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TREE FARM BULLETIN

EXPANDING THE USE OF PRESCRIBED FIRE IN NEW MEXICO

WORKING GROUP REPORT
TO THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATURE
AS REQUESTED THROUGH
HOUSE MEMORIAL 42

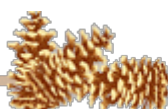
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The New Mexico House of Representatives passed House Memorial (HM) 42 in the 2019 session requesting the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) explore ways to expand the practice of prescribed fire on private lands in New Mexico. The memorial created a broad working group of experts and stakeholders from across the state to conduct research and analysis of expansion strategies and to develop a report to the legislature.

Fire is fundamentally necessary for healthy ecosystems in New Mexico; however, the central challenge is when and how to use prescribed fire to promote and manage healthy ecosystems and reduce the negative impacts of uncharacteristically large or intense wildfires, such as those the state has experienced in recent decades. Research from across the globe has conclusively shown that frequent forest and rangeland burning reduces wildfire severity and extent, and provides a host of other beneficial outcomes, including reducing costs of hazardous fuels management. However, significant barriers exist in New Mexico that make implementation of prescribed fire on private lands at the required pace and scale challenging or impossible. They include:

1. undefined statutory liability for prescribed burning;
2. lack of available and affordable insurance (directly corresponding to undefined liability);
3. private practitioners expressed a need for additional expertise through training; and
4. variability across local governments in process for obtaining permission to burn.

Collectively, these limitations constrain use of prescribed burning in New Mexico – a phenomenon that is found elsewhere in the United States where similar lack of clarity about liability, resulting limited access to insurance, and other barriers exist.

The EMNRD, Forestry Division (Forestry Division) invited all agencies and organizations named in HM 42 to join the working group. The Division formed a “core team” to lead the research and analysis and



a “full working group” with additional participants to provide feedback. The working group adopted several guiding principles, including the intent to avoid inadvertently creating conditions that would discourage prescribed fire on private lands.

After exploring the barriers to increased use of prescribed fire in New Mexico, the HM 42 working group established four objectives for its work. These include:

- Identifying steps to establish clear liability status for prescribed fire practitioners in New Mexico;
- Identifying barriers to affordable insurance for private landowners and third-party burn consultants and propose solutions;
- Identifying steps to establish a voluntary, appropriately rigorous training standard and certification pathway with incentives for private practitioner participation by way of defined liability standards and lower insurance costs; and
- Examining the need for and feasibility of a different approach to ignitions permitting in the state.

If you are interested in the Results and Recommendations of House Memorial 42, read the full report at <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/Publications/PubsMain.html>

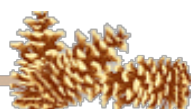


New Mexico Prescribed Burn Council Annual Meeting is VIRTUAL and open to All.

Date: December 11, 2020

Morning Session: 9-11:30 am Mountain Time

Afternoon Session: 1-2:30 pm Mountain Time



The New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council will host the 2020 Annual Meeting... in person!!! Sorry, just kidding, but things are looking good for next year. Nonetheless, please join us for a great review of 2020 where the call for MORE prescribed fire was sounded across the country from California to New Mexico to Washington, D.C. In addition, a working group of New Mexico burn practitioners completed an actionable report for the state Legislature outlining policy recommendations on how to increase prescribed fire on private lands within the state. Come hear our State Forester Laura McCarthy give us the inside scoop on potential draft Rx fire legislation! Also, come back after lunch to see a virtual field trip from the perspective of IGNIS – the ping-pong dropping drone that is revolutionizing the Rx fire world!

The *morning session* will consist of presentations on prescribed fire in New Mexico and the science behind it.

The *afternoon session* will consist of a drone demo and business meeting.

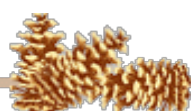
All are welcome to attend! [Click here to register NOW!](#)

October 27, 2020

**EMNRD Forestry Division Applauds Resolution to Dismiss
Mexican Spotted Owl Injunction
U.S. District Court judge to consider dissolving MSO Order in coming weeks**

SANTA FE, NM – The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department’s Forestry Division applauds today’s announcement by the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) that an out-of-court resolution has been reached regarding the Mexican spotted owl (MSO) injunction in New Mexico and Arizona. The mutual agreement between the plaintiff, WildEarth Guardians, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be reviewed by a U.S. District Court judge in the coming weeks.

