

Winter 2026

Idaho Tree Farm Program

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2025-2026

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2025-2026

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2026 Family Forest

Landowner's & Managers Conference

Idaho Tree Farm Program Annual Meeting

The days are getting longer, the sun is getting stronger, and January is quickly fading in the mirror. You know what that means! It's time to get ready to attend the annual meeting of our Idaho program and take in the **Family Forest Landowners & Managers Conference**. The conference dates and venue for the 2026 session are **March 30-31** in beautiful downtown Moscow, ID at the Best Western Plus University Inn. This year's theme is **"Navigating a Changing World: What are the Tradeoffs?"**

For you early birds interested in properly shepherding your Tree Farm for the generations to come, there will be a **"Ties to The Land"** session offered on Sunday the 29th. Also happening that day are a tour of the University of Idaho arboretum and a "Get Acquainted" social that evening.

As in prior years the **annual meeting of the Idaho Tree Farm Program** will be held Monday evening, beginning with a 6:00 PM social hour, hors d'oeuvres and no-host bar. Following the social we will recap our 2025 activities and honor our many Volunteers, Tree Farmers, Inspectors and Loggers. The highlight of the evening will be the naming of our 2026 Outstanding Logger, Inspector and Idaho Tree Farmer of the Year!

This conference is well known as your best "one stop shop" to gain stewardship knowledge and hobnob with professionals and agency folks from all over the Intermountain area. Included in the 2026 agenda are presentations on the top concerns currently for family forest owners, planned projections for agency harvest, prescribed fire/wildland fire mitigation programs/resultant impact on insurance, managing timber trespass, forest health, new and emerging products for our timber, growing your own seedlings, uses for Lidar on family forestlands, and that's only **part** of the list!

Log onto www.idahoforestowners.org for more info and to register for this great event. We hope to see you there!

In Memoriam – Janet Funk - 1943-2026

With great sadness we report the passing of a tireless stalwart of our program and a wonderful person we were blessed to have in our midst, Janet Funk. She and her husband Steve have been part of the heart & soul of Tree Farming for many years, serving in various capacities on both the local and national levels. In 2010 they were rightfully honored as our Idaho Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year, and in 2011 they were named as National Tree Farmers of the Year – Idaho's only Tree Farmers to hold that high distinction.

In addition to Tree Farming, Janet also gave her time & talent to helping with 4-H, Idaho Forest Owners Association, North Idaho Quilters Guild, faithful service at her church, and several local committees working to improve and preserve water quality in our area. For many years their Edgescreek Tree Farm has been a favorite stop for the Sustainable Forestry tour, helping to instill in our educators the lessons and rewards of proper family forest stewardship.

Our condolences to Steve and all of the Funk family, and a hearty thanks to Janet for the time and love she gave us during a life well lived.

2026 Idaho State Forestry Contest – Kurt Koetter, Idaho Tree Farm Committee

The 43rd annual contest will be held at Farragut State Park again this year on May 14 at the Scott Group Campsite. Students from grades 5-12 are competing for individual and team trophies including dollar and scholarship prizes. There were over 245 students representing 15 different groups last year, including Middle and High Schools, FFA's and 4-H organizations. There were 16 Career Fair booths and the University of Idaho Logger Sports team attended. Volunteers are important to the success of the contest and there is still time to become part of this traditional activity. The Longhorn Barbecue will be serving lunch for free to all that gather prior to the Awards Ceremony. For more information and to volunteer, please go to the IDL website and click on the Idaho State Forestry Contest. We hope to see you there.

Welcome New District 3 Chair – Samantha Buys

After many years of fine service as District 3 chair, we bid a fond farewell to our dear friend John Lillehaug. Though we hate to see him go, we are excited to welcome Samantha (Sam) Buys as our new face of Idaho Tree Farm in our southern area. Sam is a Private Forestry Specialist with Idaho Department of Lands in the McCall area. John assures us he is leaving us in good hands, and we have no doubt his trust is well placed. Sam jumped into the program learning the ropes of an Inspector during much of last year and has done a tremendous job with the Tree Farmers in her area. Please join us in welcoming Sam to the team!



