

IMPACT



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UI Extension Provides Local Forestry Professional Development Opportunities in Idaho Panhandle

The Situation

Forests are vital to the economy and quality of life in the Inland Northwest. They provide timber, wildlife habitat, scenic quality, recreational opportunities, and many other values.

Foresters and other natural resource professionals must continually sharpen their skills and stay current with emerging scientific and technological developments to sustainably produce more wood fiber and simultaneously improve forest biodiversity, health, genetics and fertility. To that end, the forestry community has established new credentials to document foresters' continuing education efforts (e.g., The Society of American Foresters "certified forester" program).

Continuing education for foresters is available through a number of sources. However, these programs do not always fit the needs of individual foresters due to budget limitations, time and travel

constraints, or other factors. UI Extension is uniquely situated to provide *local* continuing education opportunities for field foresters.

Unique skills are required of foresters who help non-industrial private forest—"NIPF"—owners (also known as family forest owners) manage their property. In the past, little training was available that directly addressed their specific professional development needs.

K-12 Teachers must also stay updated, and are continually looking for local opportunities to hone their skills. They also value objective sources of forestry education to integrate into their classrooms.

Our Response

Extension provides continuing education for foresters, teachers, and other professionals in many ways. Some programs are developed directly for these audiences. Other efforts involve adjusting



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programs developed for forest owners and other groups to meet foresters' and teachers' needs as well.

NIPF Foresters Workshop

Since 1993, the Extension Systems of the University of Idaho and Washington State University have cooperated to hold an annual forum for consulting foresters, state-employed service foresters, and other natural resource professionals working with NIPF owners.

The program, titled the *NIPF Foresters Workshop*, updates participants on emerging technology and knowledge applicable to non-industrial private forestry. It alternates between northern Idaho and eastern Washington locations.

Workshops, Evening Programs & Field Days

Strengthening Forest Stewardship Skills is an annual series of programs focused primarily on increasing private forest owners' forest management skills. But in offering these programs, we learned something -- graduate foresters were coming too! Because of this and because of some landowners' increasing skill levels from attending previous Extension programs, we have sharpened the focus of selected forest stewardship programs to simultaneously meet the continuing education needs of both experienced forest owners and graduate foresters.

For example, in 2001-2002, Society of American Foresters' "continuing forestry education" credit was provided for Extension programs titled: *Current Topics in Forest Health, Pruning for White Pine Blister Rust, Managing Forest Organic Debris & Slash* and *Growing Superior Tree Seed*.

In response to requests from K-12 teachers, we also offer University of Idaho credit for applicable Extension programs, such as the *Forestry Shortcourse*. This allows teachers to obtain university credit for programs that help them integrate forest science into their classrooms.

Publications, videos

Extension develops a wide variety of written and video resources. An increasing number of resources

are developed with field foresters and advanced private forest owners in mind.

For example, a recent publication and companion video on selective logging are being used in high school classrooms and as practical tools to train seasonally-employed timber markers.

Program Outcomes

Over 250 foresters attended Extension forestry programs in the Idaho Panhandle in 2001-2002, for a total of 1,770 contact hours. In the *NIPF Forester's Workshop*, 90% of the participants indicated they would be able to work more effectively with family forest owners as a result of the program.

Five Idaho Panhandle teachers took the forestry shortcourse for credit in 2001-2002. Some teachers have used the shortcourse to develop innovative high school forestry classes.

The future

Future Extension programming in this area will evolve to reflect emerging technologies and professional education needs in the Idaho Panhandle related to forestry.

For More Information

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18-03cschnepf-localforestry.doc

8/03