

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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Wildfire recovery conference held in response to 2015 wildfires

AT A GLANCE

Extension, in partnership with other agencies, conducted a conference for landowners on the 2015 wildfire impact assessment.

The Situation

North Central Idaho experienced a dramatic wildfire season in 2015 with approximately 60,000 acres of non-industrial private lands burned. A major collaborative effort resulted in the production of an assessment of the impacts of these fires affecting private land. There was a need to present the results of this effort to affected landowners, as well as information on using the assessment to obtain resources for assisting private landowners and fire-affected communities in recovering from the 2015 wildfires.

Our Response

University of Idaho Extension, in partnership with the North-Central Idaho Wildfire Restoration Group and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, planned and conducted a day-long conference on the fire recovery assessment in Kamiah, on May 21, 2016, entitled *Life After the Fires: Living for Today & Planning for Tomorrow*. Speakers gave presentations on the outcome of the fire assessment, the activities of the North Central Wildfire-Restoration Group, efforts to assist private landowners, new federal and state initiatives to address the increasing risk of wildfire in Idaho, the historical and ecological context to increasing wildland fire frequency and severity, and forest management approaches by private landowners and others to reduce wildfire risk.

Speakers included Penny Morgan, Professor, College of Natural Resources, University of Idaho; Steve



Lolo Creek, Idaho County, September 2015; Bill Warren photo

Becker, Chair, North-Central Idaho Wildfire Restoration Group; Cheryl Probert, Supervisor, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest; Zoanne Anderson, Area Manager, Idaho Department of Lands, Rob Keefe, Professor, College of Natural Resources, University of Idaho; Lynn Rasmussen, District Manager, Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District, as well as other agency staff who developed the assessment.

Presentations were supplemented by a gallery of wall maps and photos depicting the effects of the 2015 fires, as well as a wildfire simulation, and various publications on mitigating wildfire risks to homes and property.

Extension financial support was provided, in part, by a \$2,000 Critical Issues Grant.

Program Outcomes

The program was attended by 54 people who reported a 67% gain in knowledge of the fire assessment

results. The North-Central Idaho Wildfire Restoration Group hopes to use the assessment report as a means to support the acquisition of additional resources to assist with wildfire recovery on private lands as well as a means to prioritize fire recovery projects.

The conference, and the assessment, are part of an ongoing effort by the North-Central Idaho Wildfire Restoration Group (which includes University of Idaho Extension) to respond to the continuing needs of land recovery, as well as establishing relationships and protocols for dealing with future wildfire events affecting private lands. Extension continues to play an important role in this multi-agency effort.

“Please continue to have these presentations – I learned a great deal and will share with others that were not able to make it today.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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