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NEWS RELEASE

November 4, 2014

**New Mexico Forestry Division Watershed Restoration Project to Begin on Public Lands
Using State Severance Tax Funds**

AZTEC, NM – Work is scheduled to begin on the Dos Rios Restoration Project, which will restore 510 acres of public land along the San Juan and Animas Rivers, using \$645,150 of state severance tax funding.

This project will promote the health of the watershed and reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and the resulting post-fire damage by removing invasive Russian olive and salt cedar, and encouraging the growth of native vegetation along the San Juan and Animas Rivers. This work will be performed entirely on public lands, and will restore riparian areas on State Parks, State Game and Fish, Bureau of Land Management, City of Farmington, City of Aztec and Navajo Nation Tribal properties.

“Projects like the Dos Rios show what can be done when agencies collaborate toward a common goal,” said State Forestry Chama District Timber Management Officer Joe Carrillo. “Thanks to the funding approved by the state legislature and Governor Martinez, we’ll be able to focus funds on the highest at risk areas of our state and protect communities as well as natural resources.”

The Dos Rios project will target watersheds listed as high priority on the Chama District Priority Watersheds for Enhancing and Protecting Water Quality in the New Mexico Statewide Assessment. Native vegetation will also be planted in areas that have previously been treated for hazardous fuel reduction. This will directly support water quality objectives by returning resilient native plant communities to riparian areas along our rivers, and reduce the risk of fire and resulting high erosion events.

This three year project will complement the Lower Animas Watershed Based Planning Project. Governor Martinez announced back in June that San Juan Soil & Water Conservation District would be receiving these funds, and efforts have been ramping up locally in preparation for the start of the project.

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