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TREE FARM BULLETIN

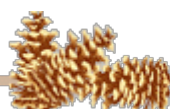
Workshop, Landowners, New Funding Address Issues to Restoring Critical Forest Ecosystems Across the Landscape

In the 1980s, a small group of researchers worked for several years to compile all relevant aspen science in one publication; it would become known to scientists and managers as “The Aspen Bible” because at the time it was thought to have everything one needed to know about aspen ecosystems and management. But research from the last decade has added much more to our understanding of these important ecosystems. *The Aspen Resilience Across Boundaries Workshop*, held in Chama from July 21-24, gathered natural resource managers, landowners, and academics to share new science and on-the-ground experience in aspen management.



Presenters and participants came from across New Mexico, Colorado and Utah and represented a variety of organizations, agencies, and universities. The agenda featured

Western Aspen Alliance Director Paul Rogers view the northern NM landscape.



short presentations on aspen ecology, emerging aspen science, and forest management in a changing climate. Field tours on private and public lands gave participants the opportunity to learn about what landowners and agencies are doing to address declining stands and to get many minds thinking about remaining questions and challenges.



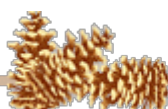
Joe Carrillo (NM State Forestry) leading discussion of aspen health near Chama, NM.

Aspen mainly reproduce by sprouting “suckers” from their roots, are thin-skinned, and their leaves are highly palatable. These factors make them delectable for herbivores, great for cavity nesters and wildlife, and highly prone to pathogens. Because of tree genetics and other variables (some known and some not), what works to regenerate an aspen stand, may not work at an adjacent, similar site. Workshop participants saw all of these processes at play and came away with an understanding that when it comes to restoration, one size does not fit all, and each stand requires unique consideration and management.



Tom Adamson (Utah BLM) view an aspen regen patch cut and elk enclosure.

So what else can be done to restore our forests? Landowners across the region are working to make a difference for the health of the landscape and people. Healthy forests support a healthy community and watershed, including water quantity and quality for downstream users. Due to 100+ years of fire suppression, other human activities, and increasing catastrophic wildfires (including Las Conchas, Cerro Grande, Whitewater-Baldy Complex, and West Fork), it is evident that forest



restoration efforts need to ramp up exponentially if we're going to make a difference in a meaningful timeframe.

The Nature Conservancy's Rio Grande Water Fund (RGWF) is doing just that and earlier this year, awarded \$410,000 over the next three years to Chama Peak Land Alliance (CPLA) for the treatment 800 acres of forested private lands through thinning and prescribed burns. Because the San Juan-Chama region supplies over a third of New Mexico's drinking water, it is an area of high priority for the RGWF. These activities support a major goal of CPLA's San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership Program launched by CPLA, private landowners and community and agency partners in 2014. This summer alone, 80 acres have already been treated and projects will continue this fall and winter with pile burns and prescribed fires. "We hope that these 80 acres of forest health improvements, and our goal of 800 acres over three years, are just the beginning and that we can continue to attract interest and funding to do thousands of more acres of treatments in the San Juan – Chama region," said Monique DiGiorgio, CPLA's Executive Director.

Prescribed fires are used by land managers to mimic natural fire and improve ecosystem health as well as community safety by reducing wood and debris that contribute to unnaturally intense wildfires. Prescribed burning takes into account many factors including topography, vegetation, and unpredictable weather. All conditions must be right to safely execute a planned burn and proper training and experience are necessary for burn crew members. So this fall and winter, when you see smoke rising above the forest, know that this type of active management is providing benefits to both the forest and the people. If you have any questions about pile burning or prescribed fires, contact NM State Forestry Chama District Office at 575-588-7831. To find out more about Chama Peak Land Alliance, visit www.chamapeak.org. To learn more about the Rio Grande Water Fund visit www.nature.org/riogrande.

By Emily Olson, Stewardship Coordinator with Chama Peak Land Alliance

FROM THE CHAIRMAN: Do not forget to put 09 December on your calendar for our next Tree Farm and Forest Stewardship meetings. We will be electing a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. Please consider putting your name into the hat for one of these positions.



In 2016, the American Tree Farm System will be celebrating their 75th year in operation. This logo does not replace the Tree Farm/Family Forest logo we are all familiar with; it will only be used throughout the anniversary year on various publications.

