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TREE FARM BULLETIN

HIGHSTUMPING.... WHAT AND WHY?

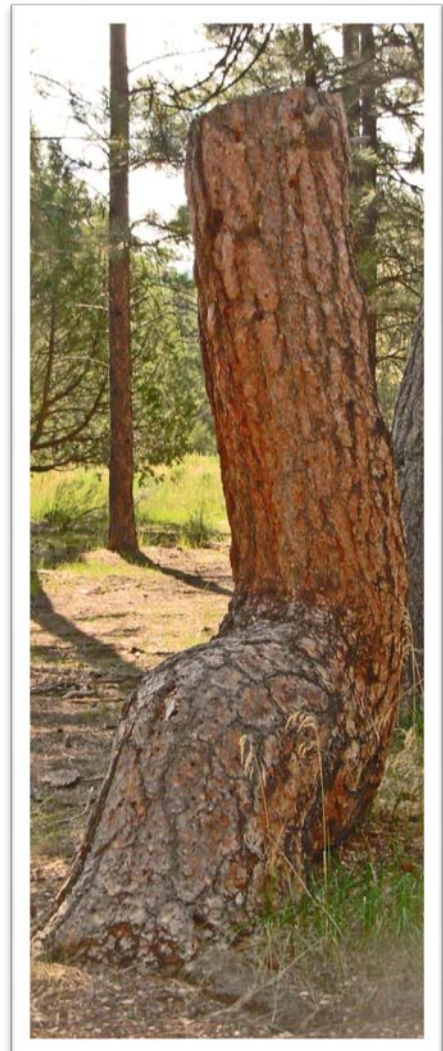
By Carl Struck, New Mexico Tree Farm #2

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With editing help by Max Steenbock, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder

When my wife Johanne Riddick and I bought our 40-acre forest in 1987 we made note of a handful of unusually shaped Ponderosa Pine trees and have since done our best to protect and preserve these venerable oddities despite the fact that they will never be of any marketable value. Their aesthetic value, providing a welcome visual respite from the classic straight and tall Ponderosa profile, was enough to insure their exclusion from any calculating forest management decisions. One in particular stood out as special. One of our neighbors told the story of shepherding sheep in our forest in his youth during the 1950's. He and his friends called this beauty the "horsey tree" and used to "ride" its bent trunk to wile away the time. It became a favorite of visitors and our frequent camping groups who loved to set their tents beneath its spreading canopy.

Unfortunately, about 8 years ago, the tree fell victim to a bark beetle attack and died. A couple of years later, we decided we had to cut it down to prevent a potentially hazardous situation should it come down while someone camped beneath it's fall zone. Its lower seven-foot section was so wonderfully formed that we thought we'd preserve that section and make our cut that high off the ground, forming a high-stump. So, for years we continued to enjoy its serpentine shape each time we passed by on our well-worn path through our property. Two years ago, we began noticing that a couple of birds, Northern Flickers, took an unusual interest in the top two feet of this high



stump and began construction of a deep cavity. It became obvious that they were preparing a nest and yes, they followed through and successfully raised their young. Right next to this large cavity we also noticed a very small opening which we were able to identify as a cavity nest for a Mountain Chickadee pair.

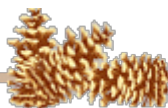


This past Spring both cavity nests once again successfully produced Flicker and Chickadee babies. When the Flicker pair first started their cavity construction, my curiosity drove me a little deeper into Flicker lore. I consulted a very old but venerable 1936 volume of *Birds of America* (Pearson) to find that in some parts of the country the Flicker is called a “high-hole” or “High-holder” because of its habit of building its nest in a hole “near the top of a high dead tree-stub”. So, it would appear that by accident we provided the perfect habitat for at least two species of bird. In addition, it is well known that the abandoned cavities of Flicker nests are the preferred nesting sites for Flammulated Owls. Flammulated Owls have been having a difficult time finding appropriate cavities of late as old snags are often targeted for cutting by our local fire wood hunters.

(<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1368355>)

All this has led me to the conviction that when it becomes necessary to cut down a large diameter tree (dead or alive) I will henceforth consider this experience and, if possible, high-stump it to provide much needed habitat for our feathered friends. It might even reduce the Flicker's obsession with trying to make cavity nests in our various out buildings! Another advantage to this high-stumping practice would be the inevitable toppling of the high-stump itself at which time it would become coarse woody debris (CWD) and become useful in the forest soil health cycle as well as helping support biodiversity. A great Win/Win opportunity!

