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TREE FARM BULLETIN, July 2007

Greetings;

Our summer monsoon season has been very sporadic here in Santa Fe and Chama where I spend most of my time. Hopefully we'll have a wet August. It does seem that the monsoon season is coming later than it used to.

Many Tree Farmers over the last five years have taken advantage of the federal program Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP). This program provides cost share funds for forest planning and forest improvement practices such as forest thinnings. New Mexico State Forestry has administered the program and over the last five years has disbursed to landowners, including many Tree Farmers \$379,489 to help in managing their forests. This program has now been eliminated by the federal government. Cost share projects that have been approved for funding will continue but there will be no new funding. This is an unfortunate turn of events. There is a real need to improve the growing conditions of our forests and, with the limited economic return available in our area, assistance to do this can make a big difference.

Although FLEP has been eliminated, there still will be cost share funds available to assist landowners with forest improvement practices. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is another federal program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). It has been primarily used by agricultural interests but has always had money available for forest improvement projects. Under the 2007 Farm Bill, EQIP funding will be increased and a portion will be earmarked for forest practices.

It remains to be seen how these EQIP funds will flow through to forest landowners. As more news becomes available I will keep you informed.

