VOLUME VIII

NUMBER 2

SEPTEMBER 2005



NEW MEXICO TREE FARM NEWS



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The Patersons – 2004 New Mexico Tree Farmers of the Year

Doug Boykin and Charlie Wicklund

Those of you that were unable to attend the 2005 NM Tree Farm program fall field day at Tom and Callie Paterson 2004 Tree Farm of the Year missed a great opportunity to see how different agencies can work together across boundaries to improve forest and watershed health. Some of the individuals representing agencies that were present were Doug Boykin, Socorro District Forest, NM State Forestry (State Tree Farm Program Advisor), Pat Morrison from US Forest Service, Glenwood Ranger District, Howard Hutchison from the San Francisco SWCD, Frank Corn NRCS District Conservationist and Dave Menzie from the NM Environmental Department. These were just a few of over 50 attendees who made the trip to the Luna Area. There were also a large number of attendees from just across the Arizona/New Mexico border. New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Chair Harry Morrison, Treasurer Charlie Wicklund, and outgoing secretary Rachel Woods were also present, along with various staff people from NM State Forestry and US Forest Service.



The Patersons with Doug Boykin, Harry Morrison and Will Stapleton at their Tree Farm

The Paterson Tree Farm is just one of the ranches outside of Luna, NM that is owned by different members of the Paterson family. Depending on who is telling the story. Tom or Alex, Tom's father, there were a number of sheepherders who belonged to the Luna family (of Los Lunas fame) or worked for the Luna's that were "slaughtered" in the Valley of Centerfire Creek by the Apaches in the 1880's. Tom tells that there were no survivors. Alex recounts that there was one women and child who made their way to the Frisco Plaza (present day Reserve) to warn the other area residents, as well as to tell the story. It was great listening to both and having them tell the group that the other person doesn't know what they're talking about.





Discussions at Paterson's Tree Farm

The tour of the ranch included the thinning of understory ponderosa pine stands (about 30 acres) as well as viewing the large erosion control/ grade structure on the Centerfire Creek. This large erosion control dam was very impressive and is working well. Tom stated "they have had two 25-year floods in the past month". The dam impounds heavy flows and runoff, allows the silt to settle out above the structure, then releases most of the water within 36 hours. It going to take years, but someday the steep banks that currently line Centerfire creek will disappear and a gentle well will be in place. As Tom stated, "this is going to help the people down stream and allow them to install their erosion control devices without having them being washed out. Work of this type needs to start at top of the watershed to help individuals on the lower end of the watershed restore their stretch of streambed".

Lunch was catered by the Luna Historical Committee and the food was great. There were hamburgers with the fixings and home made deserts.

After lunch, Tom and Callie were presented a plaque and a new Stihl chainsaw along with assorted protective equipment (Courtesy of the



NM Tree Farm Committee, American Tree Farm Program, and Stihl Chainsaws) by current NM Tree Farm Committee Harry Morrison and past chairmen Will Stapleton, Tree Framer of Year in 1994. Also in attendance was past Tree Framer of the Year Pat Jenks form 1992. Pat is a young 94. Alex "Bishop" Paterson was also presented a framed copy of the original surrender document signed by Geronimo for the Luna Historical.



Tour participants reviewing the restoration work done by the US Forest Service in the upper Centerfire Creek Watershed

In the afternoon, Pat Morrison, the Glenwood District Ranger along with staff from the Gila NF gave a brief history of the watershed and how she has worked Tom and Alex (known to many locals as the "Bishop") to implement erosion control practices on the upper end of the Centerfire watershed. Pat along with her staff conducted a driving tour with many stops of the upper watershed. The work was very impressive and all that was accomplished by agencies, landowners and concerned citizens working together.

We also had the opportunity to view changing aspens on both sides of Arizona/ New Mexico border. Great colors. The day ended with an October rainstorm coming in from the southwest, chasing everyone back into their



vehicles at Higgins Flat. The group parted ways after a very successful day.

For all those attending, thank you so much, for all those who did not attend, you missed a very special day "in the woods".

The Life and Death of a Ponderosa Forest or How Man Can Wreck Nature

By Hart Allex

The crown fire rages through the forest. Afterwards there is nothing left but ash and tall black posts. Another Southwest forest goes up in smoke. That is an all too common scenario these days. How did we come to this?

