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TREE FARM BULLETIN

Greetings;

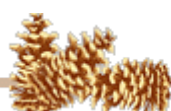
The legislature has been in session in Santa Fe as always this time of year. There doesn't seem to be anything of particular interest to Tree Farmers that is being discussed. This is a short session year where only bills pertaining to budget issues are supposed to be introduced which results in fewer bills being introduced that impact forestry directly.

The 2012 Farm Bill is still being considered in Washington D.C. so there is a lot of uncertainty on how various cost share programs that are used by Tree Farmers will fare. Virtually all cost share money used by forest landowners flows from the federal government and most of those dollars are allocated through the Farm Bill which comes up every four years.

The 2008 Farm Bill eliminated the stewardship program which had provided cost share funds to forest landowners through New Mexico State Forestry and gave extra dollars to Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) a program of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) an arm of the United States Department of Agriculture. There was a stipulation that a certain percentage of EQIP dollars were to be spent on forestry projects. Historically EQIP has been used by agricultural producers to fund projects and forest landowners have often been left out in the past. I do know of several forestry projects being funded with EQIP dollars now and of Tree Farmers who work with their local NRCS office to fund projects.

The 2012 Farm Bill may continue this shift of cost share funds to EQIP so every Tree Farmer considering a project that is eligible for cost share dollars should visit with their local NRCS office to see what is available (www.nrcs.usda.gov). Cost share funds can go a long way to improving your forest but the whole process can be time consuming since you are dealing with a bureaucracy. Improving your woods is a big motivator to help you navigate the process.

Harry A. Morrison, Vice Chairman, NM Tree Farm Committee



Message from the Chairman: We are planning a mini field day in the same format as the one scheduled and cancelled last year; discussion of the Tree Farm Program, tour Gene Harling's Tree Farm in the Bernalillo District, lunch and have a chainsaw operation and safety class. We are looking at the last week in May or the first week in June, on a Saturday. I look forward to seeing a great representation from the Bernalillo District tree farmers and as many as possible outside that area. If you have any suggestions on the best day of the week and topics please send them to me.

