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NM Tree Farm Committee

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October 2014



## TREE FARM BULLETIN

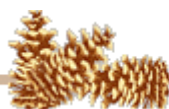
Greetings;

The grip the drought has had on New Mexico seems to be loosening. The National Weather Service reports that January 2014 was the driest January for New Mexico since state-wide record keeping began in 1895. The state only received .03 inches of precipitation on average. Things improved in February but it was still dry through June. July was the first month with above average precipitation. The Monsoon dried out in August but September was extremely wet in the southern part of the state. So much so that the southeastern part of the state is no longer considered to be in a drought. The northwestern part of the state is still classified as being in extreme drought and the remainder of the state is in the moderate drought category. This is an improvement from last year when the entire state was classified in the moderate to extreme drought range. The long range forecast is for above average precipitation through the end of the year.

Let's hope so. The drought has left its mark on our forests with above average mortality in a lot of species. In the Chama area (and perhaps other areas bark beetle has been working in the Engelmann spruce for several years now and in some places probably eighty per cent of the mature trees have died. Drought has a lingering effect on forests so we can expect to see above average mortality for several years even if we get back to a more "normal" precipitation pattern.

The drought is just another reminder of the importance of managing our forests. A well-managed forest where trees have been thinned to reduce stocking will be better able to withstand the ravages of lack of moisture much better than a forest that has not been managed. New Mexico has a history of periodic drought followed by wetter periods which emphasizes the long-term nature of managing our forests.

*Harry Morrison, New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Vice-Chairman*



**FROM THE CHAIRMAN:** Please join us for our annual Tree Farmer of the Year field day honoring the Silva Tree Farm in the Zuni Mountains. Details were in last month's bulletin and also attached. Please be sure to RSVP as soon as possible so we know how much food to order.

I need to get serious. All tree farmers need to think about the future of the committee and the New Mexico Tree Farm Program. We have been without a secretary for longer than I have been Chairman. No one has stepped up to take over that duty. My tenure as Chairman will eventually come to an end and someone needs to take over. Also, our principal advisor will be retiring at some time in the future and although we have foresters who will take over, there will be somewhat of a void for a while.

Finally, our treasury continues to go down. Grants are more difficult to get; field day lunches are getting more expensive; and Stihl Corporation has stopped giving the \$250.00 certificate to the Tree Farmer of the Year and we must decide if we can afford to fund that in the future.

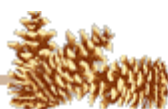
Please give the above some thought and step up to help, donate to our cause, and provide me your thoughts.

**FROM THE ADVISOR:** We have also started discussion with the current chairman of the New Mexico Association of Counties Assessor's Affiliate (sub-committee dealing with county assessor issues). These discussions will, hopefully, help us educate and inform all of the 33 county assessors in New Mexico that Forestry and tree farming is an agricultural enterprise and certified tree farms should be taxed accordingly. Now, I know we don't need all 33 county assessors on board (only about ½ have forested private lands), but if we can get a broad consensus where all county assessors interpret the statute:

*According to the regulations in New Mexico Statute 7-36-20, the term "agricultural use" relates to the use of land for the production of resources such as crops, livestock, or in the case of forestry, trees and forest products that are produced for sale or home use in whole or part. This is a critical element to the ATFS certification process. Timber management objectives in some capacity (e.g., thinning, group selection, crop tree selection, etc.) must be defined in the required written plan in order to gain ATFS certification. Unlike the short rotational harvest of row crops, forest lands require multiple years of growth and an actual product may only be harvested once every 20 years or so. Regulations in the statute also state that the minimum acreage that can be under agricultural use is one acre. Acreage for ATFS certification qualification must be at least ten acres, so by default it coheres to this regulation.*

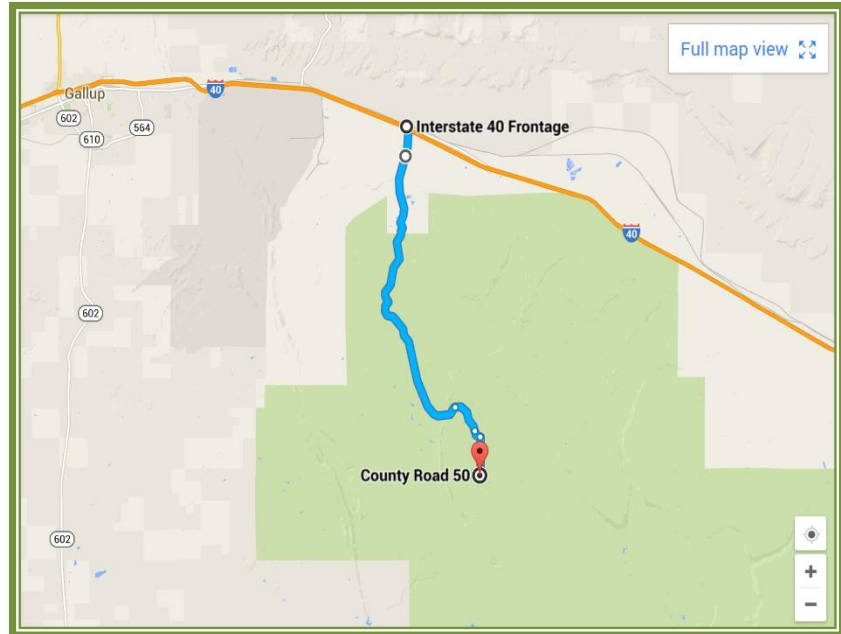
Then we will get consistent application statewide, we are then hoping that being a tree farmer will provide more than just information and education, it will provide a form of tax relief to the landowner. We are planning on meeting either via conference call or in person with Gary Pérez, Chief Deputy Assessor, and Santa Fe County Assessor's Office (and the current chair) before the end of the year as well as make a presentation to the New Mexico Association of Counties Assessor's Affiliate in early 2015. We will keep you posted.

*Doug Boykin, New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Advisor*



## SILVA TREE FARM 2013 NEW MEXICO TREE FARMER OF THE YEAR

The Silva Property has been a certified Tree Farm for over 20 years. The property came to the Silva Family in 1928 when it was purchased from the railroad for sheep grazing. The land has stayed in the family and been passed down over time to family members. One thing has been consistent with the land, and that is it has been a well-managed forest.



This year's Tree Farm of the Year celebration is slated for October 18. From 10:00 – 2:00 and will include a walking tour of some of the recent management, a classic Tree Farm style lunch and a chance to talk with fellow Tree Farmers about their forests.

Please join us for this field day and award presentation:

**When:** Saturday, October 18, 2014

**Where:** Silva Tree Farm

**Time:** 10:00 AM – 2:00

Lunch will be served

Take interstate 40 to the Fort Wingate Exit. Proceed South along State Road 400 approximately 10 miles until the road becomes gravel (this will be Forest Road 50). Proceed along Forest Road 50 approximately 2.2 miles until you reach Forest Road 402. Turn right and proceed 1.25 miles until it takes a sharp left turn. Look right and you are at the gate. We will have a sign!!

**Please RSVP Todd Haines by 10/11/14**

And for additional questions contact Todd Haines

867-2334 Ext 101 or [todd.haines@state.nm.us](mailto:todd.haines@state.nm.us)

