



## NEWS FROM THE RIDGE



### Rolling Ridge Conservancy Announces Timber Harvest

After over five years of discernment and searching, a contract has been signed and timber harvesting work has begun with Conservation Forests, LLC. This process began many years ago as we saw a forest that, even in its beauty, is struggling to grow and maintain a diversity of native plants. **By implementing honorable harvesting practices through selective cutting, we hope to allow the healthiest trees left standing to have more space in the canopy for growth, while offering sunlight to the forest floor for a new generation of saplings and improved wildlife habitat.** We have been seeking a logging company that would work with our ethic of prioritizing long term, sustainable forest health and regeneration while respecting both the gift of wood and the woods in balanced measure.

Conservation Forests was identified and recommended by our previous land steward, Jeff Feaga, and we have spent much of the last year getting to know them better. Wyatt and Ash Latimer, the owners of Conservation Forests, are in the business to shift the paradigm in logging from one of extraction, to one of stewardship for now and years to come. **The Conservation Forests long-term contract demonstrates a commitment to take the "seventh generation" view of forest health and improvement, observing the responsiveness of the woods to change; and minimizing the extractive impulse seen in short one-off harvests.** They also employ the use of large Finnish harvesting machines that minimize compaction, skidding, and the need for logging trails into the forest. In visits to harvests they have conducted on other sites, we were impressed to see regeneration in the tracks left by the machine – within three years leaving little to no evidence that a path had been made. [Here is a link](#) to an article with a description of the Conservation Forests approach, with a short video showing their harvester in action. **In their work we see promise for a future forest of stronger resilience and diversity in age, species, and habitat.**

This process will be ongoing, primarily during the months from November to the end of March. Each harvest plan for a forest

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stand proposed by Conservation Forests will be done in compliance with the recommendations in our Forest Stewardship Plan. Each harvest plan will also be subject to approval by the Conservancy.

We do not take the cutting of trees lightly – we know the heart-wrenching sadness at seeing trucks pulling away heavy with logs of poplar, maple, oak, and pine. **We live in a relationship with this land and kinship with all her beings and so we take our responsibilities for stewardship and reciprocity with a great deal of mindfulness, humility, and commitment.** As we observe these changes and see how the forest responds, we remain hopeful that this process will also open possibilities for restoration and regeneration into the future.



*Our trail system will have closures to ensure safety as timber harvest work is in process. Initially all trails sections north of Mission Road and Friends Trail will be closed to hiking and biking. In addition to ropes and signage on the physical trails, updated information and maps will be posted on the [RRC website](http://www.rollingridgeconservancy.org) throughout this project. Please respect the closures as they are for everyone's safety. If you have any questions, please contact our land steward at [luke@rollingridgeconservancy.org](mailto:luke@rollingridgeconservancy.org).*



## Lenses

An old mentor once recommended that I practice wearing the lenses of countless perspectives while out in the woods; and where I don't understand - wonder. One day take on the lens of a hunter and focus on the clues in the woods to track and map the movements of your prey. The next day imagine you are a possum on the search for something to nibble and wonder what it will be. I have been at this practice for some time and have taken on many perspectives...child, forager, basket maker, turkey, dog, ant - the list goes on and on.

These days as I'm walking the streams, the recent timber cut, and the trails I continue seeing new things in the forest. The timber cut you've read about here is creating more possibilities. I must acknowledge the challenge it has been to see this go forward and alter a landscape I have known in a particular way for some time. But here I have opportunities to continue to put on lenses and see what an already transforming landscape looks like with these larger changes. The lenses of a hawk or bat in an opened canopy. The perspective of an acorn with sunlight in its view. Mycelium spores with a forest floor full of debris. Hikers revisiting an old favorite trail to find it transformed. The view of all those trees and their dependents sacrificed in the cut.

The more lenses I take on the more complex the picture, becomes - sometimes enlivening, sometimes full of sorrow. It's a practice I find enriching that seems to widen both my understanding and connection with the world around me, in ways that acknowledge painful truths and still inspire.

~ Luke Bauer, Land Steward