“Thankfully, our Forestry Division was able to find some interim solutions to help keep local companies afloat, prevent long-term layoffs, and save jobs,” said Sarah Cottrell Propst, EMNRD Cabinet Secretary. “The relationships born during the MSO injunction are now a solid foundation for New Mexico to build upon to respond to the escalating threat of catastrophic wildfire.”





Meeting twice monthly for a full year, partners from local communities, agencies, and non-governmental organizations worked together to find alternative projects for 80% of thinning contractors affected by the MSO injunction and to find alternative wood supply for 75% of the wood-products manufacturers and 100% of commercial firewood operators. This unprecedented level of cooperation kept the MSO injunction from devastating New Mexico's forest sector and restoration economy while the parties negotiated.

"The community of people who work on forest restoration came together like never before while

the MSO injunction was in place to make sure that communities had access to firewood, forest workers had jobs, and small sawmills and wood-products manufacturers had a wood supply," said Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD Forestry Division.

Once a final ruling is in place, the Forestry Division, the Forest Service, and partners will work together to decide when and where forest restoration projects on the Carson, Cibola, Gila, Lincoln, and Santa Fe National Forests will resume. Restoration projects are a key part of healthy forest management.

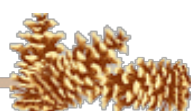
It has been a very difficult year for all of us. As we all navigate through the current pandemic, the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee had to cancel both of our field days (spring and fall) and two of our three committee meetings went virtual. There appears to be a small light shining through the forest, potential vaccine forthcoming. Until that time arrives, I wanted to share some webinar information with you for the upcoming winter days when it is difficult to get outside to enjoy our beautiful outdoor environment.

WILDLAND STORIES: FIRE ECOLOGY WITH DR. LARISSA YOCOM

Hosted by Darren McAvoy and Gabrielle Harden

December 11, 2020 at 9:00 am MT

Fire Ecology: It is everywhere around us, yet so many of us know so little. What is fire ecology? What makes fire behave the way it does? What is a fire ecologist and how does one get into that field? What are the coolest/most surprising/unique fire ecosystems on the planet? These are just some of the questions we aim to answer with our guest Dr. Larissa Yocom, an assistant professor in fire ecology at Utah State University https://usu-edu.zoom.us/webinar/register/4816057094386/WN_rFr6kfzETfurDdPZ1LBG1w



On the American Tree Farm System website at <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/webinar-archive> click on "Webinar Archive". View archived webinar's, if you have not seen it, it is new to you. Just to name a few topics on this website:

Archaeology on Private Lands <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/archaeologyprivatelands>

Pollinator Conservation in Forest Lands <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/pollinatorconservation>

Bat Management <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/batmanagementwebinar>

Wild Turkey Woodlands: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/wildturkeywebinar>

There are many more topics to choose from, give them a view.

1) SPRING 2021 FIELD DAY

The Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year event will be held on April 24, 2021 at the Spirit Hill Certified Family Forest owned by Carl Struck and Johanne Riddick. Lunch will be provided by the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee. Additional information will be forthcoming as we get closer to the Spring Field Day. We look forward to visiting with you. If you have any questions, please contact Arnie Friedt at arnie.friedt@state.nm.us

2) COMMITTEE MEETING

All Tree Farmers are invited and encouraged to take part in our 3rd New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Meeting of the year (three held annually). Please join us at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, December 9th, 2020. This meeting will be VIRTUAL utilizing "ZOOM", an invite will be sent to you via your e-mail address prior to December 9th. Join us and hear what other tree farmers have been up to and share your tree farm accomplishments with the group. We look forward to visiting with you. If you have any questions, please contact Arnie Friedt at arnie.friedt@state.nm.us

3) BUY, SELL OR TRADE

Are you looking for forestry related equipment to buy (i.e., chipper, splitter, chainsaw, etc.)? Or do you own forestry related equipment you would like to sell or trade? Forestry related equipment only, please, no homes or land. We would like to help you make the connection with other New Mexico Tree Farmers. Provide us with a description of the equipment, price, photo and contact information and we will post it in the New Mexico Tree Farm Bulletin. If you would like us to help you make the connection, please provide information to Arnie Friedt at arnie.friedt@state.nm.us

4) E-MAIL INSTEAD OF SNAIL MAIL

Would you prefer to receive your Tree Farm Bulletin by e-mail instead of snail mail? If so, contact Arnie Friedt at arnie.friedt@state.nm.us and provide him with your contact information. By receiving your Tree Farm Bulletin by e-mail our operating costs are reduced. Thank you for considering this option.