There are probably more reasons than the questions that prompt them, but it all comes down to the activities of Man. Sure, forest fires happened before the human race started playing with forests. But they were probably not the clear cutting nothing left forest fires we have today.

The most interesting aspect to this disaster is that the lack of fire is what makes the fires so catastrophic. Hello? For some of us this is old news but for most it is still a wake up call. For that matter the Forest Service has, only in the past few decades, reversed their century old stance of putting out every fire as soon as possible. And, at that, the enviro wackos are still against the new policy. Legal action from them hampers thinning and prescribed burning at all levels and to allow a natural fire to continue burning under good conditions invites their noise level to increase.

So what happened? In 1890 there were 5 million sheep and a million cows in New Mexico. The Sangre de Cristos played center stage in the strip mining of the grazing lands because there were communities in all the little valleys. Keep in mind this is not a big mountain range. It didn't take too long before



Have you ever seen pictures of how the Ponderosa forests looked before the strip mining?(http://www.eri.nau.edu/whats restorati on/how_changed.aspx) It is an awesome thing. Did you ever hear of vellow pine? Well, that was the color of the bark on the huge trees. Don't see that anymore. These trees were separated by lots of space and it all had grass and shrubs growing on it. Don't see that anymore. Ever wonder where the turkey and deer went? I thought they were poached out but closer inspection shows there is nothing to eat in my forest. There is nothing on the ground between the trees but pine needles and pine cones. The sun can't get down there.

Of course, it didn't take too long before the grazing was over, the stock population crashed and the precipitation came out of the mountains rather than soaking in. But the big trees were all gone by then. Railroad ties, mine timbers and city construction all had their way with the yellow pine. According to the Ecological Restoration Institute it only takes 65 years without burning or thinning to cause the kind of forest we have. How long does it take for nature to fix this mess herself? No sign of progress so far.

Logging the trees did not cause the destruction of the forest. The trees are here ready to burn in the next forest fire. To save them we have to thin them and get the ground cover growing again. That is a tall order. On my place we figure we need to take out 85% of the trees. That is a scary statement and an unimaginable job.

Have you really looked at a Ponderosa? If it is growing by itself it is fully formed, with live





branches to the ground and except for the newest ones they are horizontal. Most of my trees have dead branches the first 10 to 15 feet and the others ones are at a 45 degree angle. They can't droop because other trees are in the way. They can't fully develop needles because there is not enough sunlight. They will never make it to the yellow pine stage. Most of the trees on my ranch are younger than I am.

When trees are packed that close together they are ripe for a variety of predators. Squirrels can jump from tree to tree and are great at nipping off the new growth and girdling the bark near the top. Mistletoe only needs 30 feet to flip the seeds to other trees. Elk terrorize the short saplings that are not fully branched. And of course, water and nutrients are in short supply and over demand with a crowded forest.

So, we can leave our forests overcrowded and ripe for the next fire or we can thin (hard) and help the ground cover with reseeding and shrub planting. Besides the awesome feeling of walking through a forest that looks like a park we have the satisfaction of knowing that the vegetation and wildlife are much better off. When these trees are marketable size there may no long be a need for wood in our society. But there is always a need for recreation, wildlife and water retention in the mountains.

I liberally borrowed from many sources for this article including the Ecological Restoration Institute (http://www.eri.nau.edu/) but the very best is: "Enchantment and Exploitation" The life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range by William DeBuys. It describes what happened to the Sangre de Cristos.

A LAND OF SUPERLATIVES

By Will Stapleton



A quick glance at a map showing the Socorro Forestry District alongside the Capitan Forestry District would not be enough to determine which was the larger of the two. I knew I'd be in hot water if I tried that approach so I sought expert reference instead; i.e., the New Mexico Administrative code, all counties statistics, year 2002. Adding the land area (in square miles) of the counties in each district, Socorro Forestry District emerges as the winner with 31,921 square miles. Capitan Forestry District has 30,989 square miles.

