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# NEW MEXICO TREE FARM NEWS

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## NEW MEXICO TREE FARMER OF THE YEAR

### American Tree Farm System Recognizes Chama Area Residents

On August 10<sup>th</sup> the New Mexico and Colorado Tree Farm Committees came together to honor their respective Outstanding State Tree Farmer's of the Year. New Mexico honored the Chromo Mountain Ranch owned by Dr. Richard and Sue Gooding .

Colorado honored the Diamond S Ranch owned by Jeb and Cecilia Binkly. These families were recognized for their commitment to land stewardship and for their active forest management programs. The Chromo Mountain and Diamond S ranches are neighboring properties located along the New Mexico/Colorado line, just north and west of Chama, New Mexico.

The Gooding and Binkley families who receive forestry assistance from state forestry personnel and private forestry consultants hosted a field tour of their respective properties. Those in attendance included tree farm landowners from both states, state forestry personnel, consultants and others interested in the management of private forest lands. Participants saw many practices which promote the mission of the American Tree Farm Program: "To promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry."

The group of over seventy, first toured the Diamond S where they had the opportunity to hear about management of mixed conifer, spruce/fir, wildlife and fisheries. The group then traveled to the Chromo Mountain Ranch where they had a

delicious BBQ lunch, compliments of Quality Wood Products, New Mexico Tree Farm Committee and the Colorado Tree Farm Committee. They then toured the Chromo Mountain ranch and heard about forest management for large game animals, oak brush control, and wildlife and riparian plantings utilizing the New Mexico State Forestry seedling program.

It was a very busy day for all in attendance, but a wonderful opportunity to see these beautiful properties, network and visit about good natural resource management with folks who have similar interests. A big thank you goes out to the Gooding and Binkley families for graciously allowing everyone to tour these spectacular properties.



Tree Farmers Pat and Julie Jenks of Luna, New Mexico October 2002

Pat and Julia have been tree farmers in the Luna area since May of 1984. Current NM Forestry Division Resource Protection Bureau Chief Fred Rossbach signed them up when Fred was the Timber Staff on the Socorro District.

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## Forester's Log: Philmont Forestry

© Mary Stuever, 22 November 2002

In northern New Mexico, on the eastern flank of the south end of the Rocky Mountains, there is a paradise. It is a magical land of enchantment known as Philmont Boy Scout Ranch. Donated to the scouts by philanthropist Waite Phillips, the camp today encompasses 214 square miles and is accessed by hundreds of miles of hiking trails. I am proud to be one of the 760,000 people who, since 1938, have hiked and cherished the Philmont trails.

When I started my summer employment there in the late 1970's, I was a freshman forestry student. By my final summer in 1983, I had graduated, and was a professional forester. In the years between, I had come to see this mountain paradise with exceedingly sharpened concern. Although fire suppression was a top priority, the forest was otherwise not being managed. In the absence of fire, dense stands of trees and massive amounts of downed logs were accumulating across the ranch. I knew it was not a question of if Philmont would burn; it was only a question of when the tragedy would occur. I was frustrated that my pleas for extensive forestry activities were not aligned with the existing recreation management directions that banned logging.

Fortunately, the ranch's management philosophy has changed. Although recreation is still the primary objective, Philmont is now embracing the role of providing stewardship for healthy forests. Last month, the ranch hosted a Grand Opening of their Demonstration Forest. This 45-acre area demonstrates several techniques of forest management. Created as an outdoor classroom, the area includes a covered gazebo and pit latrines. Trails roam through forests that have been logged by various methods, and include riparian and meadow restoration projects. Along the trails, interpretive signs, which can be changed as the ecosystem responds, inform hikers about the treatments.

About sixty people gathered to explore the new "classroom". Participants included area teachers planning field trips for their students, neighboring ranchers interested in implementing forestry programs, and staff and members of many organizations that had joined forces to help the ranch construct the project. New Mexico State Forestry Division provided the technical guidance; the wood for signs and structures were logged on site by Griego Lumber, milled at Quality Wood Products in Chama, and used in construction by staff at Philmont. The overriding sponsor of the project is the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee, an organization of private landowners who are committed to managing their forests and promoting forestry.

