

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

Susana Martinez
Governor

John H. Bemis
Cabinet Secretary

Brett F. Woods, Ph.D.
Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Tony Delfin, Division Director
State Forestry Division



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News Release

Contact: Dan Ware – Fire Prevention and Outreach Program Manager
505-476-3336/505-690-8210
daniel.ware@state.nm.us

New Mexico Rio Grande Cottonwood Tree Crowned National Champion

SANTA FE, NM— Based on measurements taken by New Mexico State Forestry, a Rio Grande cottonwood tree has been crowned National Champion by the American Forest Foundation, according to New Mexico State Forestry’s Urban and Community Forester, Kelly Washburn.

The tree, which measures 34 feet around its base and is 85 feet tall, has lived and thrived for several decades on land owned by Albuquerque resident Richard Cordova.

The Rio Grande Cottonwood is synonymous with Albuquerque and New Mexico as an important part of not only our forested ecosystems, but our cultural identity as well,” said Washburn. “We’re pleased that Mr. Cordova and his family recognized the significance of his tree and has worked to keep it thriving.”

The American Forest Foundation, which maintains the National Register of Big Trees, recently certified the measurements Washburn and other foresters from State Forestry took last fall. This new National Champion tree surpasses the previous champion, located in Fort Davis, Texas.

New Mexico is home to 15 National Champion Big Trees. A list of New Mexico State Champions as well as a link to the National Big Tree Registry can be found at www.nmforestry.com, on the Community Forestry Program page.

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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

220 South St. Francis Drive • Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Phone (505) 476-3325 • Fax (505) 476-3330 • www.emnrd.state.nm.us/fd