impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Over 300 Idaho loggers advance knowledge of sustainable forestry practices

AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension helps loggers implement sustainable forestry practices which provide Idaho forest products manufacturers access to markets that require certified wood products.

The Situation

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

Unfortunately, if communication between landowners, loggers or foresters is inadequate, the resulting harvests may not meet expectations. State forest practice laws are in place to help remedy these communication gaps, as they are designed to provide minimum standards for loggers and land managers to follow. If contractors understand the "spirit of the law" within these regulations, they can often modify their activities to reach forest management goals more effectively. That is particularly critical with the use of mechanized harvesting tools which give loggers increased production and efficiency in their operations and ultimately more responsibility in the woods.

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



Logging contractors participate in the field exercises near Coeur d'Alene. Photo by Ryer Becker.

A growing number of forest products retailers require forest products be certified, signifying they were harvested from managed forests using sustainable practices. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is a forest certification program Idaho mills participate in. SFI requires loggers to be trained in forestry best management practices (BMPs). By offering logger training to meet these industry requirements, UI Extension Forestry is uniquely positioned to help Idaho's logging contractors and forest products manufacturers maintain or increase Idaho's share of global markets for certified wood products.

University of Idaho Extension

UI Extension Forestry
208-874-2698
875 Perimeter Dr. MS 1133, Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133

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, harvest impacts on forested sites and water quality. LEAP is instructed by University of Idaho Extension faculty, with Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) personnel providing content on state forestry laws, forest insects and forest diseases.

Partially supported by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, the Idaho logger education committee developed the Idaho Pro-Logger Program, administered through the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho (ALC). The Idaho pro-logger credentials require LEAP and 12 credits of continuing education (CE) annually, four of which must include OSHA approved logging health and safety.

With growing enrollment in the Idaho Pro-Logger Program, more loggers are looking for ways to meet CE credit requirements. Based on logger recommendations, we developed LEAP Update, an annual program where loggers learn about current forestry best management practices and stay current on changes to regulations and available resources. Participation in LEAP Update and the required first aid course provide contractors with their required annual CE credits for pro-logger.

In 2026, 35 people attend the LEAP sessions held in Coeur d'Alene and Moscow, and 284 people attended the three LEAP Update sessions held in Orofino, Coeur d'Alene and Bonners Ferry. Loggers also attended other 2026 UI Extension forestry programs across Idaho on topics such as forest measurements, stream restoration, forest insects and disease. These classes provided additional continuing education credits. In total, UI Extension provided over 1,000 continuing education hours for Idaho loggers in 2026.

Program Outcomes

Over 2,200 loggers have attended the 70 plus LEAP sessions offered annually in Idaho since 1994. Following loggers' participation in the three LEAP Update sessions held in Idaho in 2026:

- 186 loggers will monitor for forest insects and disease;
- 182 will monitor log markets and prices;
- 209 will remain current on IDL FPA requirements;
- 108 will feel more equipped to connect and communicate with stakeholders;
- 56 will explore the use of drone technology for logging applications;
- 195 will use BMP's to avoid fire/spark risk; and
- 179 will better understand dynamic forces of harvester chain to promote safe use.

As of October 2026, 593 loggers are currently 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 timber and biomass production to support Idaho's economy, while maintaining water quality, improving forest health, and enhancing biological diversity and sustainability.

The Future

University of Idaho Extension will continue to provide LEAP and other educational opportunities guided by Idaho loggers and other forest products industry stakeholders.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho

Idaho Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee

Idaho Department of Lands

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Ryer Becker, Forest Operations Extension Specialist • University of Idaho Extension • 208-874-2698 • rbecker@uidaho.edu
Randy Brooks, Associate Dean and Director of Extension • University of Idaho Extension • 208-885-6356 • rbrooks@uidaho.edu

58-26-rbecker-logger-education • 10/26

University of Idaho, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Idaho counties cooperating.
The University of Idaho is an equal opportunity employer.