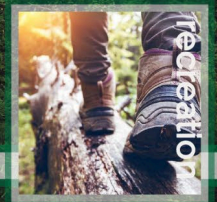


NEW MEXICO TREE FARM BULLETIN



WILD ABOUT TURKEYS: MORE THAN JUST A THANKSGIVING ICON

Written by: Todd Haines, NM Tree Farm Program, Inspector Coordinator

Did you know Turkey is the only bird native to North America? Ben Franklin made a comment that the eagle rendition chosen looked more like a turkey in a letter to his daughter. Here is the letter:

For my own part I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country. He is a bird of bad moral character. He does not get his living honestly. You may have seen him perched on some dead tree, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing hawk; and when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish and is bearing it to his nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes it from him.

With all this injustice, he is never in good case, but like those among men who live by sharping and robbing he is generally poor and often very lousy. Besides he is a rank coward: the little king bird not bigger than a sparrow attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. [...]

I am on this account not displeased that the figure is not known as a bald eagle but looks more like a turkey. For in truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America. Eagles have been found in all countries, but the turkey was peculiar to ours, the first of the species seen in Europe being brought to France by the Jesuits from Canada and served up at the wedding table of Charles the ninth.

He is besides, (though a little vain and silly tis true, but not the worse emblem for that) a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British guards who should presume to invade his farmyard with a red coat on.

If you have ever been chased by a turkey, you know that last part is true. 😊

Turkey is an indicator species

“Wild turkeys are what biologists call an indicator species — meaning their presence in a location is indicative of a healthy ecosystem for all other species, including humans.” (From WPLN News podcast, “Turkey? Wild!”)

[Learn more about other indicator species!](#)



3RD QUARTER
2025

OUR MISSION

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 American Tree Farm System (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundaion, is committed to sustaining forests, watershed and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship.

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One landowner’s take on mushrooms as a sign of success. Plus register for an upcoming field day.

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Be wildfire ready!

Resources to help empower landowners

Eastern Wild Turkey



Photo credit: Levi Glines

Gould's Wild Turkey



Photo credit: Stephen Spurlock

Osceola Wild Turkey



Photo credit: Mike Matthews

Rio Grande Wild Turkey



Photo credit: Darcy Daniels

Meriam's Wild Turkey



Photo credit: Guy Tillett

There are several turkey subspecies in America. Below is the list provided by the National Wild Turkey Federation:

- Eastern Wild Turkey – Most abundant species found in 38 states.
- Gould's Wild Turkey – Found in Arizona, New Mexico (Portions of Mexico).
- Osceola Wild Turkey – Only found in the Peninsula of Florida.
- Rio Grande Wild Turkey – Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas (other western states).
- Meriam's Wild Turkey – Most abundant in mountainous regions of the west.

Enhancing Turkey Habitat on Private Lands

For private landowners interested in supporting healthy wild turkey populations — whether for conservation, observation, or hunting — thoughtful habitat management is key.

In his article *“Properly Managing Your Property for Turkeys (Large or Small),”* Sam Jacobs — writer and chief historian at Ammo.com — highlights key habitat management strategies for private landowners looking to support wild turkey populations, two of which are:

Large Tree Management

“We all know turkeys roost in large trees, away from danger, but what are we doing to ensure we always have several of those trees in the future?”

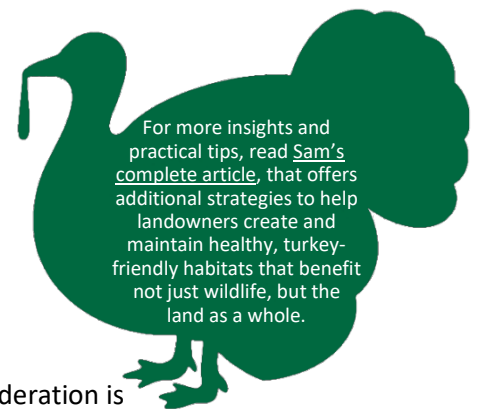
Selective cutting and planting in prime roosting locations will help ensure you have several healthy roost trees for years.”

Water Management

“The best turkey hunting I’ve ever experienced has always been around a creek, river or marshy area. While you might not be able to create these from scratch, if you have at least one on your property, it’s best to ensure the water quality is as good as possible. This will help the vegetation the turkeys rely on thrive, allowing the turkeys to thrive.”

