

Idaho Master Forest Stewards Program accepting Applications

University of Idaho Extension is seeking additional candidates for the Idaho Master Forest Stewards (IMFS) program. The Idaho Master Forest Stewards program was co-designed with forest owners to increase participants' forestry knowledge and skills; enable them to provide educational assistance to forest owners and other groups; and provide a forum for richer peer to peer learning among forest owners. Eighty-eight people have participated in the program thus far.

Idaho Master Forest Stewards receive over 70 hours of training, much of which consists of selected existing UI Extension programs many Idaho forest owners may have already completed (credit is given for previous attendance). But the program also includes new indoor and outdoor educational experiences designed to take participants to the next level of managing their forest and helping other forest owners to do the same. These four one-day "IMFS core sessions" are held at forested sites throughout northern Idaho to expose participants to a range of forest ecosystems.

In return for their training, Idaho Master Forest Stewards provide 70 hours of volunteer service helping forest owners and other groups learn more about research-based information on Idaho forests and forestry. A variety of volunteer service activities are possible, including outreach to forest owners, helping with forest owner associations, or teaching youth about forests. Idaho Master Forest Stewards function as University of Idaho Extension volunteers, similar to Idaho Master Gardeners.

Those interested in becoming an Idaho Master Forest Steward should contact the University of Idaho Extension Office in Kootenai County at (208) 446-1680 for program details and an application. These materials can also be downloaded at

www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/panhandle/programs/master-stewards.

Enrollment is limited to 20 people per training cohort. Idaho Master Forest Stewards applications are accepted continually, but **for possible inclusion in the 2018 cohort of trainees, applications are due April 1st, 2018**. The largest portion of the 2018 training will take place during four one-day sessions held Saturdays in April, May, June, and September.

The Idaho Master Forest Stewards program requires a substantial investment of time and energy by participants. In return, the program provides valuable learning experiences, camaraderie with others who are committed to good forest stewardship, and the means of making a significant, personal impact for Idaho forests. For questions about the program, call Chris Schnepf at (208) 446-1680.

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