This large district has two counties within its boundaries that are large. Catron County, in the northwest guardant, with a land area of 6,898 square miles, is the largest county in New Mexico. Its neighbor to the east, Socorro County, with a land area of 6,626 square miles, is the third largest county in New Mexico. Socorro and other counties (Bernalillo, San Miguel, Santa Fe and Taos) were political entities, created by Mexico in 1844. After New Mexico became part of the United States in 1846, these counties were reestablished as territorial counties (1850-52) Socorro County is one of the oldest counties in New Mexico.

Before leaving Socorro County, there is another feature which deserves some attention. Known as the Rio Grande Rift, it came into being about 30 million years ago when two more or less parallel fault zones crossed New Mexico from north to south. As tension pulled the two halves of New Mexico apart, the central north-south sliver between the fault zones dropped downward. As the center portion dropped and filled with sand and gravel, land masses on either side of the valley pushed upward, creating mountain ranges like the Sandias and Manzanos. The faults along the eastern side of the rift have been inactive for many thousands of years, but here is still plenty of minor movement on the west side between Belen and Socorro and north of Los Alamos. The movement (seismic activity) in



the Socorro is roughly centered above a thin 650 square mile magma body. The magma is moving, in small quantities, upward into crust less than 12 miles below the earth's surface, causing it to rise 1/4 inch per year.

About 50 miles to the northwest of Socorro, in the north central part of the district, there is a geographical feature known as the Plains of Agustine. This beautiful, flat-floored, mountain bounded, extensively grassed valley, tucked in New Mexico's largest closed basin, was once a 50 mile long Ice Age time (1.8 million to 10,000 years ago) lake. The vegetation of the Ice Age (steppe grassland; sagebrush upland; riparian forest of birch, spruce and shrubs; as well as xeric plants such as ragweed, juniper, oak, cottonwood and willow) supported melting pots of very large and small animals. By 10,000 years ago, the very large animals had become extinct, because of change in climate and plant communities or hunting pressure from humans. Paleorindians, nomadic, big game hunters had arrived in the area about 11,000 to 12,000 years ago.

As interesting as the foregoing is to some of us, most visitors do not come to the Plains of Agustine for the same reasons. Most visitors to the area are interested in seeing the site of the radioastronomy observatory where a very large array of saucer like antennae gathers radio signals from far out in interstellar space. Signals emitted millions and even billions of years ago, only now reaching the Earth, give scientists here a look at conditions within the universe at the time when our solar system was young. A visitor center, a slide show, and a walking tour explain the various areas of study among them the births and deaths of stars, the properties of galaxies like our own, and the history of the origin of the universe. Mostly the array of 27 antennas (each weighs 230 tons and measures 82 feet in diameter) is distributed along railroad tracks arranged in a Y shape. Two branches of the Y are about 13 miles long and the third is more than 11 miles



long. Antennas rotate toward a radio source, of which a picture is generated after 8 to 12 hours exposure time. The array can be contracted or expanded by moving the antennae towers along interesting railroad tracks.

Beginning about 40 million years ago, much of southwestern and central New Mexico was subjected to an enormous explosion of volcanic activity that lasted about 20 million years before subsiding. Great thicknesses of ash-flow tuffs, along with orndesit, rhyolite and basalt flows, originated from gigantic volcanic caldrons (some more than 30 miles in diameter), as a consequence of two colliding tectonic plates along the western coast of North America. Many of the caldrons have eroded so that they are not obvious in the present landscape. One exception is the Black Range. The southern two-thirds of the range is a 30 mile wide caldera that has been tilted and eroded. Thus, the interior is visible. More than two Valle Grande calderas (28 miles wide) could fit in the Black Range caldera. It's that big!

The Gila National Forest is the largest national forest in New Mexico with 3.3 million acres (including 614,202 acres of the Apache National Forest in New Mexico that's administered by Gila National Forest. It is a vast area of rugged mountain ranges in southwestern New Mexico that is little affected by civilization. It has been called a caldron of colliding ecosystems because it is positioned where the Chihuahua Desert, the Sonoran Desert, the Sierra Madre Mountains and Highlands of Mexico, the southern Rocky Mountains, and Sky Islands, like the Chiricahuas Mountains (thrusting abruptly from the desert floor to create forested "islands" in a sea of arid grasslands), all overlap. The mountains represent the northern limit for many tropical plant and animal species, the southern limit for North American species and a migratory corridor for hundreds of others. A



profusion of plants and animals, many of them throw backs to the Ice Age are now stranded on the Sky Islands. Others use the north-south alignment and microclimate to provide migratory corridors and borderland paths for birds and animals. There is a tremendous amount of biological diversity here in this part of the United States.