The site location is spectacular both from an aesthetic as well as practical stand point. Adjacent to the postcard-perfect landmarks of Cathedral Rock and Cimarroncito Reservoir, the central location is visited by 12,000 scouts each year hiking to base camp along the Tooth-of-Time Ridge. Vehicles, including school buses, can easily access the site as well. Less obvious, but as important, the project occurs in the watershed that provides the majority of water for the town of Cimarron.

Since the mid-1990's, Philmont had been focusing their forestry activities in this watershed and the adjacent watershed that serves the summer population of over 20,000 visitors. Considering the ranch's vast forests, these watersheds are top priority because the resulting erosion following catastrophic wildfires can be devastating to community watersheds. The hope is that by actively managing forests, lighter fuel conditions will mean less intense fires and watersheds that can recover from fires faster.

Fuel conditions are only part of the fire equation, as the ranch experienced this year. Early in the summer several lightning ignited fires called the Ponil Complex burned over 92,000 acres, 28,000 acres that were on the Boy Scout camp. Even in areas where the ranch had thinned or logged, the fires raged through in an intense firestorm. Extreme dry and windy weather conditions drove the blaze. Afterward, the ranch faced serious issues of having miles of blackened canyons and acres of charred slopes.

Following the tour of the Demonstration Forest, a small group of us headed north to examine some of the projects Philmont has undertaken to try to mitigate erosion and salvage some of the damaged timber. Standing on the moon-scaped hillsides of blackened earth amidst charred tree skeletons, I wanted to cry. As a forester, I see more than my fair share of the impact caused by catastrophic fires, results of our fire suppression legacy. Although I never master the emotional response these tragedies evoke, this time it felt worse. This fire burned in the Philmont paradise of my youth. My youthful predictions of destruction had come to pass. Yet now I was incredibly grateful the ranch was taking action to hopefully mitigate the impact of future fires.

## Order Your New Mexico Tree Farm Logo

You can still order your New Mexico Tree Farm logo now. An eight inch logo patch costs \$52.00, a 6 inch patch costs \$21.00, and an 4 1/4 in logo patch costs \$18.00. If you wish to have the logo sewn on a garment (vest, shirt or jacket), please include it the package. If you wish the package sent back to you, please include a self-

addressed and durable mailer large enough for the garment/and or patch. **Make the checks payable to: Will Stapleton, NM Tree Farm Program, P.O. Box 356 Aztec, New Mexico 87410.** Thanks for your support of the New Mexico Tree Farm Program.



## THE FOREST LAND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (FLEP) A NEW FOREST SERVICE PROGRAM

August 9, 2002



The Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) is an exciting new Forest Service landowner incentive program authorized in the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-171). Through FLEP, State forestry agencies can provide a wide array of services to ensure that our nation's non-industrial private forests (NIPF) and related resources continue to provide forest products and safeguard the health of our water, air, and wildlife.

The Forest Service manages the program through State forestry agencies to:

- Establish, manage, maintain, enhance, and restore NIPF lands;
- Enhance the productivity of timber, fish and wildlife habitat, soil, water, air quality, wetlands, and riparian buffers of these lands;
- Assist owners and managers to more actively manage NIPF lands and related resources;
- Reduce the risk and help restore, recover and mitigate the damage to forests caused by fire, insects, invasive species, disease and damaging weather; and to
- Encourage the use of State, Federal, and private sector resource management expertise, financial assistance and educational programs.

The FLEP program funding will be \$20 million in Fiscal Year 2003. An additional \$80 million will be divided among the following four years. State forestry agencies can use FLEP funds to provide financial, educational or technical assistance to NIPF owners to achieve a broad array of objectives including: (1) forest stewardship plan development, (2) afforestation and reforestation, (3) forest stand improvement, (4) agroforestry implementation, (5) water quality improvement and watershed protection, (6) fish and wildlife habitat protection, (7) forest health and protection, (8) invasive species control, (9) wildfire and catastrophic risk reduction, (10) wildfire and catastrophic event rehabilitation, and (11) special practices.

The FLEP program replaces two previous conservation incentives programs: the Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) and the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP). Eligibility criteria for FLEP are slightly broader than for SIP and FIP to allow more participation by tribes, those who manage land that they rent (rather than own) and land under tenure systems other than out-right ownership. FLEP allows treatment of up to 1000 acres per year and variances of up to 5,000 acres if significant public benefits will accrue. The aggregate payment is expected to be \$100,000 through 2007.

The Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are in the process of obligating any residual funds remaining in SIP and FIP. Both of these programs did receive 2002 appropriations. The Farm Bill provides for use of these 2002 funds for the program purposes.

Each State will be responsible for web-based accomplishment reporting. Reports will include practices implemented as well as technical and educational assistance provided. States will also track funds spent under each of these categories.

Program implementation will commence 30 days after the publication of an interim rule in the Federal Register (towards the end of calendar year 2002). A formal 60-day comment period will follow.

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### FUTURE EVENTS:

**Tree Farm Field Trip to Sherry Barrows Industries April 12, 2003**

**Mora Open House Meeting May 16, 2003**

**Tree Farm Executive Meeting in Mora Friday May 16, 2003.**

**Gascon Ranch Demonstration forest dedication May 17, 2003.**

**Fall Tree Farmer of the year Field Trip October 2003 TBA**

**National American Tree Farm Meeting Fort Collins October 2004.**

**Deadline for summer addition of newsletter submissions May 1, 2003**

**Rio Grande Demonstration Forest Dedication October 2003 TBA**



## WORDS FROM THE WOODS

### PHILMONT SCOUT RANCH DEMONSTRATION FOREST

By Arnie Friedt



Many hours had gone into the development of the Philmont Scout Ranch Demonstration Forest (PSRDF) in order to celebrate the Grand Opening on October 26, 2002. What is a demonstration forest you ask? A demonstration forest is a small-scale version of a working forest that demonstrates techniques of forest management. Forest management is usually practiced over an area of hundreds, or even thousands of acres, which makes understanding of its various aspects difficult for the occasional visitor. Demonstration forests are a program of the American Tree Farm System. The Philmont Scout Ranch agreed to sponsor a demonstration forest as part of their commitment to good forest management.

The PSRDF is an outdoor classroom, 45 acres in size, it demonstrates four harvesting methods and has nine learning stations:

#### Timber Harvesting Learning Stations

- Patch Cut Method
- Dwarf Mistletoe
- Sanitation Cut Method
- Tree Ring Counting
- Selection Cut Method
- Snag Station
- Seed Tree Cut Method
- Jeff Creek Riparian Zone
- Pre-commercial Thinning

- Western Spruce Budworm
- Bark Beetle
- Meadow Management
- Erosion Control

Our target audience is 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders but in reality people of all ages will benefit from what it has to offer. It is an educational tool and our hope is to inform people about forest management the forestry profession and the work foresters do. Thousands of scouts will be touring this project every summer and if they choose to they could earn a merit badge in forestry after completing all necessary requirements. For the rest of us, it will be open for tours in April/May and September/October of each year. If you are interested in bringing groups to tour this area, we ask that you give us at least a two-week prior notice if not more.

This PSRDF is a self-guided tour. The Visitor Center is the starting point, which will give you some background information. Once on the one mile tour, each of the learning stations informs you of different aspects of forest management.



Good forest management is always a work in progress. The PSRDF will need additional harvests and thinnings as time goes on. A forest is in a perpetual state of growth and

change. Recognizing the natural processes that grow and change a forest and working with these processes is the key to good forest management. This involves a long-term commitment and a recognition that the job is never done.

This Visitor Center was built for the PSRDF. Most of the lumber used in this structure was harvested off of the PSRDF. It was harvested by Griego Logging, milled by Mr. Harry Morrison and Quality Wood Products out of Chama, NM, returned to this site and built by the Philmont Construction Crew. All the hard work paid off with the overwhelming attendance at the Grand Opening on October 26, 2002. Sixty-two people braved the chilly morning to get a look at the first operational demonstration forest in New Mexico. Attendees included, tree farmers, local ranches,



local schools, government agencies and media. After the one mile hike a warm lunch was provided. After lunch, two optional tours ran concurrently, visitors could either attend the Villa Philmonte Tour or the Ponil Fire Rehabilitation Tour.

I would like to thank the following organizations that have made this project become a reality and it has by far been a team effort:

- Philmont Scout Ranch
- American Tree Farm System
- Quality Wood Products
- Mora Research Center
- New Mexico State Forestry Division

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