

IMPACT



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Nearly 700 Idaho Panhandle loggers learn more about forest ecology, silviculture, water quality

The Situation

Loggers are a critical link in forest management, particularly on lands whose owners are less active in directly managing their property.

Unfortunately, if communication between landowners, loggers, or foresters is inadequate, the resulting timber harvests may not meet expectations. State forest practice laws remedy this somewhat, but they are designed to provide minimum criteria, and loggers may not fully appreciate the reasons these regulations were created.

If loggers understand the “spirit of the law” to forest practice act regulations, they can often modify their activities to reach forest management goals even more effectively. That is particularly critical, since increasing use of mechanized harvesting tools gives loggers more responsibility in the woods.

Also, since most loggers work on many forest properties in a year, they have contact with multiple forest owners. Loggers provide another vehicle to communicate with a larger number of family forest owners.

The more loggers know about forest management, the better they can communicate with forest owners, foresters, and others involved in managing private forest resources. Participating in education programs can simultaneously improve the demand for their

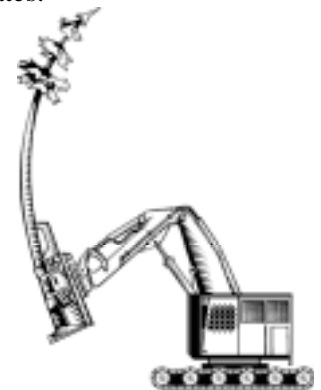
services, and document their commitment to forest stewardship.

Forest products companies are looking for ways to improve forestry operations on their own lands and properties they buy timber from. To this end, most Idaho forest product companies are participating in the “Sustainable Forestry Initiative” (SFI), a national effort of the American Forest and Paper Association.

Our Response

LEAP

Many loggers are landowners, and have participated in Extension programs designed for forest owners. However, in the past, few Extension programs were targeted directly to loggers. That changed with *Logger Education to Advance Professionalism* (“LEAP”), a national Extension program piloted in Idaho and several other states.



LEAP features over 20 hours of training designed to increase loggers' understanding and skills related to forest ecology, silviculture, and water quality. The program is instructed by University of Idaho faculty, with additional presentations from Idaho Dept. of Lands personnel on state forestry laws, insects, and disease. Enrollment is limited to 30 loggers per session, for an effective learning environment.

Partially stimulated by SFI, a statewide logger education committee developed the "Idaho Pro-Logger" program, administered through the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho (ALC). Among other standards, the Idaho Pro-Logger credential requires participation in *LEAP* and 16 credits of continuing education annually.

Other workshops

With the increased emphasis on providing educational opportunities for loggers, Extension has worked to integrate logger education needs into other education programs as well.

Videos and publications

The effort to provide more educational opportunities for loggers requires publications and other educational materials tied to their needs. We developed two videos for that purpose, titled *Forest Water Quality* and *I Want to Log "Selectively"*. Both projects were developed with partial support from the Idaho Department of Lands, the U.S. Forest Service, and other partners. The latter video was developed with advice from loggers and thinning contractors who served on a "quality assurance committee" for the effort.

Program Outcomes

Six hundred and ninety-five loggers have attended the 23 *LEAP* sessions offered in the Idaho Panhandle since 1994 (157 in 2001-2002). On exit evaluations, 90-100% of the participants indicated they would implement improved management practices as a result of attending *LEAP*.

Ninety loggers attended other Extension forestry programs in 2001-2002, such as *Managing Organic Debris & Slash* and *Scaling and Marketing Private*

Timber. In total, UI Extension provided 3,253 contact hours of continuing education for Panhandle loggers in 2001-2002.

Thus far, 546 loggers have signed up for the Idaho Pro-Logger program.

The future

In concert with these efforts, Extension will continue to provide *LEAP* and other educational opportunities for loggers and integrate logger education needs into Extension videos and publications. These programs are being guided by two steering committees composed entirely of loggers—one for Bonner and Boundary counties and one for Benewah & Kootenai Counties. Single-day field programs that address critical issues identified by loggers (e.g., road drainage) will be a growing part of the mix.

For More Information

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