There you have it. A small taste of something BIG. I hope you have an opportunity to get out and enjoy it.



Will Stapleton receiving his Distinguished Service Award/Plaque from Doug Boykin and Harry Morrison

Community Irrigation Ditches By Robert E. Oxford (Reprinted from Talon – The Aztec Local News July 1-15, 2005)

Let's examine some of the history of irrigation ditches in the San Juan River Basin in and around San Juan County. The oldest ditch in the area is the Turley (Manzanares) ditch located a few miles below Navajo Dam on the San Juan River. This ditch, in 1938, was irrigating about 270 acres of farmland and was given a right to take 6.7 cubic feet per second



of water, at its intake, off the San Juan River. It has a priory date of 1876 relating to its initial action to use water. The second oldest ditch is the Lower Animas Ditch, with a priority date of 1877, diverting off the Animas River above Aztec and below Cedar Hill. This ditch was irrigating 1497 acres of farmland in 1938 and was given 40.5 CFS of flow plus 3.6 CFS for the Town of Aztec. All ditches in the Echo Ditch Decree of 1948 were given 1 CFS for each 40 acres of irrigated land. The most junior old ditch in the valley is the Farmer's Mutual Ditch that diverts about 100 CFS and has both a diversion point on the Animas River and the San Juan River, both near the confluence of the two rivers in Farmington. The Farmers Mutual Ditch goes all the way through Kirtland and has a priority date of 1920 on the Animas River.

What does cubic feet per second mean? This is a measure of a volume (1 cubic foot or 1 foot X 1 foot by 1 foot) flowing at a velocity of 1 foot per second of time. Most ditches I have measured, flow at a velocity of 1 to 1.50 ft. per second. Water flowing at 1 ft. per second will flow 3600 feet (60 seconds times 60 minutes) or approximately three-fourths of a mile per hour. Some of our ditches in the valley are 30 miles long, taking 40 hours for water leaving the river at the head of the ditch to reach the end of the ditch. The cross sectional area of the ditch times the velocity of the ditch determines the flow rate of the ditch. In other words, if a ditch is 10 foot wide and 6 feet deep, flowing at 1 ft. per second, the CFS of the ditch is 60 CRS.

There were 15 ditches on the La Plata River, 19 on the Animas River, 12 on the San Juan River, 13 on the Pine River, and 4 on the Navajo River identified in the 1948 decree. Of these, about 12 remain on the La Plata, 18 on the Animas, 5 on the San Juan, about 4 on the Pine, and 4 on the Navajo River. Navajo Lake inundated a lot of the ditches on the San Juan and Pine River. The Echo Decree confirmed



about 36,000 acres being irrigated and gave out water rights in District Court. The current State Engineer attorneys say they did not participate in the Echo Decree in 1948 because it was not a State Adjudication of all the water users in the Basin. But the State was a party to it and can choose whether to actively get involved, or not, but are bound by the District Court's decisions in the Echo Decree, nonetheless.

The State Engineer (actually State of New Mexico) attorneys are going to press the court to adjudicate everyone a consumptive use amount and a farm delivery amount in the coming adjudication. Most in the Echo Decree, except La Plata, was given a FDR amount of about 3 acre-feet per acre. The consumptive use amount is associated with the consumptive irrigation requirement for growing a crop. The 1938 State Engineers Report, which was an exhibit in the Echo Decree, was not adjudicated as some say in Santa Fe, but was only one of many exhibits in the Court Case given consideration by the Judge. The CIR's in the Engineers report vary from about 1.0 to 2.0, with 1.0 at the Colorado border and 2.0 at the Hogback towards Shiprock. The 1938 Engineer report acknowledges a wide variation in the basin and many factors contribute to the variance. So why does the State believe agricultural uses in this basin by each ditch or water user must have a cap, such as a consumptive use amount? Their theory is the individual's water right is only the amount of water the crop consumes, or beneficially puts to use in the evapotranspiration process, less the effective rainfall. The farm delivery requirement doubles the CIR, assuming an irrigation efficiently of 50%, or flood irrigating.