So, I can hear the question...” how do you high-stump a tree...safely?” A very good question indeed! A Google search for “high-stumping” will get you a hilarious video of a sawyer cutting a huge tree with a monster saw at about a 6-foot height “kids, don't try this at home!” In my case, you can see by the photo, that I only had to stand on the broad, horizontal lower section and the cut was then only chest high. The tree was also leaning significantly away from me! A cut like this is not too difficult to achieve safely if the operator is a competent chainsaw user, considers the cut carefully, rehearsing one's exit route, and is in reasonable physical shape. A more normally shaped tree would pose more serious considerations but cutting a high-stump at the highest comfortable and safe height of the chainsaw operator is within most of our abilities. Having said this, however, many of us have had our local power company send a professional crew to clear branches or large trees from our power right-



of-way and in such instances a suggestion of leaving a tree high stumped can result in the desired effect. Of course, a large diameter, dead tree in the thick of the forest is best left to stand as a snag for maximum wildlife habitat, letting nature take its course. But if such a tree had to come down, why not consider cutting it as high as safely possible for wildlife habitat? In commercial logging operations it is well known that high stumping select trees results in increased biodiversity (<http://www.metsaboard.com/Media/Metsa-Board-Magazine/Pages/High-stumps-and-retention-trees.aspx>) (<https://goo.gl/uGuR7c>). Of course, in such operations, large powered equipment is used and the mechanics of cutting a high stump are vastly simplified.

High stumping then, is something worth considering when conditions allow the practice to be undertaken in an efficient and safe manner. Just another tool in a tree farmers management kit.

1) WHEN WAS YOUR LAST TREE FARM INSPECTION?

When was the last time your property was inspected by a Tree Farm Inspector? If it has been longer than five years you are overdue. A Tree Farm inspection should be conducted every five years. If it has been longer than five years, you are no longer a “Certified” Tree Farmer and you need to be inspected. It is imperative that we make sure the inspections and management plans for our certified tree farmers are current, concise and correct, with addendums where needed. If you have not had your tree farm inspected in the last 5 years, please call your inspector and set up a date and a time for an inspection. All you need to do is call your Tree Farm Inspector at one of the numbers below and have the coffee pot on when your inspector gets there.

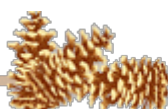
Chama District	575-588-7831	Cimarron District	575-376-2204
Socorro District	575-835-9359	Las Vegas District	505-425-7472
Capitan District	575-354-2231	Bernalillo District	505-867-2334

2) 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

3) COMMUNITY CORNER

If your community is having a forestry related public event let us know the details and we would be delighted to promote your event in the New Mexico Tree Farm Bulletin. Give us the event details, Who, What, Where and When with contact information and we will include in our monthly bulletin. If you would like us to help you promote your event, 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 Doug Boykin at doug.boykin@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.

5) COMMITTEE MEETING

All Tree Farmers are invited and encouraged to attend our 3rd New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Meeting of the year (three held annually). Please join us at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, December 13, 2017 at the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish office located at 3841 Midway Place NE, Albuquerque, NM. Come out 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

6) AMAZONSMILE

DID YOU KNOW SHOPPING AT AMAZONSMILE CAN HELP SUPPORT THE NEW MEXICO TREE FARM COMMITTEE?

WHAT IS AMAZONSMILE?

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop on AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers.

HOW DOES AMAZONSMILE WORK?

When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization from almost one million eligible organizations. To browse or shop AmazonSmile, customers must first select a charitable organization. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer's selected charitable organization.

IS THERE ANY COST TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS OR TO THE CUSTOMERS?

No. There is no cost to charitable organizations or to AmazonSmile customers. The shopping experience is identical to Amazon.com with the added benefit that the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate to the charitable organizations selected by customers.

DOES THE AMAZONSMILE FOUNDATION TAKE ANY PORTION OF DONATIONS TO FUND ITS OPERATIONS?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT, NEW MEXICO TREE FARM COMMITTEE.

