

IMPACT

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Over 160 Panhandle loggers learn about sustainable forestry in 2013-2014

AT A GLANCE

UI Extension helps loggers practice sustainable forestry which supports Idaho forest product companies access to markets that require certified wood products.

The Situation

Loggers are a critical link in forest management, particularly on lands whose owners are less active in directly managing their property. Since most loggers work on many forest properties in a year, they also provide another vehicle to communicate with a larger number of family forest owners.

Unfortunately, if communication between landowners, loggers, or foresters is inadequate, the resulting timber or biomass harvests may not meet expectations. State forest practice laws remedy this somewhat, but they are designed to provide minimum standards. If loggers understand the “spirit of the law” in forest practice act regulations, they can often modify their activities to reach forest management goals more effectively. That is particularly critical with use of mechanized harvesting tools that give loggers more responsibility in the woods.

The more loggers know about forest management, the better they can communicate with forest owners, foresters, and others involved in managing forests. Participating in education programs can simultaneously improve demand for their services and document their commitment to forest stewardship.

A growing number of forest products retailers want to sell forest products that can be certified as harvested from sustainably managed forests. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), the forest certification program that most Idaho mills participate in, re-



Loggers participating in LEAP field exercises.

quires loggers who are trained in forestry best management practices. To the extent forest certification programs require trained loggers, UI Extension logger training efforts are vital to helping Idaho forest product companies maintain or increase Idaho’s share of global markets for certified wood products.

Our Response

Logger Education to Advance Professionalism (“LEAP”) is a national Extension program piloted in Idaho and several other states. LEAP features over 20 hours of training designed to increase loggers’ understanding and skills related to forest ecology, silviculture, and water quality. LEAP is instructed by University of Idaho Extension faculty, with additional presentations from Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) personnel on state forestry laws, insects, and disease.

Partially stimulated by SFI, the Idaho logger education committee developed the Idaho Pro-Logger pro-

gram, administered through the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho (ALC). The Idaho Pro-Logger credential requires LEAP and 12 credits of continuing education annually.

With growing enrollment in the Idaho Pro-Logger program, more loggers are looking for ways to meet credit requirements. Based on logger recommendations, we developed LEAP Update, an annual 2-day program where loggers learn about current forestry issues.

Twenty-three loggers attended other 2013-2014 UI Extension forestry programs in the panhandle on topics such as forest insects & disease, log scaling, & GPS. UI Extension provided 1,665 continuing education hours for 190 Panhandle loggers in 2013-2014.

Program Outcomes

Nearly 1,000 loggers have attended the 43 LEAP sessions offered annually in the Idaho Panhandle since 1994. As a result of 163 loggers' participation in the three LEAP Update sessions held in the Idaho Panhandle in 2014:

- 111 loggers will apply silviculture to grand fir;
- 113 will reduce moisture loss with Douglas-fir logs;
- 152 will apply latest Idaho Forest Practice rules near streams;
- 135 will improve log manufacturing; and
- 135 will protect water quality during harvest operations.

As of 2014, 628 loggers are enrolled in the Idaho Pro-Logger program. Training in programs offered by UI Extension helps loggers apply better land stewardship. Through communication from these loggers, this knowledge will also reach landowners, who will ultimately increase wood and biomass to support Idaho's economy, while maintaining water quality, improving forest health, and enhancing biological diversity.

The Future

UI Extension will continue to provide LEAP and other educational opportunities guided by Idaho loggers.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

- Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho
- Idaho Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee.
- Idaho Department of Lands

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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