

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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UI Extension Sharpens Skills of Local Foresters and Other Professionals in Idaho Panhandle

The Situation

Forests are vital to the economy and quality of life in the Inland Northwest. 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).

Many continuing education venues do not 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.

K-12 teachers must also stay updated, and are continually looking for local opportunities to hone their skills. They also value research-based 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 specifically for particular audiences. Other efforts involve adjusting programs developed for forest owners or other groups to simultaneously meet foresters' or teachers' needs as well.



Family Foresters Workshop

Since 1993, University of Idaho Extension and Washington State University Extension have cooperated to hold an annual forum for consulting foresters, state-employed service foresters, and other natural resource professionals working with family forest owners (also known as non-industrial private forest – "NIPF" owners). The program, titled the *Family Foresters Workshop*, updates participants on emerging technology and knowledge applicable to non-industrial private forestry.

Land, Water, & Fire Conference

Since 2005, University of Idaho Extension and Washington State University Extension have cooperated to hold the annual *Inland Northwest Land, Water, & Fire Conference*, designed to give rural policy makers, land use professionals, local agency staff, contractors, realtors, foresters, and

rural residents an opportunity to learn about current research and experience and apply it to policies and activities in rural areas and near-rural areas.

Workshops & Field Days

Strengthening Forest Stewardship Skills is an annual series of programs focused primarily on increasing family 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 2006-2007, Society of American Foresters' "Continuing Forestry Education" credit was provided for UI Extension programs on forest health, conservation easements, and global positioning systems. 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 family forest owners in mind.

Program Outcomes

Over 200 foresters attended Extension forestry programs in the Idaho Panhandle in 2006-2007, for 1,421 contact hours.

Participants in the 2007 *Family Forester's Workshop*, indicated percentage knowledge increases ranging from 11% to 55% on lodgepole pine silviculture, small scale equipment for slash management, niche & direct marketing wood products to local markets, grouse management, and family forest economics/policy as a result of the program.

Three Idaho Panhandle teachers took the forestry shortcourse for credit in 2006-2007. Some teachers

have used the shortcourse to develop innovative high school forestry classes.

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.

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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