My goodness how complicated this must be for the average irrigator on an irrigation ditch. Why, in my opinion, have we come to all this new stuff if the State Engineer wants in the new adjudication? In my opinion, many things have changed in the State Engineer's office



since the death of Steve Reynolds in 1990. The office became political in 1992 when Governor Johnson was elected. The San Juan Water Commission got Tom Turney appointed as State Engineer because of the Animas-La Plata project. Mr. Turney, in turn, got the attorneys more involved in all water right matters, other than just adjudications. He also let, or encouraged, the Interstate Stream Commission be more involved in water right matters, other than just compact issues. This has led to power struggles within the State Engineer's overall duties. On top of this, we have a State Engineer with very little experience with water rights administration prior to his appointment by Governor Richardson. The State Engineer has over appropriated water in this basin to the Bureau of Reclamation, which is now becoming Navajo Nation water rights. The squeeze is on by the State Engineer to eliminate the old ditch water rights, no ifs, ands, or buts. But of course, this is just one expert's opinion.

Some Wildlife (Food) Tree Species for New Mexico

By John Harrington

While most trees and shrubs from pines and junipers to various cactus offer a wide range of benefits to wildlife the following species which can provide abundant food for various wildlife species.

Chokecherry Crabapple American Plum Little Walnut Wild Plum

<u>Trees</u>

Burr Oak Gambel Oak Arizona Walnut White Oak

<u>Shrubs</u>

Currants Elderberry Winter Fat Snowberry



Bitterbrush Huckleberry Buffaloberry Gooseberry Raspberry Myrtle Blueberry Mt. Mahogany Fourwing Saltbush

Arboriculture, Part 1

By Joseph Stehling

While viewing an episode of Southwest Yard and Garden some time ago, I became interested in the structure of trees. I thought you might also be interested in how the various parts of a tree function, how trees cope with stress, and how trees can be damaged. As such, this is the first in a series of educational articles on these subjects. The source for this article is:

Arboriculture. Integrated Management of Landscape Trees, Shrubs, and Vines. Richard W. Harris, James R. Clark, and Nelda P Matheny, Fourth Edition, Prentice Hall, 2003

Arboriculture is defined as the cultivation of trees and shrubs - the planting, care, and scientific cultivation of trees and woody vegetation in a non-forest environment.

There are 10 principles associated with tree care. An understanding of these principles can assist you in diagnosing problems with trees and allow you to make informed recommendations on proper care and rehabilitative work.

- As tree development changes with time, so must tree care.
 - Trees grow rapidly when young and reach mature height early in their life cycle. During this period of rapid growth, care should be focused on developing good



- Tree care is a long-term, low intensity process
 - Trees generally possess long life spans and thrive under conditions of stability. Change, in almost any form represents stress for trees. Transplanting, pruning, and pest management can all be stress factors. Programs of care must minimize change around trees. Arboricultural treatments should be provided in small doses over the long term. The next article will discuss how trees compensate for some of the induced stresses.
- Tree care is founded on the principles of plant health care
 - Pest management and tree management cannot be separated. The tree is the key to managing pest and cultural problems. By maintaining health and vigor the tree will be most resistant to stress of all types. The reverse is also true. The control of many pests is based on cultural treatments, such as pruning and irrigation.





- Tree care applies general concepts to specific genotypes.
 - Arboricultural practice starts with general concepts, such as natural target pruning. compartmentalization, and "right tree right place". The latter is particularly important in our rather unforgiving environment in the Southwest. We apply those general concepts in very specific ways, based on the requirements of the individual genera, species, or cultivars. It is very important that you become familiar with the cultural and environmental requirements of each tree species suitable for planting in our climate. I cannot stress that last statement enough when you are making recommendations to our clients.
- In tree care, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure because we have a limited ability to cure.
 - Trees grow in a manner that • accumulates history and treatment. Once a tree has been injured by construction equipment, experienced a change in grade or soil compaction, or been poorly pruned, it is difficult to correct the problem. Similarly, once a tree is in severe decline, we can do little to arrest that pattern. What we can do is take a positive active approach to avoiding significant changes to the tree's growing environment and factors that predispose the tree to stress and decline.
- Good trees and tree care start with quality plants.
 - There is no substitute for a



quality plant, either as nursery stock or an existing tree. Structure depends on initial culture so there is little we can do to modify basic problems such as poor branch spacing and attachment; root bound container stock, and inadequate trunk taper. So, the initial focus should be on obtaining quality plants.

