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## TREE FARM BULLETIN, October 2009

Greetings,

On October 17<sup>th</sup> about thirty Tree Farmers, foresters, and others gathered at the Ranch de Chaparral Girl Scout Camp to honor the camp as recipients of the 2008 New Mexico Tree Farmer of the Year. The Tree Farmer of the Year award is given to the Tree Farm that best exemplifies the standards of sustainability of the American Tree Farm System.

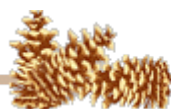
The 1,034 acre property is owned and operated by the Chaparral Council of the Girl Scouts of America. They have owned the property since 1963 and in that 45 plus years have hosted thousands of Girl Scouts and other guests. The property is heavily forested and like much private property in New Mexico was not managed for long-term forest goals in the past. This allowed a dense forest to develop which was detrimental to the growth and productivity of the forest. From the onset of owning the property the Chaparral Council embarked on a program to thin the forest to improve productivity, soil and water and to help reduce the threat of catastrophic fires occurring. Working closely with New Mexico State Forestry, a plan was developed and a series of forest thinnings took place. In some of the thinnings saw logs and other commercial products were removed. As well as improving the forest this allowed a small income stream for the Girl Scouts. One key tenant of Tree Farm standards is the use of commercial sales to generate income for the landowner.

October 17<sup>th</sup> turned out to be a warm and sunny fall day; perfect for touring the property. Todd Haines, New Mexico State District Forester, led the group on a short walking tour of areas close to camp headquarters that have been thinned. There was a dramatic difference between areas that had been thinned and areas that have yet to be thinned. The thinned areas had much larger and better formed trees and had much more ground cover. The diversity of the forest had been maintained with fir coming up underneath the Ponderosa.

After the walking tour lunch was served. Ed Parsons, ranger for the ranch and award winning chef, had been at work since five in the morning making beef brisket and baking cookies. The food was so good almost everyone was back for seconds.

A short awards presentation followed lunch. A very nice plaque was presented to Mary Holman, Board Chair for Chaparral and a \$350 gift certificate for Stihl products was presented to Ed.

We hope you can join us next year for our Tree Farmer of the Year event. It's always a good time to be in the woods.





(From left to right: Mary Holman, Harry Morrison and Ed Parsons)

## HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TREES?

**How much of the United States was covered by trees when the Pilgrims landed?** There were 937 million acres of superb virgin forest. That included all territory except the Great Plains and some western desert areas.

**Who uses the wilderness areas?** They are open to the public without restriction, except for fire regulations. Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with state laws.

**What are some attractive evergreens for ornamental purposes?** Arbor vitae, boxwood, firs, hemlock, American holly, junipers, and cedar. Austrian pine, mugho pine, Scotch pine, and white pine are also good. Yews are among the most useful evergreens for ornamental use.

**What is the proper way to tap for maple sugar?** Bore a 3/8 inch hole, no deeper than 3 inches, and between 2 to 4 feet above the ground. The sunny side of the tree trunk is best. Insert a metal spout which fits tightly in the hole so the sap can flow through it, and hang a bucket on the spout. You may have to wait days or even a couple of weeks for the clear sap to begin dripping off the end of the spout into the bucket. The bucket must be cleared every day. Sap allowed to stand loses its quality. The latest device is plastic tubing which runs from tree to tree and on to the sap house, eliminating taps, buckets and gathering. This tubing is so rigged that the pressure of the sap from the tree even forces it to flow uphill to the sap house.

**Are antibiotics used to combat tree disease?** Antibiotics are organic chemicals produced by living organisms (primarily bacteria and fungi) which are capable of inhibiting the growth of, or destroying, other organisms.

**How does a tree get the materials for its structure?** The tree breathes from the tips of its highest leaves to the tips of its deepest roots. The material used in the structure of its wood is 95 percent taken out of the air. This includes the water which it picks up in the ground but which fell out of the air. The 95 percent consists of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. This is the body of the tree, its material mass, strength, toughness. Strangely this is wrought out of air and water. The remaining 5 percent is the chemical magic of the tree. This consists of minute amounts, mere traces of some 15 other elements. The amazing thing is that these are not mixed haphazardly in the tree but are precisely put together with a little of this and a touch of that, making things happen in a predestined way. The delicate combinations are far beyond the ability of man's chemical laboratory. Phosphorus creates seeds and promotes root growth. Calcium develops leaves, protoplasm, and fresh cells. Magnesium gives the mysterious power to chlorophyll and spurs on phosphorus. Potassium makes the life blood of the tree, filling the sap of growing tips, giving power to pollen, helping nitrogen to form proteins. Sulfur is the building material of protein, and it makes root hairs. Iron acts as a sparkplug for chlorophyll. Silicon, the element of glass, enters into the manufacture of the bark of the tree.

Platt, Rutherford 1992. 1001 Questions Answered About Trees. Dover Books. 318pp.

