



DOUG BOYKIN
Chairman,
NM Tree Farm Committee

1118 Hope Farms Road
Socorro, NM 87801
575-838-3027

Diboykin61@gmail.com
www.treefarmssystem.org/new-mexico

February 2021



TREE FARM BULLETIN

WHAT I HAVE DONE AND LESSONS LEARNED

by Bob Gosney, Tree Farmer, Silver City, NM gosneybob@gmail.com

I recently contacted my friend and mentor, Doug Boykin, to learn who to contact for my next Tree Farm inspection report. Doug was the single most helpful person over my 25 years of land management efforts. He asked if I would write an article on: “what I have done, and lessons learned”. I agreed!

First some background information. I purchased 117 acres of land in 1992 about 8 miles north of Silver City. This parcel was part of a 640-acre ranch that had been mostly unused for the previous 25 years. It was heavily covered in pinon, juniper, oak, and several acres of ponderosa. It was adjacent to the Gila National Forest. After about 3 years to establish a one-mile road into the middle of the property, install electric power, drill water well, clear a building site, install a septic system, design, and build a house, we settled into our paradise! (Photo 1)

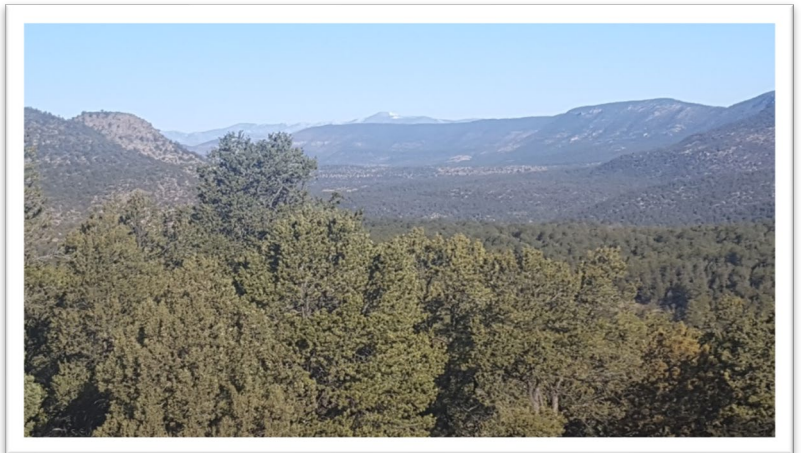
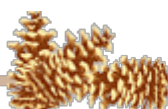


Photo 1: Paradise looking north toward Mogollon Baldy

Our property and most of the surrounding properties were heavily wooded with much understory “ladder fuels” and not very accessible for fire suppression. Our nearest fire station was 45 minutes away. So, my attention turned to fire prevention. I joined the volunteer fire department, helped established a substation one mile from the property, learned about defensible space and went to work thinning the strategic areas of the property. My actions attracted attention from some county, state, national forest, and environmental operations. That is when I met Doug. He suggested I develop a written plan and Lann Moore provided the knowhow and details for my first Forest Stewardship Plan in 1997.



First Lesson Learned: There were several groups that were interested in helping and providing knowhow for my land management. The NM EMNRD Forestry Division was the most helpful.

My initial efforts and thoughts were just good common sense. I wanted to improve the property for (1) ascetics (2) fire suppression (3) wildlife enhancement and (4) water retention/prevent erosion, generally in that order of priority. The concept of defensible space was just being publicized and I began this effort around the house and outbuilding. I quickly realized this was a lot of work! I then employed a crew of 6 to do a thinning around some of the property boundary and along two high ridges running north and south of the housing area amounting to 17 acres. This developed into a major effort, mainly the disposal of the slash. I burned all the slash and had numerous fires going every day for several weeks.

Second Lesson Learned: The type of vegetation and undergrowth in my area required huge efforts (and expense), way beyond the initial estimate, to eliminate the slash.