Wind Damage and Bark Beetle Management

Hannah Hollowell, Noah Lindeman, and Erika Eidson, ID Dept of Lands Entomology

Winter storms in December 2025, with above average rainfall and high wind conditions, caused pockets of blowdown in forests across Idaho. Trees damaged and downed from these wind events, particularly ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, western larch, or Engelmann spruce, can trigger bark beetle issues. Prompt management, where feasible, is the best way to reduce the chance of losing additional trees to bark beetles.

Here in Idaho, we have three major species of bark beetles that are attracted to windthrow: **pine engraver**, **Douglas-fir beetle**, and **spruce beetle**. These bark beetles can lay eggs in downed logs, and a new generation of bark beetles can emerge from those logs and attack nearby standing trees. So what's the greatest risk?

- Pine slash (tops, branches, or small trees) that are > 3" in diameter are most susceptible to pine engraver
- Douglas-fir logs that are >14" diameter are most susceptible to Douglas-fir beetle; windthrown western larch logs can also be susceptible to Douglas-fir beetle, although standing larch are rarely attacked
- Engelmann spruce logs that are >16" diameter are susceptible to spruce beetle

In general, the best option to reduce beetle infestations is to remove damaged and windthrown trees. If there aren't enough trees to economically salvage, consider safely burning, chipping, or debarking logs (such as with a Log Wizard) to destroy the food source for beetles. If chipping in spring, avoid piling chips near the base of standing trees since their odors can temporarily attract bark beetles. If none of these options are possible, removing branches and cutting green logs into smaller pieces and spreading in sunny areas to dry can reduce suitability for bark beetles, although it's not 100% effective. If using logs for firewood, consider debarking or splitting logs to dry them quickly and don't stack green firewood next to live standing trees. Also note that older dead trees don't pose a bark beetle threat, but rather green windthrown trees and logs damaged this past winter.

These three bark beetle species have different lifecycles, so the timeline for managing windthrow depends on what species of trees are down. Pine engraver (*Ips pini*) has 2-3 generations each year; beetles infest downed pine material in April-May, then a new generation emerges typically in June and can attack nearby pines. Douglas-fir beetle (*Dendroctonus pseudotsugae*) and spruce beetle (*Dendroctonus rufipennis*) take at least a year to develop, so beetles would infest downed Douglas-fir, western larch, or spruce in 2026 and the new generation of beetles wouldn't emerge until 2027. In general, windthrow from these December 2025 storms should be dealt with in the following timeframe:

- If possible, a salvage harvest before April 2026 will help remove windthrown trees before any type of bark beetles can infest them in the first place.
- If a timber sale isn't feasible in that timeframe, management of pine slash should be prioritized in the spring and summer of 2026 to prevent pine engraver outbreak.
- Management of downed Douglas-fir, western larch, or Engelmann spruce logs should occur before April or May 2027 to be effective.

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Wind Damage and Bark Beetle Management (Continued from Page 3)

Pine Engraver Management.

Prompt treatment of windthrown pine is critical. The first generation of pine engraver can infest windthrown pine material >3" diameter between April-June. These beetles reproduce in the downed logs. Their offspring emerge later in summer to search for additional hosts, which can include nearby standing pines. If slash from this wind event (or slash generated from salvage logging) is removed or destroyed by mid-April, this prevents infestation to begin with. If slash can't be managed before April 2026, it may become infested with pine engraver, but it can still be removed or destroyed by June 2026 to prevent the developing generation of pine engraver from emerging and infesting nearby live trees.

Options can include removing slash, piling and burning, debarking, chipping, mastication, or lopping the pine material into smaller pieces and scattering them in sunny areas to dry, although lop-and-scatter is not 100% effective at mitigating pine engraver infestation. If slash can't be removed or destroyed before June 2026, creating extra-large slash piles can be a management option. Very large slash piles (minimum 20 foot long and 10 foot deep) can be effective if they are constructed in winter or spring of 2026 with larger pieces at the bottom of the pile. Creating large piles allows the interior pieces to keep enough moisture that beetles infest slash in the same pile all season without venturing further to attack standing trees. Slash piles can then be burned at the end of fall or through the winter of 2026-27, although burning can be more difficult when the largest materials are located at the interior of the pile. **Depending on site conditions, creating large slash piles may not always be effective in hot, dry summers.**

For more information on pine engraver management, reach out to the IDL forest health team at (208) 769-1525 or check out the [IDL Forest Pest Fact Sheet: Pine Engraver](#) or the [USFS FHP Pine Engraver Management Guide](#) online.

