

State of New Mexico  
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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**News Release**

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## **600-Acre New Mexico Forestry/Mescalero Apache Tribe Watershed Restoration Project Underway**

Mescalero, NM – Work on a 600-acre watershed restoration treatment project on Mescalero Apache Tribal land using state severance tax funding has begun, according to the New Mexico State Forestry Division.

The goal of the project is to reduce tree density and lower the threat of catastrophic wildfire, while promoting forest health in three critical watershed areas on tribal land.

“Interagency collaboration is vital when it comes to projects that promote forest and watershed health in populated areas,” said New Mexico State Forestry Capitán District Timber Management Officer Frank Silva. “This watershed project will not only protect vital watersheds on Mescalero Tribal land, but will also help protect surrounding communities and natural resources on public and private lands downstream from the project site.”

Funding for the Mescalero Apache Tribe Watershed Restoration Project was approved by Governor Martinez during the 2014 legislative session as a part of \$6.2 million in severance tax dollars to be used to treat approximately 7,700 acres of 14 high priority watershed areas on public lands, as identified in the New Mexico Forest Action Plan.

The Mescalero Apache Tribe Watershed Restoration Project will target three watersheds listed as high priority by New Mexico State Forestry, as part of a statewide assessment that looked at watershed areas that are considered at-risk. The project, which is planned to be completed within two years, will utilize mechanical equipment to reduce overly dense fuel stands. Smaller diameter trees will be cut and scattered through the area as a natural way to prevent erosion.

This treatment supports water quality objectives, promotes the growth of native vegetation and creates a forest ecosystem that is more resilient to fire.

New Mexico State Forestry is involved in the implementation of many other healthy forest projects including Governor Susana Martinez’s water initiatives to protect and promote healthy watersheds.

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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.*

