Forest Owners Learn to Manage Their Timber Sales

The Situation
Over 83% of Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai and Benewah Counties is forested. Over 878,000 acres (44% of all forested land) is held by an estimated 28,000 Non-Industrial Private Forestland (NIPF) owners. The 1993 timber harvest from these lands was over 214 million board feet, with an estimated economic value of $86 million for mill-delivered logs, or $129 million milled.

Non-industrial private forest lands become even more important to Panhandle counties when timber supply from industrial and national forest lands declines. In 1993, NIPF lands produced 28% of Idaho's timber harvest, even though they only comprise 12% of the state's forest acreage. The percentage of timber supply from Panhandle NIPF lands is likely even higher, since the ratio of NIPF land is higher.

Recent high log prices have made many forest landowners more interested in selling timber. As a result, the timber harvest on NIPF lands in northern Idaho has increased greatly.

Landowners are more likely to be pleased with their timber harvest if they understand timber harvest terminology and methods, then communicate their desires to foresters, logging operators and others involved with the sale.

Our Response
As part of the Idaho Forest Stewardship program, a cooperative effort with the Idaho Dept. of Lands and many other partners, the UI Cooperative Extension System conducted a workshop titled Managing Your Timber Sale to help strengthen NIPF owners' ability to achieve harvests that meet their expectations.

The program was held in Bonners Ferry in April, 1995. Topics covered included: timber harvest decisions, timber sale contracts, working with logging operators, log markets, professional assistance.
Achievements

Fifteen (15) people attended the session. An estimated total of 15 NIPF owners and 920 NIPF acres were reached. One-hundred percent of the participants indicated they would implement improved management practices as a result of attending.

This was the third year Managing Your Timber Sale was held. Nearly 300 people have participated in the program at 9 locations in Idaho since 1993.

The Future

Can the current high level of timber supply from NIPF lands be sustained? Perhaps not at current levels, but NIPF lands can grow much more timber than they have traditionally. Increased prices bring incentives for more intensive management practices, such as tree planting and thinning. As a result, landowners are more interested than ever in programs which give them the skills to increase the timber productivity of their properties and simultaneously manage for wildlife habitat, water, livestock forage, scenic qualities, and other forest values.

Managing Your Timber Sale is part of a comprehensive Extension education program for NIPF owners titled Strengthening Forest Stewardship Skills. The series of programs features a diverse array of educational activities designed to strengthen NIPF owners’ ability to implement practices which improve forest health and growth. Programs are offered in a variety of locations and times and are announced in a yearly calendar distributed each fall. Other programs offered in this annual series cover tree planting, thinning, insect and disease treatments, and many other topics.

Non-industrial private forests will continue to be vital to northern Idaho’s timber supply. Additional sessions of this program will be held at other north Idaho locations in the future. An Extension publication on timber sale contract decisions is also available.

For More Information

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