

# IMPACT

University of Idaho  
Extension

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## Clearwater area farm and forest fair

### The Situation

The Clearwater Basin area of north central Idaho is famous for its diverse topography of mountains, prairies, and river valleys. A diverse business base of forest products, agriculture, and tourism is a reflection of the variety of natural resources in the area.

The Clearwater Basin area which includes Clearwater, Lewis and Idaho counties is approximately 7.3 million acres. Of that acreage 5.8 million acres (79.37%) is forest land and 451,200 acres is in agricultural production.

The population of the Clearwater Basin area represents a growing diversity of culture and geographical backgrounds. Many residents, whether new to the area or employed in other industries, may be unfamiliar with the natural resource-based enterprises upon which the area economy is built. This unfamiliarity may lead to misunderstandings and friction regarding best management practices and natural resource use issues.

### Our Response

For the past 12 years, UI Extension Educators have provided an educational program relative to the natural resource-based industries in the area. The program is intended to help participants better understand public policy issues regarding forestry and agriculture. This educational program is targeted towards fifth grade youth. The desired effect is to provide a balanced view of the importance and impact of natural resource-based industries on their lives and environment.

Over 4000 youth in the past 12 years have experienced the fair, which consists of ten rotating stations covering issues in agriculture and forestry.



UI Extension Educator Valdasue Steele teaches youth about soils.

The Farm and Forest Fair runs for two days with two sessions each day. Each session consists of 10 stations which the students and teachers rotate through in nine-minute intervals. Stations have either agriculture or forestry industry personnel who demonstrate or speak about their particular area of expertise. Presenters are encouraged to make their presentations as hands-on as possible. There are approximately 450 students and teachers reached each year during the fair.

The Clearwater Area Farm and Forest Fair is provided to fifth grade youth in the NCIA area at no cost. Financial support comes from a variety of organizations including Farm Bureau, Idaho Wheat Commission, Idaho/Lewis Cattleman's Association and the Orofino Armory.

### Program Outcomes

Evaluations have shown that students, teachers, and presenters value the Farm and Forest Fair as a way to expose today's youth to the agriculture and forestry industries in NCIA.

Due to the success of the Clearwater Area Farm and Forest Fair other organizations in the state of Idaho are using the fair as a model to implement similar programs across the state. Farm Bureau Association filmed the 2009 Farm and Forest Fair for just such a purpose. You can view the film at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5GpDM5iZk>

The Clearwater Area Farm and Forest Fair has enjoyed continuing success as an educational program and will continue to be held annually each spring.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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