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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Forestry Division seedling program to focus on fire-damaged areas
Goal is to spur tree growth in forests that won't naturally regenerate

SANTA FE – To better meet New Mexico's urgent reforestation needs, the New Mexico Forestry Division is re-energizing its popular Conservation Seedling Program to steer key species to targeted areas and provide technical support to improve tree survival rates, ultimately protecting our forests and reducing long-term damage from high-severity wildfires.

Beginning this fall, the new Seedlings for Reforestation program will guide high-demand seedling varieties such as ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir to areas that have suffered fire damage to reduce long-term effects of erosion, flooding and degraded watersheds. To improve seedling survival, the program will match seed sources to planting sites and offer technical support for planting and long-term monitoring. A single, annual distribution event will happen in the fall, the optimal season to plant seedlings.

"With limited seedlings and a changing climate, we need to prioritize getting the right tree to the right place at the right time," said State Forester **Laura McCarthy**. "We need to think about how the landscape functions and act with urgency. Our new Seedlings for Reforestation program aims to do exactly that."

Since the 1960s, the New Mexico Forestry Division's [Conservation Seedling Program](#) has distributed millions of trees to help meet conservation goals, including streambank restoration, erosion control and wildlife habitat improvement. Seedlings sell out quickly every year.

The new program will target the state's limited seedling supply to the areas where it will have the most productive impact. More than 7 million acres have burned across New Mexico this decade, leaving large areas with high severity burn scars. These forests are unable to naturally regenerate, leading to persistent flooding that threatens communities.

"[In 2020](#), we set the goal of reforesting burned areas with trees that will thrive in the climate conditions a century from now," said **Gwen Wion**, reforestation program manager. "With this reconfigured program, we are directing seedlings to where they will have the greatest impact."

For more information about program updates and ordering, visit the Division's [Conservation Seedlings](#) page.

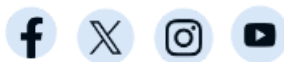
This press release is available online [here](#).



Ponderosa pine seedlings grow at the John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center. Photo: George Ducker, Forestry Division.



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