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TREE FARM BULLETIN

CAN YOU HELP A STRUGGLING WOOD INDUSTRY?

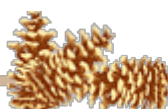
Laura McCarthy, State Forester of New Mexico

The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's Forestry Division is working closely with local, state and federal partners to offer alternatives for New Mexicans impacted by a September 2019 federal court ruling halting timber management actions on the five National Forests in our state. The injunction affects timber sales, fuels reduction and most other vegetation management projects in forests types that are habitat for the Mexican spotted owl.

The timing of the injunction was unfortunate, as it hit at the exact time that local sawmills and other wood products businesses were starting to stockpile wood to support their operations through winter and spring. These businesses are mostly family and locally owned and provide an estimated 250 jobs in rural communities where unemployment is significantly higher than the state average. September is also firewood gathering time and commercial firewood businesses were especially hard hit when their plans to gather wood on National Forest were impeded. Firewood operations are typically small-scale and provide supplemental income in areas with high unemployment, as well as generate affordable firewood for elderly and disabled residents. Finally, contractors who operate thinning hand crews or machinery are also affected by the injunction. Several dozen contractors were working on National Forest and the cessation of those projects bring the total estimate to more than 400 jobs affected.

New Mexico's sawmills and other businesses and forest contractors may not make it through the shutdown. If they stop operations, employees will find other work and it will be hard, if not impossible, to start again when the injunction is lifted. These potentially severe impacts of the injunction on rural residents prompted the Forestry Division to seek alternative wood supplies for sawmills and firewood users and to find state and private land projects for contractors with crews and machinery.

Owners of private forest land can also help. Private landowners can support rural jobs and the state's local wood-using businesses by contracting with these local businesses if the landowner is interested in harvesting commercial wood products on their lands. In addition to helping industry make it through the shutdown, the benefits to private landowners would include reducing the wildland fire threat by removing hazardous fuels and potentially generating income from their forest products. The Forestry



Division issues harvest permits for harvests on private lands and requires compliance with its rules for best management practices to prevent forest fires, control forest pests, mitigate erosion, and maintain and enhance forest health.

The sale of commercial timber species is conducted through negotiation between the private landowner and the local sawmill or contract operator who will purchase the product. The landowner is required to file an application for a harvest permit at their local Forestry Division District Office and the harvest must comply with the Forestry Division's rules governing commercial timber harvests. The permit application includes the owner's name, legal description of the land where harvest will occur, timber sale name, evidence of ownership, and a harvest practice plan. If the proposed harvest complies with the Forestry Division's rules for commercial timber harvests, the Forestry Division will issue a harvest permit. The Forestry Division will periodically inspect the timber harvest area to ensure that the harvest complies with the requirements of the harvest permit, stays within the confines of the permit area, and all necessary best management practices required by the harvest permit and Forestry Division rules are implemented. Click on this link for additional information <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/ForestMgt/ForestMgt.html>

If you are interested in helping your fellow New Mexico small businesses or would like more information, please contact your local Forestry Division District Office. Click on this link to locate your nearest District Office <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/contact.html> or call 505-476-3325. Together we can support our rural communities and keep our forests healthy.

1) SAVE THE DATE

The New Mexico Tree Farm Committee has scheduled their Spring Field Day to be held on May 16th, 2020. Carl Struck & Johanne Riddick would like to invite all tree farmers to their tree farm located near Penasco, NM. Stay tuned, additional details will be forthcoming.

2) COMMITTEE MEETING

All Tree Farmers are invited and encouraged to attend our 1st New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Meeting of the year (three held annually). Please join us at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, March 11th, 2020 at the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish office located at 7816 Alamo Road. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120. Come out and hear what other tree farmers have been up to and share your tree farm accomplishments with the group. We look forward to visiting with you. If you have any questions, please contact Arnie Friedt at arnie.friedt@state.nm.us

3) E-MAIL INSTEAD OF SNAIL MAIL

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