Most of the government experience was with ponderosa pine forest. The pinon, juniper and oak slash took 3-4 times the effort. I have continued to expand my thinned areas and have completed about 40 acres. This includes about 4 acres around the house and outbuilding, increasing the defensible space to at least 300 feet. To open my access to the property for recreation and fire suppression I have created about a mile of 4wd roads and more than 4 miles of ATV/hiking trails.

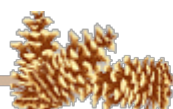


Photo 2: Log dams

At the time of the initial thinning project, I begin using the pinon logs as dams in the gulches to reduce water erosion and create grassy areas behind the small dams. The original ranch had major erosion control done back in the CCC days. Several dams about 6 feet high, one 50-foot dam on the major drainage gulch and many “one rock” dams on the minor drainage areas. I have two of the 6-foot dams and many one rock dams on my 117 acres. All of these impediments were filled with sediment and not functional. My log

dams quickly created a check on erosion and provided areas of fertile soil and various grasses. I have continued to construct and repair these dams and have more than 200 of them. They function extremely well for reducing erosion, moisture retention and wildlife food/habitat (Photo 2).

Third Lesson Learned: My many log dams are a better way to create long term benefits than larger dams IF they are maintained every 2-3 years and this provides a way to utilize the dead and dying pinon trees which, I get about 20 to 50/year.



My “money crop” is firewood. I easily harvest 3-5 cords of juniper and oak for my use and gifts. Early on I tried to give pinon away to anyone that was willing to cut and take it. After 3-4 years I stopped this because it caused me too many problems. The general public is not able to harvest firewood safely and adequately on my hilly and wooded terrain without a lot of my help. I have not had any success in having commercial firewood cutters willing to harvest the pinon firewood. Therefore, I have not removed as much pinon as I would like to.

To improve my ability to thin and maintain my land efforts caused me to create several “gadgets”. The first was to equip my tractor with extended forks and a back rack on the front bucket. This allows piles about 5’ high, 6’ wide and 6’ long. Adding a hinge extension on the ends of the forks allows about a 50% increase of slash loads (Photo 3).



Photo 3: Tractor slash carrier

I have dug a burn pit that quickly and safely burns slash. This is a pit about 8 foot deep, 10 feet wide and 20 feet long. I then pile the ash from this pit on three sides of the pit which makes it deeper. This pit allows for much more burn efficiently as well as fire safety (Photo 4).



Photo 4: Burn pit

I also have equipped my tractor with a PTO pump and a 100’ hose reel (Photo 5). I load two 55-gallon barrels on the tractor’s front loader and can pump

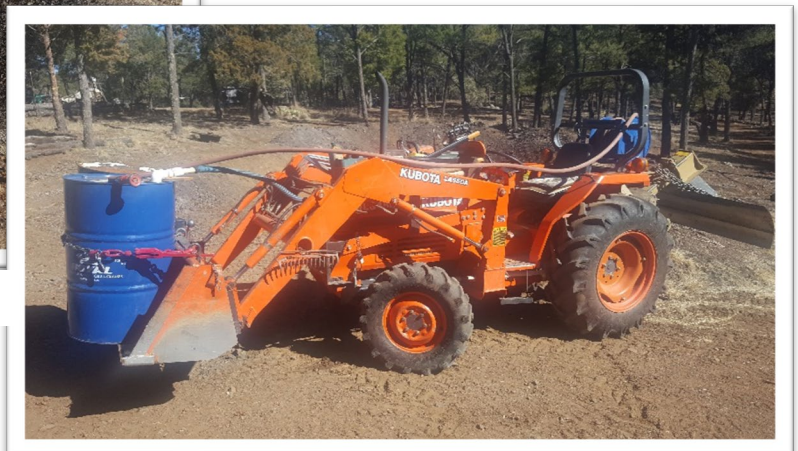
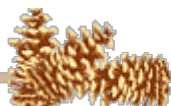


Photo 5: Tractor fire engine

and spray water. I use this “fire truck” apparatus when I burn slash in areas too far to transport the slash to my burn pit. I also have a backpack fire pump that I use



as standby when doing a slash burn. It is not a good idea to catch the woods on fire if you are a member of the fire department!

