

Intermountain Live in the Woods showcases forest products industry to 400 students

AT A GLANCE

Educating and engaging the next generation of Idaho's forest products industry is critical as we look to bolster workforce capacity and support the continued sustainable management of forestlands.

The Situation

The forest products industry is an integral part of Idaho's economy and rural communities. Despite the importance of this sector, recruitment and attracting the next generation workforce remains a persistent challenge for forestry, logging and manufacturing.

Poor public perceptions, lack of positive exposure, and a general lack of familiarity with the forest products industry nationwide threaten the future of these critical industries and our ability to support healthy, resilient forests through sustainable forest management. Getting youth to experience the industry in real time and seeing the passion of industry professionals from the field became a priority.

Our Response

University of Idaho Extension teamed up with local forest products industry leaders to showcase Idaho's diverse forest products industry and all that it has to offer relative to careers, economic value, and ecological benefits across all levels of forestry, logging and products manufacturing.

Initially, this event was planned for the local St. Maries middle and high school students as an addition to their career day. With the goal of highlighting all aspects of



Student participants transitioning between stations.

the timber industry, the planning committee identified a location where relevant equipment, and interactive stations could help promote the industry and share about the diverse roles and career opportunities it offers. The goal was to allow students to interact with everyone from equipment operators to foresters to managers within the industry and see the entire process from seedling to board.

To increase the reach and impact of this event, additional schools from north Idaho were invited to participate. To support this increased scope, schools were split across the two-day event with half of the attendees participating on day one and the remainder arriving for day two.

Program Outcomes

400 students from six different school districts across northern Idaho participated in the Intermountain Live in the Woods event over the course of the two days. Students engaged with different stations throughout the day and were able to see the entire process and cycle of Idaho's timber industry and sustainable forest management.

The stations students rotated through included discussions and activities related to tree planting, mastication, silviculture, the logging process with onsite logging equipment, heavy equipment service, wildland firefighting, primary forest products manufacturing, logging equipment simulators, bandsaw milling, forest health and a helicopter rescue demonstration. Each station captured the technologically advanced and ecologically-sound nature of contemporary forest management, forest operations and forest products manufacturing.

These stations and activities were all led by industry professionals from their respective areas of expertise. Over the course of the event, over 50 volunteers participated from Idaho's forest products industry to lead tour groups and activity stations.

The program was well received by students and school administrators, with one noting "The Pacific

Northwest has long been an important producer of timber products to help build strong communities and the infrastructures that support these communities. This was an exciting endeavor that will help to maintain a viable workforce in the years ahead."

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

This event was made possible by our local timber industry and community sponsors and volunteers: Danielson Logging, Intermountain Logging Conference, Jack Buell Trucking, PotlatchDeltic, St. Maries School District, Nelson Brothers Timber Management, Pacific Logging Congress, Hendrickx Logging, Manley Jobs, 10th Street Super Stop, Bennett Lumber Products, Cannon Hill Industries, The Farnsworth Family, Gem State Logging, Modern Machinery, Papé Machinery, St. Joe Cycle Club, Two Rivers Logging, Western States CAT, Whistle Stop Coffee, Zay's Cutting, Les Schwab Tires, Associated Logging Contractors, Archie's IGA, Associated Insurance Services, Benewah County EMS, Manulife Investment Management, St. Maries Gazette Record, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Forest Group, Inland Empire Paper Company, Life Flight Network, Inland Forest Management, Edward Jones, Molpus Woodlands Group, Pine Creek Logging, Potlatch School District, St. Joe Potty Huts, Stella Jones, Two Bear Air Rescue and Hansen Logging.

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