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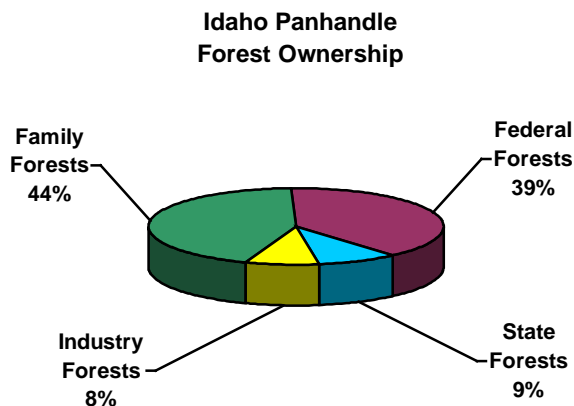
University of Idaho
Extension

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UI Extension Programs Give Idaho Panhandle Landowners Skills to Manage Family Forests

The Situation

Roughly 44% of the forests in the Idaho Panhandle (Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai and Benewah counties) are held and managed by family forest owners¹. The most recent national forest owner census showed that Idaho family forest owners have more than doubled in number, from 21,700 in 1978, to 47,400 owners in 1993.



Family forests provide timber, water, wildlife habitat, and many other values. Since 1987, the average annual timber harvest from these forests in the Idaho Panhandle has been over 178 million board feet, valued at \$107 million milled. By comparison, the average annual timber harvest on all of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Ranger

¹ Also known as non-industrial private forest owners or "NIPF" owners.

Districts combined over the same time period was 135 million board feet.

Family forests have provided 28% of the timber harvest in the ten northern counties of Idaho since 1997. Without family forest owners, several lumber mills in North Idaho would have closed down.

Family forest owners have varied goals for their property, ranging from timber income to simply "a place to get away from it all." With better management, family forests can provide much more than they have historically. With a better working knowledge of forest ecology, silviculture, and related forest management techniques, family forest owners can sustainably produce more wood fiber and simultaneously improve forest health, genetics, and fertility.

The improved management practices family forest owners implement as a result of knowledge and skills gained in UI Extension programs will ultimately increase wood available to local mills, while maintaining water quality, reducing catastrophic fire risk, improving forest growth and health, and enhancing biological diversity.

Our Response

Workshops & Field Days

As part of the Idaho Forest Stewardship program, a cooperative effort with the Idaho Dept. of Lands and many other partners, UI Extension provides an annual series of workshops, field days and other educational activities titled *Strengthening Forest*

Stewardship Skills. The activities are designed to strengthen forest owners' ability to implement practices that improve forest health and growth, and are offered in a variety of locations and times.

In addition to Stewardship programs, many other Extension programs are given annually to groups requesting them, or in partnership with other agencies and organizations.

Woodland Notes

Woodland Notes, a forestry newsletter providing practical advice on forest management, is mailed out twice annually to over 4,000 Panhandle households. It is often the only consistent contact absentee forest owners have with professional forestry (one third of Panhandle forest owners receiving *Woodland Notes* reside out-of-state or south of Idaho County).

Publications and Videos

Forest owners can choose from over 140 forestry Extension publications available through local UI Extension offices. Extension videos on water quality, "selective" logging, and forest tax management, provide additional resources to help forest owners learn on their own.

Program Outcomes

In FY 06-07, 482 forest owners attended Extension workshops and other educational activities in the Idaho Panhandle. Over 7,000 Idahoans have participated in *Strengthening Forest Stewardship Skills* since 1992. In most program evaluations, fewer than half of participants indicated previous involvement in forestry education or assistance programs.

Based on exit surveys of UI Extension Forest Stewardship programs in 2006-2007:

- 137 panhandle family forest owners will monitor for insect, disease, or animal damage
- 104 will thin forest trees
- 105 will manage to favor larch and pines
- 64 will use a GPS receiver for forest management
- 32 will prune forest trees
- 24 will complete a forest management plan
- 22 will look into GIS to manage their forest
- 22 will contact a forester for additional assistance
- 22 will reduce vegetation competing with tree seedlings

- 20 will use safety equipment when thinning
- 17 will apply adaptive silviculture concepts
- 17 will use internet data sources to manage their forest
- 17 will reduce fuels in the home ignition zone
- 16 will make their home easier for firefighters to access
- 15 will pursue additional information on conservation easements

Strengthening Forest Stewardship Skills will continue to be offered annually, along with new publications, videos, and other efforts to help Idaho Panhandle family forest owners manage their forests more effectively.

For More Information

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