Fourth Lesson Learned: Having a 4wd tractor, portable firefighting equipment and a burn pit is a huge asset for continued efforts.

My efforts currently, and in the past 5 years, are primarily maintenance of what I have developed. The biggest chore is cutting the new bush like growth from the oak stumps. This needs to be done about every 3-4 years. I use a heavy duty weed whipper with a steel chopper blade. This works well but is labor intensive.

Fifth Lesson Learned: In hindsight I would have taken the time and effort to pull the oak tree roots out of the ground. I now do this.

In conclusion, this effort has been a labor of love. It involves a lot of work, but I enjoy the benefits. I enjoy sharing my experience with others that are getting started and those with similar vision. The highlight of my efforts was to be named New Mexico Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year in 2015 (Photo 6).



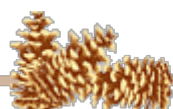
Photo 6: Bob & Barb Gosney

1) SPRING 2021 FIELD DAY

The Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year event is tentatively scheduled for April 24, 2021 at the Spirit Hill Certified Family Forest owned by Carl Struck and Johanne Riddick. We hope to make a final decision no later than April 1, 2021. Additional information will be forthcoming.

2) COMMITTEE MEETING

All Tree Farmers are invited and encouraged to take part in our 1ST New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Meeting of the year (three held annually). Please join us at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, March 10th, 2021. This meeting will be VIRTUAL utilizing "ZOOM", an invite will be sent to you via your e-mail address prior to March 10th. Join us 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) SUGGESTED READING FROM CARL STRUCK (2019 OTFY)

This article (link below), passed to me by a friend, is not only a great read but explains in sufficient detail the way I have come to think of forests after living in and with them for nearly 50 years! It explains why I have come to be cautious and conservative when it comes to forest "management" practices, erring on the side of biodiversity over efficient human-centered calculations. I hope you take the time to read it all the way through...our walks in the woods will be so much richer for it! Enjoy! Carl

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/02/magazine/tree-communication-mycorrhiza.html?referringSource=articleShare>

4) SUPER QUIZ

Score 1 point for each correct answer on the Freshman Level, 2 points on the Graduate Level and 3 points on the Ph.D. Level. Subject: TREES (e.g., Which country has a green cedar in the center of its flag? Answer: Lebanon.)

FRESHMAN LEVEL

1. What is the term for a young tree?
2. Trees are commonly divided into these two types.
3. What is characteristic of deciduous trees?

GRADUATE LEVEL

4. What is the name for the upper part of a tree, including the branches and leaves?
5. What group of evergreens do these trees fall into: cedars, firs, pines, and spruces?
6. Term for a forest in its natural state, before being explored or exploited by man.

PH.D. LEVEL

7. What term describes a biome characterized by coniferous forests?
8. Term for the uppermost layer in a forest, formed by the crowns of the trees.
9. What is a coppice or copse?

ANSWERS: will be posted in the March 2021 Tree Farm Bulletin.

SCORING: 18 points – congratulations, doctor; 15 to 17 points – honors graduate; 10 to 14 points – you're plenty smart, but no grind; 4 to 9 points – you really should hit the books harder; 1 point to 3 points – enroll in remedial courses immediately; 0 points – who reads the questions to you?

Super Quiz is a registered trademark of K. Fisher Enterprises Ltd. © Ken Fisher North America Syndicate Inc.

ANSWERS to the January 2021 Super Quiz: 1. Willow. 2. Tree line. 3. "A poem lovely as a tree." 4. Eucalyptus. 5. Cones. 6. Cedar. 7. "Loveliest of Trees." 8. "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn." 9. Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*).

