



Joseph M. Stehling Jr.
Chairman,
NM Tree Farm Committee

HC 70 Box 109
Ocate, NM 87734

(575)-377-0546

joestehling@earthlink.net

www.nmtreefarmers.org

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TREE FARM BULLETIN

Time to make our Decision on “Certification of Wood Products”

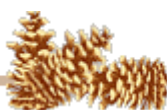
As I wrote several months back, we find ourselves in the middle of major discussions around the word “certified”.

A little background; when I first started working with the Tree Farm System, there were two types of tree Farmers: Pioneer and Certified. Pioneer Tree Farmers were those landowners who had an interest in becoming tree farmers but had not done any management activities on their lands and did not have a management plan. Certified Tree farmers were those landowners who had a completed management plan and had accomplished several natural resource related projects on their lands.

Starting about 2000 the term certified as it relates to wood products and forestry started taking on a different meaning. There is a thought process out in the forest products marketing world that makes the suggestions that forest products that are produced in an ecologically sustainable way would have a greater value than forest products produced in a more traditional sense. The example I used is that consumers will pay more for King Crab that was actually caught in the Gulf of Alaska than King Crab that was raised in a Fish Farm (crab farm would be a better term). An underlining assumption here is that there are enough consumers out there that care about purchasing “certified sustainable forest products” or “green certified” and these consumers actually drive the forest products market. This “certification” or “green certification” resulted in the need for us to incorporate our current “Standards for Sustainability” check list that is attached to the Tree Farm inspection form and our need to complete 5 year audits to maintain the sustainability certification.

So, in 15 years, we have gone from “certified” meaning a graduate practicing tree farm/family forest that is operating within the recommendations of an approved management plan and completing forestry activities as they can to “certified” meaning that the tree farm is producing an unspecified amount of forest products for the “green certified” forest products market.

This model just does not fit our program in New Mexico. Most of our tree farmers/family forest owners have small properties, are more interested in protecting and managing their properties for forest health, watershed, wildlife, recreation and aesthetics. About half will never harvest more than a few dozen truckloads of logs (or firewood). Also, the green certification, to date has not been a market force in the state.



Where it stands now is we have until the end of December, 2015, to decide if we want to “opt out” or “opt in” to the certification system. Some states, the ones who have a vibrant forest products industry, will most likely opt in and then try to work to achieve the benefits of the green certification status for their tree farmer/family forest owners. This also may result in a fee or stipend paid by the landowner to be “green certified” and be involved in the “certified” part of the tree farm program. Other states may opt out, (like New Mexico could do) so that we can still maintain our program but not be involved in the green certification.

One of the many benefits of the Tree Farm program in New Mexico is that it has no membership fees to be a member. If we opt in, my feeling is that sooner or later everyone - tree farmer/family forest owner - may soon be required to pay dues or a small stipend. Joe and I would like to hear from you all on your thoughts. We would like to make the final decision at the December committee meeting so we can move on to more important matters. Most of the feedback we have received to date does not support the green certification so at this point, we feel like the best thing to do is to “opt out”. If you feel differently, please let us know ASAP.

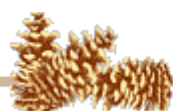
As I stated before, Certified has a new meaning and we need to decide what definition we are going to use in New Mexico.

Thanks for your time. *Doug Boykin, NM Tree Farm Committee Advisor*

Here is an update for you on a project that NM Tree Farmers have been watching for years. Tree Farmers Tom and Callie Paterson and daughters Lindsay and Caroline own the Spur Ranch near Luna. Since 1997, they’ve been working on ways to stabilize Centerfire Creek (which runs through their property) and restore its natural gradient and riparian marshes and wetlands. To do that, they have built three sediment retention structures. The cost, paid for with help from partners, is close to a million dollars. Take a look at these pictures:



Structure # 1 - has been in place since 2000; it has raised the upstream creek level 10 feet so far.





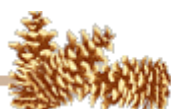
Structure # 2 - installed in 2012; first major flood flow in 2013; it will raise the creek level 10.5 feet.



Structure # 3 - installed in 2012; first major flow in 2013; it will raise the creek level 10 feet.

When the Patersons began this work in 1997, the stated objective of their Spur Ranch Project was to improve water quality by decreasing sediment load downstream into the San Francisco River, improve conditions of flow to enhance perennial flow, restore previously degraded meadows, retain soil on the upper watershed, raise the watertable, increase forage and herbaceous production and improve watershed function. In 2013, it's clear that the structures are working as intended.

Doug Boykin, NM Tree Farm Committee Advisor



FROM THE CHAIRMAN: DO NOT FORGET OUR OUTSTANDING TREE FARMER OF THE YEAR FIELD DAY ON 18 OCTOBER. **RSVP to Shannon Atencio by Monday October 14th**. Either call her office number or send her an email: (505) 425-7472; Shannon.Atencio@state.nm.us. Festivities will begin at 10:00 am and run until after the catered lunch.

DIRECTIONS TO THE VIGIL TREE FARM

Address: 425 HWY 105, mile marker 7.5

From Las Vegas:

- I25 to Las Vegas, take exit 245 into Las Vegas.
- Go straight until you get to 7th street, and then turn right (7th street is also SR 518).
- Follow Hwy 518 through Las Vegas, past Storrie Lake State Park and approximately 10 miles north of Las Vegas you will turn left in Sapello onto SR 94 (just past the gas station).
- Stay on SR 94 for 8.7 miles.
- At 8.7 miles go straight on SR-105 (SR-94 turns sharply to the right - do not take the turn - go straight on SR-105).
- 3.5 miles down SR-105 you will take the right fork in the road onto SR-105 (the fork is just past the county solid waste transfer station or “trash dump”).
- 4.3 miles down this road is the entrance to the Vigil Tree Farm on the left (a Tree Farm sign will be posted at the entrance), follow the signs up the driveway to the house.

From Mora:

- From NM-518 turn south onto NM-94, travel 9.7 miles then take a right onto State Route 105.
- 3.5 miles down SR-105 you will take the right fork in the road onto SR-105 (the fork is just past the county solid waste transfer station or “trash dump”).
- 4.3 miles down this road is the entrance to the Vigil Tree Farm on the left (a Tree Farm sign will be posted at the entrance), follow the signs up the driveway to the house.

One last item, congratulations to Priscilla Wayne from Pine Hill, NM who won the 2013 Cow Elk Hunt Raffle donated by Buck Buchanan of the Buchanan Ranch near Pie Town, NM. Also, thanks to everyone who purchased a raffle ticket or provided a tax deductible donation to support your New Mexico Tree Farm Committee.

