

UI Extension brings current science to Idaho Panhandle foresters in 2024-2025

AT A GLANCE

UI Extension provides local continuing education opportunities that help foresters and other natural resource professionals stay up to date on current forest science and technology.

The Situation

Forests are vital to the economy and quality of life in the Inland Northwest. Foresters and other natural resource professionals must continually sharpen their skills and stay current with emerging scientific and technological developments to sustainably produce more wood and forest biomass and simultaneously improve forest biodiversity and health. To that end, the forestry community has established credentials to document foresters' continuing education efforts (e.g., Society of American Foresters "Certified Forester" program).

Many continuing education venues do not fit the needs of individual foresters due to budget limitations, time and travel constraints, or other factors. UI Extension is uniquely situated to provide local continuing education opportunities for field foresters. K-12 teachers must also stay updated and are continually looking for local opportunities to hone their skills. They also value research-based sources of forestry education to integrate into their classrooms.



Consulting Foresters and state foresters participating in the 2025 UI/WSU Family Foresters Workshop.

Our Response

UI Extension provides continuing education for foresters, teachers and other professionals in many ways. Some programs are developed specifically for particular audiences. For example, University of Idaho Extension and Washington State University Extension cooperate to hold an annual forum for consulting foresters, state-employed service foresters and other natural resource professionals working with family forest owners. The program, titled "Family Foresters Workshop," updates participants on emerging technology and knowledge applicable to family-owned forests.

Other efforts involve adjusting programs developed for forest owners or other groups to simultaneously meet foresters' or teachers' needs. For example, in 2024-2025, Society of American Foresters' "Continuing Forestry Education" (CFE) credit was provided for UI Extension programs on forest health, logging and family forestry. We also offer University of Idaho credit for applicable UI Extension programs, such as "Forestry Shortcourse." This allows teachers to obtain university credit for programs that help them integrate local forest science into their classrooms.

Program Outcomes

One-hundred and forty-three foresters and other natural resource professionals attended UI Extension forestry programs in the Idaho Panhandle in 2024-2025, for 1,039 contact hours.

The 67 participants in the 2025 Family Foresters Workshop indicated percentage knowledge increases ranging from 10% to 69% on: spatially variable forest treatments, wood innovations, headwater streams, ponderosa pine log markets, forest practice laws,

managing riparian zones, grouse habitat, low-value wood products from wildland urban interface forests, markets for essential oils from forest products and family forest economics/policy.

Some teachers have used the short course to develop innovative high school forestry classes.

The Future

Future UI Extension programming in this area will evolve to reflect emerging technologies and professional education needs in the Idaho Panhandle related to forestry.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

- Society of American Foresters
- Association of Consulting Foresters
- Washington State University Extension
- Idaho Department of Lands
- Washington Department of Natural Resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Chris Schnepf, Area Extension Educator, Panhandle Forestry • University of Idaho Extension • 208-292-1288 • cschnepf@uidaho.edu

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