## Forest Utilization Research (FUR) Program

The University of Idaho College of Natural Resources is charged by the Idaho State Legislature to enhance the value of vital, state funded, natural resource assets via the Policy Analysis Group and Rangeland Center, under the Forest Utilization Research Program. These assets provide research opportunities, data, education to students, legislators, industry and the Idaho citizenry.

The value of FUR programs is proven through the economic value of Idaho's natural resource industries, which generated \$5.7 billion in 2013.

### **Budget Request FY 2016**

#### **TOTAL FY2016 MAINTENANCE FUNDING**

\$866,100 This maintains the FY 2015 scope of work, and includes \$48,800 in one-time capital outlay for forest operations equipment: Truck, Chain saws (3), Walkie Talkies (2), GPS units (3), Tree climbing harness

#### LINE ITEM REQUEST

- **\$268,500** for salary, travel, operations and capital equipment for 2.5 new FTEs in research and analysis related directly to the programs supported by FUR.
  - \$111,600 Forest Research Economist faculty position 12.01 (1.0 FTE)

This position will create the research capacity to document, with in-depth analysis, the importance of natural resource-based enterprises in Idaho's economy, including forest products, trucking and forest resource-based recreation and tourism.

 \$107,900 Rangeland Resource Management Analyst
12.02 faculty position (1.0 FTE) This position would increase the research capacity of the Rangeland Center to focus on wildfire and invasive species management, especially to maintain and restore habitat for greater sage-grouse.

**\$49,000** Forest Resource Analyst (0.5 FTE)

12.03 This position would enhance research capacity and document the importance of forestbased enterprises in Idaho, including tree volume, growth and yield.

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These resources will enhance the capability of FUR programs to work with stakeholders and leverage additional funds from other non-state sources, both of which help strengthen traditional Idaho industries and the rural communities that rely upon the jobs from harvesting, transporting and processing timber into useful consumer products and grazing livestock on rangelands.

The request for additional resources in the FUR program will directly serve professional managers and state and private owners of Idaho forest and rangelands. They will enhance the skills and tools to sustain and improve the health and productivity of forests and rangelands with respect to a full range of goods and services, including environmental quality as well as timber-based wood and paper products and forage for livestock grazing. Rural communities and outdoor recreation stakeholders in Idaho benefit from productive forest and rangelands that support economic enterprises, vigorous wildlife populations, fertile soils, and abundant supplies of clean water.

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#### Support for FUR outcomes:

Programs funded by FUR (Idaho Statute title 38, chapter 7) encompass some of the most economically-impactful areas of the state's natural resource industries, as outlined in statute (§38.703). Quantifying this impact is necessary for advancement of research and for industry, agencies and the Idaho Legislature to make sound management decisions. At the present time, none of these sectors has the long-term capacity for providing economic analysis.

Through FUR support, the University of Idaho has the potential capacity and capability of providing this service to stakeholders, landowners, lawmakers and other researchers (§38.705 and §38.711), with the additional funding to support three positions:

#### Forest Resource Economist (12.01):

Providing expertise to lead the economic study of Idaho's forest products will provide the research capacity for enhanced analysis. No entity, public or private, has routinely provided this economic analysis, although it is sought regularly by industry, private and governmental stakeholders. The University is mandated to "investigate...benefits both economic and social that flow from (timber) production, protection and management (§38.705). Producing economic analysis and forecasting is important to Idaho's forest products industry which supports adding a full-time economist to FUR.

#### **Rangeland Resource Management Analyst (12.02):**

This position can leverage research dollars, lead research and disseminate information on the impact of wildfire and invasive species on sage-grouse habitat and rangelands benefitting livestock producers, among other Idaho-centric rangeland topics (§38.715 (b) and (c)).

#### Forest Resource Analyst (12.03):

Idaho's economic benefit from natural resource industries is directly impacted by the availability of analytical and informational services, a required service of the PAG (§38.714.1(c)). This half-time position would specialize in compiling and modeling forest resource change. Industry supports any move to increase access to and availability of current and relevant data on Idaho's forest resources.

#### Equipment (10.31):

The University's Experimental Forest is the site of relevant research and educational opportunities for students and industry. Forest operations equipment is a necessary element of this operation but is expensive and difficult to replace. The truck used on the forest was purchased in 1979. Other equipment needing replacement, including chain saws and climbing equipment, was purchased prior to 2000. The safety, training and practical experience of students, as well as impact on research, lies in the use of current and reliable equipment.

College of Natural Resources

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