5119-C](#).

Han, L., J. J. Camarero, G. Jia, Z. Zhang, and L. Chen. 2025. Drought resilience and legacy effects in two forest tree species on Loess Plateau of China: Growth and water-use efficiency under different drought conditions. Forest Ecosystems: [100297](#).

Kohl, M. T., C. P. Sandford, P. C. Rogers, R. Chi, T. A. Messmer, and D. K. Dahlgren. 2024. Function over form: The benefits of aspen as surrogate brood-rearing habitat for greater sage-grouse. Ecosphere [15:e70060](#).

Legrais, O. E. G., P. Blanchet, C. Boudaud, A. Cogulet, and J. V. F. Silva. 2025. Assessment of Populus tremuloides (Michx) mechanical characteristics for glulam production. Materials and Structures [58:51](#).

Nesbit, K. A., L. Yocom, A. M. Trudgeon, P. C. Rogers, D. J. McAvoy, E. Lane, and R. J. DeRose. 2025. Stand composition and development stage affect fuel characteristics of quaking aspen forests in Utah, USA. Canadian Journal of Forest Research [55:1-13](#).

Robles, D., Y. Boulanger, J. Pascual, V. Danneyrolles, Y. Bergeron, and I. Drobyshev. 2025. Timber harvesting was the most important factor driving changes in vegetation composition, as compared to climate and fire regime shifts, in the mixedwood temperate forests of Temiscamingue since AD 1830. Landscape Ecology [40:26](#).

Rogers, P. C., G. Corkery, and A. B. Miller. 2024. Condition and Management Futures in a Quaking Aspen Recreation Area. Final Report to Snyderville Basin Special Recreation

District. Western Aspen Alliance, Logan, Utah. [\[Project Report\] 24 pp.](#)

Shafeian, E., B. J. Mood, K. W. Belcher, and C. P. Laroque. 2025. Assessing spatial distribution and quantification of native trees in Saskatchewan’s prairie landscape using remote sensing techniques. European Journal of Remote Sensing [58:2438638](#).

Stoddard, M. T., K. C. Rodman, C. D. Crouch, D. W. Huffman, P. Z. Fulé, K. M. Waring, and M. M. Moore. 2024. Multi-decadal aspen dynamics show recruitment bottleneck across complex mountain community. Forest Ecology and Management 572:122326.

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