- Tree selection is founded on "right plant, right place"
 - This principle is especially important in our rather unforgiving climate. We need to thoroughly understand our environmental and cultural conditions and select the species and cultivars adapted to each particular site or growing situation. A critical site assessment might consider temperature, precipitation pattern, soil, environmental stresses (e.g. pavement or road salt), available growing space, microclimate conditions, and management regime.
- Arboriculture treatments can have either positive benefits or negative consequences.
 - Our actions can have both positive and negative effects on tree growth. In his writings Alex Shigo, a noted arborculturist, says that pruning may be the best thing we can do for a tree, and the worst thing we can do for a tree. On one hand, clearing the crown of dead, dying, diseased, and otherwise structurally unsound branches is generally positive. On the other hand, topping the same tree to remove 90% of its foliage is negative.



The timing, intensity, application, and quality of pruning determine whether the effect is beneficial or deleterious. Other treatments,

- such as irrigation, fertilization, mulching, pest management, support systems, and tree injection, offer similar variations in response.
- Tree health and hazard are related but not equivalent.
 - Trees that are apparently healthy may possess significant structural defects that compromise their stability. In such cases, trees normally considered vigorous may fail. Although tree health and structural stability are related, they are not equivalent. You will need to consider both aspects of tree development when evaluating and recommending a program of care.
- Arboriculture and forestry are related but not equivalent fields.
 - Arborists see trees as individuals with a goal of maximizing the development of each tree with little or no sense of time. Foresters see trees as components of a large group with a goal of maximizing development of the group within a fixed time period. Trees growing in the open develop differently than those found in groups. We must acknowledge these differences in perspective and development, and use them in a variety of management situations.

In the next article I will discuss tree structure and some common tree problems and their resolution.



New Mexico Tree Farm News is cosponsored by:

- American Forest Foundation
- Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department – Forestry Division
- New Mexico State University Mora Research Center

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New Mexico Tree Farm News is published once or twice a year, depending on funds. Distribution includes over 150 Tree Farmers throughout New Mexico along with over 50 forest product producers. If you would like to advertise your Tree Farm, your products, or your company, please send us the information and we will be glad to include it in the next newsletter.

Donations to cover printing and mailing cost are always appreciated.

Dear New Mexico Tree Farmers:

My apologies for not getting this newsletter out sooner. It has been a busy field season with many changes and little time for folks to submit materials. I want to again encourage all New Mexico Tree Farmers who wish to submit their writing to do so. Also, as you have read in the past two issues, if you come across an article you think others might like, please send a copy to me with information on how to contact the



author or publisher for permission to reprint the article. The easiest way is to submit your article, poem, etc. via electronic mail to John Harrington (joharrin@nmsu.edu) or by regular mail at:

John Harrington

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2005 New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Christmas Tree Ornament

As many of you all know, we have several NM Tree Farmers who are donating native grown trees off their private lands to be placed in various federal offices in Washington DC, as well as in Sen. Domenici's, Sen. Bingaman's, Rep. Wilson's and Rep. Pearce's offices.

The Tree Farm Committee wanted to make sure that these offices realize where the trees came from, as well as the Tree Farmers themselves receive something

for their efforts. Christmas Tree So we are getting Ornaments made.



We have ordered 100 of these ornaments, and expect to give out about 15, leaving 85 or so to sell to interested members, State Forestry employees, etc. We should have them right after Thanksgiving, in time for the division meeting.

Cost will be \$15.00 each. Please fax in the needed information if you want one reserved for you and your family.

Name_





Number of Ornaments_____

(Checks can be made out to the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee) Fax to NM Sate Forestry, Socorro (505.835.9452)

