

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

The Situation

More than 83 percent of the Idaho Panhandle (Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai and Benewah counties) is forested. Roughly 44 percent of those lands are held and managed by non-industrial private forest owners.

Private forests provide timber, water, wildlife habitat, recreation, grazing, and many other values. From 1987-1997, the average annual timber harvest from private lands in the Idaho Panhandle was over 179 million board feet, with an estimated value of nearly \$108 million milled.

With better management, private forests can provide much more than they have traditionally. With a better working knowledge of forest ecology, silviculture, and related forest management techniques, private forest owners can sustainably produce more wood fiber and simultaneously improve forest biodiversity, health, genetics and fertility.

Our Response

Forest owners have varied goals for their property, ranging from timber income to simply "a place to get away from it all". Forest owners, like other adult learners, also have varied learning styles and needs. Extension forestry programming is likewise varied, to help stimulate owners' management.

Workshops, Evening Programs & Field Days

As part of the Idaho Forest Stewardship program, a cooperative effort with the Idaho Department of Lands and many other partners, the UI Cooperative Extension System provides an annual series of workshops, field days and other educational activities, 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, goes out twice annually to over 4,000 Panhandle households. It is often the only consistent contact absentee forest owners have with professional forestry (26 percent 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. Recent Extension videos on water quality, "selective" logging and forest tax management and provide additional resources to help forest owners learn on their own.

Achievements

In 1998-99, over 400 people attended Extension workshops and other educational activities in the Idaho Panhandle. In evaluations of most programs (see table below), fewer than half of participants indicated previous involvement in forestry education or assistance programs. On most programs, over 90 percent of the participants indicated they would implement improved management practices as a result.

The Future

A recent U.S. Forest Service study showed that Idaho private forest owners have more than doubled in number, from 21,700 in 1978, to 47,400 owners in 1993.

Strengthening Forest Stewardship Skills will continue to be offered annually, along with new publications (e.g., a selective logging booklet), videos, and other efforts to help Idaho Panhandle landowners manage their forests more effectively.

We are also studying innovative ways to stretch limited Extension forestry staffing, by developing a master forest owner program, and researching more effective and efficient ways to reach private forest owners and encourage their adoption of improved forest management practices.

For More Information

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Program	Number of Participants	NIPF Owners	NIPF Acres	Previous participation in forestry education or assistance programs		Cost Share	Property Visit	IFOA Member	% to use improved practices*	
				Program (> 3 hr.)	Program (< 3 hr.)				Yes	Probably
<i>Forest Insect & Disease Field Day</i>	32	27	2,270 ac.	22%	48%	7%	26%	22%	92%	4%
<i>Forestry Shortcourse</i>	44	37	1,118 ac.	10%	23%	3%	13%	7%	93%	3%
<i>Current Topics in Forest Health</i>	26	18	4,170 ac.	53%	63%	32%	26%	26%	74%	26%
<i>Scaling & Marketing Timber</i>	35	27	4,696 ac.	11%	17%	11%	22%	0%	47%	53%
<i>Backyard Forests</i>	27	25	321 ac.	29%	29%	0%	12%	6%	94%	6%
<i>Small Scale Logging Technology</i>	39	32	3,019 ac.	18%	35%	18%	35%	29%	61%	28%
<i>D-fir Beetle Field Tour</i>	20	12	1,073 ac.	0%	7%	0%	7%	7%	77%	8%
<i>Logging Safety for Landowners</i>	11	10	1,287 ac.	67%	67%	33%	44%	33%	89%	11%
<i>Thinning & Pruning Field Day</i>	20	13	4,591 ac.	20%	67%	27%	27%	27%	80%	13%
<i>Hybrid Poplar Field Day</i>	32	13	488 ac.	8%	33%	0%	0%	0%	45%	36%

* Responses to "Do you believe you will implement improved management practices as a result of attending today's program?", to which participants could circle either: "Yes" "Probably", "Not Sure", "Probably Not", or "No".

