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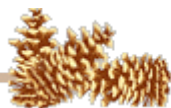


2010 OUTSTANDING TREE FARMER OF THE YEAR
Congratulations to Carlos Ramirez
of the
Ramirez Tree Farm



(Left to right: Joe Stehling – NM Tree Farm Chair, Shannon Atencio - Forester and Carlos Ramirez – Tree Farmer)

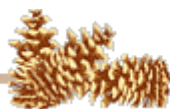
This past month the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee hosted two major annual events. On a spectacularly beautiful fall day we honored Carlos Ramirez as New Mexico Tree Farmer of the year. Shannon Atencio, Forester for the Las Vegas District set up a wonderful tour of one section of the award winning tree farm followed by a succulent bar-b-que lunch. The October bulletin provided some details on the tree farm and its operations. The tree farm, located near Rociada, north of Las Vegas, is



almost completely surrounded by the Santa Fe National Forest and the northwestern corner actually borders the Pecos Wilderness boundary. The property was commercially logged in the late 1990's and again in 2008-2009. After the most recent timber harvest the Las Vegas District Office completed a management plan for the property in 2009. Since then Carlos has managed several phases of thinning projects on the property, participated in a noxious weed management program by treating various invasive thistle species, and he is participating in a 319 riparian restoration project on his property in Lower Rociada in cooperation with Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District. Carlos is also actively pursuing NRCS EQIP funding for a variety of practices and he is working with Tierra y Montes to pursue a USFWS grant for wildlife habitat improvement. Timber Management activities have emphasized harvest and utilization of mature timber and follow up thinning to improve stand vigor, retaining trees with desirable form and strong genetic characteristics. These activities have also encouraging growth of a multi-storied, uneven aged timber stand.



This property is managed to produce and harvest a variety of products including white fir Christmas trees, firewood, vigas, latillas and aspen trees for landscaping.



NEW MEXICO PRESCRIBED FIRE COUNCIL

The second event was a meeting at the Pritzlaff Ranch of the New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council where the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee provided the lunch. The ranch is owned by the Biophylia Foundation, a non-profit foundation that since 1997 has worked to improve land productivity and species diversity on private lands. The mission of the Foundation is to support efforts that protect, restore, enhance, and preserve wildlife habitat, and efforts which can help reconnect individuals with nature. The ranch facilities are being restored, to include Pueblo frescos painted in the 1940s by Ma Pe Wi. The facilities are used to house ongoing collaborations with researchers, educators, and other land conservation professionals to further the art and science of land management and conservation.

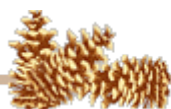


Pritzlaff Ranch Consultant Bob Lineback explains objectives of the prescribed burn.



Attendees represented the Vermejo Park Ranch, State Land Office, private consultants, NM State Forestry and Tree Farm Committee (Chairman Joe Stehling – right)

The scenically located facilities are available for meetings and conferences. The tour of the ranch demonstrated forest management in action. The ranch has begun an extensive program of habitat and forestry restoration on the 3,300 acre forest to improve diversity, goshawk habitat, soil, and water conservation. Students and faculty from the New Mexico Highlands University, Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute have assisted in marking restoration plots and in monitoring the aftereffects of the restoration work. The work has been accomplished with the assistance of several agencies which include the Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency of USDA, and the New Mexico Forestry Division. Information on this very important meeting was provided in a separate mailing to all Tree Farmers.



The purpose of the New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council is to develop policies and procedures to make prescribed fire in New Mexico safer and more accepted for all practitioners and to encourage the use of prescribed fire from a law and policy perspective. The Council's Vision is to work with cooperators to support them in their ability to apply fire at the right time, in the right place, and for the right reasons. The morning consisted of reports on Wildfire and Smoke Rule revisions and a briefing by the Southwest Fire Science Consortium whose mission is to provide a forum for managers, scientists, and policy makers to interact and share fire science in ways that can effectively move new information on fire behavior to management practices. Following a pizza lunch the group toured the Pritzlaff ranch to view restoration thinning and its three demonstration forests – Ecological Restoration Institute patch, Northern Goshawk patch, and the Genetics patch. Each stand had its own prescriptions and stand characteristics. Included in this tour were prescribed burn areas and a discussion of the prescribed burn plan. What was most revealing was the description of how and why one of the prescribed burns escaped the burn area due to unforecasted exceptionally strong winds that caused a wildfire which requested a response from approximately 75 local fire responders.

From the Chairman: These were outstanding outings that provided great examples of proper forestry. It was disappointing that only three tree farmers were able to attend and support what should be a very special day for any tree farmer - being named Tree Farmer of the Year. I was expecting a few more tree farmers to attend to share in this event. No tree farmers participated in the Prescribed Fire Council outing. All the experts from State Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, BLM, and the Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute, among others were present to address the issues and a lot of information was available.

We canceled two other Tree Farmer events this fall because of lack of interest – Tree Farm Field Day at Gene Harling's property near Albuquerque and the Cimarron District Forest Management Plan workshop in Taos. (Only two tree farmers signed up for the Field Day and only one signed up for the Management Plan workshops). The low turnout for these activities has been quite disappointing. This is OUR Tree Farm committee and program, supported by the NM State Forestry Division. We cannot have a successful program without participation from our Tree Farmers. A lot of work goes into preparing the events and the lack of interest disappoints those who have put in the effort. We have +/- 170 tree farmers listed on our roster. I am hoping that more than two or three would be interested in attending events. If you are no longer interested in continuing as a pioneer or certified tree farmer, please let your Inspecting Forester or local District Forester know. My goal for the program is to create a member driven program with interested and involved landowners who work together to make the program more meaningful to its participants. Our next committee meeting is scheduled for Dec. 7th in Albuquerque. We have grant funds to help you with travel cost so if you want to attend, please let me know.

Joe Stehling

NM Tree Farm Committee Chair