So perhaps Ben Franklin was onto something after all. The wild turkey isn’t just a quirky, courageous farmyard sentinel — it’s a symbol of ecological health, native heritage, and land stewardship. By managing our lands with turkeys in mind, we’re not only supporting a species unique to North America, but helping to preserve the natural legacy Franklin admired.

Whether you’re a landowner, a hunter, or simply a fan of this feathered icon, there’s no doubt: the turkey is worthy of far more than just a place at the Thanksgiving table.



For more insights and practical tips, read [Sam's complete article](#), that offers additional strategies to help landowners create and maintain healthy, turkey-friendly habitats that benefit not just wildlife, but the land as a whole.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

The National Wild Turkey Federation

The mission of the National Wild Turkey Federation is the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of our hunting heritage. They carry out this mission through a strategy they call their “Lifestyle Hub,” which aims to Engage, Entertain, and Educate the public about the importance of wild turkeys and their habitat. Learn more: <https://www.nwtf.org/>.

WITHOUT MUSHROOMS, NO FOREST | WITHOUT FOREST, NO MUSHROOMS

Written by: Carl Struck

This was the conclusion in a nutshell of a research paper authored by Simon Egli in 2011 titled "*Mycorrhizal mushroom diversity and productivity-- an indicator of forest health?*" published by "the Annals of Forest Science". I had been searching the internet for evidence that might support a phenomena I'd been noticing taking shape for the past 7 years. Wondering if it was just a coincidence, my imagination or was it really possible that the slow, incremental, ecological forest management work we had been applying in our mostly Ponderosa 40-acre Family Forest since 2012 resulting in a noticeable uptick in my success foraging for delicious edible mushrooms? Our forest stands at 8,500' in the semi-arid Northern New Mexico mountains and had been logged of its old growth around 1910 and second growth trees probably sometime in the late 1950's. Like so much of the forest surrounding us, it was overstocked and had depleted soils from over grazing for over a century before we purchased it in 1987. And here it was...a study confirming that science had taken notice of the same phenomena as I was seeing in our forest as the trees and vegetation responded to our efforts. Let me explain.



Many years ago, my interest in edible wild mushrooms had led me to the work of Paul Stamets and his 2005 book "*Mycelium Running (how mushrooms can save the world)*" where my attention was grabbed by chapter 6 "*Mycoforestry*". What?!? Mycoforestry? It seemed to me that he was suggesting a "regenerative agriculture" approach for forest management using the 5 regenerative principals:

1. Minimize soil disturbance
2. Keep bare soil covered
3. Maintain living roots
4. Maximize biodiversity
5. Support or introduce grazing animals

UPCOMING EVENT DETAILS

Field Day: "Mushrooms as Forest Health Indicators"

Date: Thursday, July 24

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Location: Taos County, New Mexico

---- **Register today** ----

Join the Forest Stewards Guild for a unique field day on forest health! Led by Carl Struck, this event will take you on an exploratory hike across several neighboring properties to explore the intricate relationships between ecosystems and fungal communities.

Participants will learn how forest management practices influence both forests and fungi. This is an excellent opportunity for those passionate about forest stewardship and ecological health.

For more details and to register, visit: [Forest Stewards Guild Event Page](#)

HAVE SOME FUN!

Want to Cook What You Cultivate? Check out [Forager Chef](#) — a fantastic website full of wild mushroom recipes, tips for cooking your forest harvest, and inspiration for using fungi in everyday meals. Whether you're managing your land to encourage chanterelles, morels, or boletes, this site can help you turn your foraging success into something delicious.

Fungi Fun Fact:

Mushrooms are just the fruit—most of the fungus lives underground as a vast network called mycelium, which helps trees communicate and share nutrients.

Foraging Best Practice

Cut mushrooms at the base with a knife to avoid damaging the underground mycelium. It helps ensure they return next year!

