



Presentation: Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership

Rick Tholen, Chair, Intermountain Society of American Foresters

Rick observed seeing good things happening at local levels with individual collaboratives, but asked the question: how do we get these small groups to network and talk to each other? The Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership (IFRP) was formed, a group of representative stakeholders in Idaho's forest issues including The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Conservation League, Trout Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Woody Biomass Utilization Partnership, and the Society of American Foresters.

There are currently eight active collaboratives in Idaho, and Rick talked about how the IFRP could help these collaboratives engage and expand zones of agreement. Members agreed that Idaho forests need active management and that the timber products industry is a viable, essential component; including timber production objectives must be considered and represented, "Before [the industry] goes out of business."

At a state level, the IFRP didn't want to be a director of all collaboratives. Rick spoke of the unique geographic areas to which each collaborative belongs, and so, "Let's not get in the way of the good stuff they're doing." The mission of the IFRP includes figuring out how to help these collaboratives be more productive, expand the zone of agreement, and more landscape-scale work. An element of this assistance occurs at their annual two-day conference, held every year for the last five years, with around 120 attendees. Members can network, discuss challenges, "cross-pollinate" ideas, and attend trainings. Training have included best management practices for collaboratives and documenting administrative processes. Rick emphasized the conference is about ideas and exchange, not direction.

Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership website: www.idahoforestpartners.org. You can find all notes from all conferences, a "State of the Forest" page updated by collaboratives, and a map with project locations and CFLRP landscapes.