



Joseph M. Stehling Jr.
Chairman,
NM Tree Farm Committee
HC 70 Box 109
Ocate, NM 87734
(575)-377-0546
joestehling@earthlink.net
www.nmtreefarmers.org

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TREE FARM BULLETIN

Greetings and Happy New Year!

It's nice to see some snow for the New Year but of course we are still well below average for precipitation over most of the state. The general prognosis is for continued warmer and drier weather in New Mexico for years to come. If the prognosis turns out to be correct our forests could see more large scale disturbances such as fire, insect epidemics, wind throw, etc. as nature adjusts to possibly a "new normal". As our local climate does become drier and warmer our forests will not be able to sustain the number of trees that have become established and grown over the past 100-150 years.

All the more reason for Tree Farmers to be actively managing their forest or woodland areas. Any forest thinning removes the weaker trees that nature will "thin" anyway and one result is more water retention. By opening up the forest a thin allows more precipitation to reach the forest floor where it stays (assuming no erosion problems) to become available to plants and trees.

Of course everyone is aware of fire danger. A thin obviously will remove a lot of "fuel" for any potential fire. If we are warmer and drier, fire will be more of a threat. As well as removing fuel, greater water retention in itself will help to reduce fire risk. Water and fire do not mix.

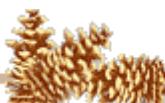
If you are not currently thinning your property the New Year is a good time to plan projects. If you have thinned parts of your property in the past now is a good time to walk that area to determine if it needs additional work. Even with our limited moisture your forest is constantly growing and evolving. In forestry the job is never done.

H a p p y T h i n n i n g !

Harry A. Morrison, Vice Chairman, NM Tree Farm Committee

STATE INSPECTOR PROGRAM

The inspector corps is made up of consulting foresters with private forestry consulting firms in New Mexico, forest industry foresters and service foresters from the NM Forestry Division. Currently, there are 28 trained inspectors doing the inspecting and field work. Starting in 2011, inspector training has included about two hours of training on the ATFS Tree Farm Program data base. This allows trained inspectors to enter the inspections online, which in turn makes it possible to complete all forms of inspections in 5-7 days, start to finish. This also minimizes errors in multiple data base entry activities.



The New Mexico Tree Farm Committee has been working hard to substitute quality for quantity and, has thus been very engaged in inspections outside the required national sample. This resulted in 51 total inspections being completed in 2012 (7 required) from a standing count of 160+/. The top three inspectors receive a gift certificate from Sportsman's Warehouse for their hard work. The New Mexico Tree Farm Committee is pleased to award Capitan District Staff Forester Frank Silva with The John Harrington New Mexico Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector Award for 2012.



Chairman Joe Stehling (left) presents Inspector Frank Silva (right) with Inspector of the Year Traveling Plaque which he gets to display in his office for the next year. Frank completed a total of 16 inspections. Receiving the second place award was Shannon Atencio (12 inspections) from the Las Vegas District and Joe Carrillo (7 inspections) from the Chama District received third place.

Congratulations Frank, Shannon and Joe, job well done!

Doug Boykin, Program Advisor, NM Tree Farm Committee

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN: Once again I wish everyone a Happy New Year. I am looking forward to this year. In addition to the third party audit of select tree farms that will be happening this year, we have a number of activities planned that I hope to see many of you attend-field days, thrice annual meetings, and our major activity honoring our 2012 Tree Farmer of the Year. We will be publishing the dates for those events as early as possible so you can plan on attending. I would like to congratulate Frank Silva for his hard work inspecting tree farms and winning our Inspector of the year award. He and the runner-ups did yeoman work in certifying and recertifying our wonderful tree farms and decertifying those tree farms that no longer wanted to participate in the program. We are looking for quality rather than quantity. Finally, as I mentioned previously, we would like to feature our hard working tree farmers in the bulletin. I would like you to tell your story and send it to me. I can make it pretty if you feel you are deficient in that area. I, and other tree farmers, would like to hear about how others are managing their forests. One additional note, we are still looking for someone to take on the duties of secretary for the committee. It is not an onerous job, but one that needs to be filled. Thanks for your help.