WITHOUT MUSHROOMS, NO FOREST | WITHOUT FOREST, NO MUSHROOMS *continued...*

So, I started thinking how I could apply these principles to our forest management. I thought about this for some time on my daily walks in our woods and realized I was burning a valuable asset when dealing with excess thinning slash. Instead, I could be chipping the slash into a useful product that could help us achieve these “principals”. I stopped burning, bought a small chipper and started covering our many bare, mineral soil patches 2-3” inches deep in chips and very quickly found this one management alteration alone could accomplish my new goals. The small wood chips, shredded needles and pinecones protected the bare mineral soil from the heat of the sun, the compaction/erosion of the rain, added a “food” source for the soil micro-organisms and resulted in the soils being able to absorb more moisture as well as retain it for longer periods. Sure enough, after sufficient time passed (3-5 years in our case) allowing the natural biology of the soil to work its magic, I started noticing increased vegetation (bio-diversity/living roots) as well as an increase in wildlife visits (elk/turkey, etc...wild livestock if you will).

Then I started seeing more mushrooms! It’s important to understand that mushrooms are the reproductive body of mycelium which form vast, threadlike networks throughout the forest litter, duff and other soil horizons. Saprophytic, or decaying fungi, breakdown woody material on the forest floor converting it to nutrients that can be absorbed by roots of plants. The mycorrhizal, or root fungi, form a symbiotic relationship with our trees and other vegetation as they deliver water and nutrients to those roots thus significantly increasing the root system’s reach and efficiency. In return for the moisture and nutrients the mycorrhizal fungi get the excess sugars produced by the photosynthesis of the trees and other vegetation. I started wondering if abundance and diversity of mushrooms, when weather conditions were sufficiently moist to stimulate their growth, might not be a biological indicator of forest health. Both the study mentioned above and another “[How Different Fungal Communities Influence Tree Growth](#)”, a 2022 paper put out by the “[Swiss Federal Research Institute \(WSL\)](#)”, suggest that there definitely is a correlation even if a causation is not yet fully understood.

Both papers also suggested that the optimum density and diversity of mushrooms seems to correlate to tree density allowing dappled sunlight and that both over-stocked and under-stocked tree stands had reduced fungal communities. There is a lot of information to chew on here and the science is pretty complex so if you’re not a science nerd I would suggest you start with the WSL study first. But please, do give them a peek...pretty compelling work!

All I can conclude from my observations, walking through our forest during the “monsoon” mushroom hunting season, is that our management practices over the past 13 years or so seems to have created a “happy fungi hunting ground”... especially my favorite the *boletus barrowsii*, commonly called the White King Bolete or White Porcini, a mycorrhizal associated with Ponderosa. Neighboring stands with different management styles, or in some cases having never been managed since the old growth logging, seem to lack the abundance and diversity of ours. But then, I often don’t get beyond our forest when my day pack is heavy with edible forest bounty...YUM!

This July 24, Thursday, the Forest Stewards Guild is offering a field day on our property titled “[Mushrooms as Forest Health Indicators](#)”. I’ll be leading a small group of registered participants across several neighboring properties on an exploratory hike as we discuss the intricate complexities of ecosystem and fungal communities and how forest management practices might affect them. Those of you within driving distance of Taos County can get more information and register [here](#).

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

[18 Common Mushrooms Found in New Mexico! \(2025\)](#)

[New Mexico Mycological Society](#)

[Forest Stewards Guild](#)



BE WILDFIRE READY

Each year, wildfires burn thousands of acres and threaten homes across New Mexico. The **Ready, Set, Go!** program gives landowners practical steps to prepare for the fire season. Be *Ready* by creating defensible space and understanding fire risk. Be *Set* by staying alert when fire danger increases. And be prepared to *Go* early when wildfire threatens. This nationally recognized program, led by the [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#), helps save lives and property—starting with smart, early action. Learn more at [Ready, Set, Go! New Mexico - Forestry](#).

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- [American Forest Foundation website](#)
- [American Tree Farm System | National website](#)
- [Family Forest Research Center](#)
- [Forest Management map viewer](#)
- [Guide to Resources for Private Forest Landowners in NM](#)
- [MyLandPlan.org](#)
- [National Association of State Foresters | NM website](#)
- [National Woodland Owners Association \(NWOA\)](#)
- [New Mexico Department of Game and Fish](#)
- [New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Members](#)
- [New Mexico Tree Farm Program website](#)
- [NM Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department \(EMNRD\)](#)
- [U.S. Forest Service](#)



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