Douglas-fir Beetle Management.

Remove or treat downed Douglas-fir and western larch by April 2027. A salvage harvest conducted before spring 2026 will allow large-diameter blowdown to be removed before being infested by Douglas-fir beetle. Even if logs are infested, they can still be removed before April 2027 to protect nearby standing Douglas-fir; salvaged logs should be promptly processed at the mill to prevent beetles from infesting Douglas-fir trees near the mill.

If salvage logging isn't an option, larger-diameter logs can be bucked and split this spring or summer and left to dry out. Infested materials can also be removed, chipped, or burned during the winter of 2026-27, which are all effective options to prevent beetles from emerging in spring of 2027.

Another management option is MCH, a repellent pheromone which specifically deters Douglas-fir beetle from infesting logs or Douglas-fir trees. We've covered MCH in the past, but in a nutshell this pheromone signals to Douglas-fir beetles that a tree is already fully infested (essentially acting as a "no vacancy" sign), and beetles fly by without attacking.



Wind Damage and Bark Beetle Management (Continued from Page 4)

MCH can be stapled to windthrown Douglas-fir logs in April 2026 to protect them from Douglas-fir beetle. Or if logs can't be treated in 2026 and become infested, surrounding stands can be protected with MCH applied to nearby standing trees in April 2027.

In certain situations, MCH can be a cost-effective option, so if you're interested in using pheromones, please contact the IDL forest health team for more information at (208) 769-1525. Additional information about Douglas-fir beetle can be found at [IDL Forest Pest Fact Sheet: Douglas-fir Beetle](#) or the [USFS FHP Douglas-fir Beetle Management Guide](#) online.

Spruce Beetle Management.

Remove or treat downed spruce by May 2027. Because spruce beetles take 1-2 years to develop, any downed spruce trees may be infested in 2026, with the next generation of beetles not emerging until 2027 or, in cold climates, possibly 2028. Salvage harvests can effectively remove large-diameter blowdown before spruce beetle becomes an issue.

If logs can't be removed, other management options include bucking or splitting logs (cut logs to <18" in length and scatter in sunny, dry areas) in 2026 to dry out material prior to 2027. Other options for managing the infested material include pile and burn, or chip or masticate material before May 2027. For more information on spruce beetle, check out the [IDL Forest Pest Fact Sheet: Spruce Beetle](#) or the [USFS FHP Spruce Beetle Management Guide](#) online.

Forestry Day at the Legislature – Samantha Buys, District 3 Chair

The 2026 Forestry Day at the Legislature theme, *Why Mass Timber Is Right for Idaho*, proved to be a topic of great interest, bringing in one of the largest crowds John Lillehaug has witnessed in his more than 20 years of attendance.

Ashley Thompson, PE, SE, of KPFF Consulting Engineers, spoke on the benefits of mass timber products in architecture, particularly regarding students' and employees' mental health, as well as the material's natural beauty and sustainability. Greg Womack from the American Wood Council presented on the structural integrity of buildings using mass timber products sharing findings from a multiyear study on the effects of structural fires on mass timber. Peter MacKeith - University of Arkansas, and Dennis Becker - University of Idaho, presented successes highlighting their universities' involvement with mass timber production and its use in building architecture. Dennis explained how mass timber products used on the new ICCU Arena created new jobs in Idaho, while utilizing local timber from the U of I Experimental Forest and local mills for production. More information can be found at [ICCU Arena | University of Idaho](#) and [Idaho Central Credit Union Arena](#).

The event was hosted by the Intermountain and Inland Empire Society of American Foresters and included sponsors such as PotlatchDeltic, Idaho Forest Group, Stimson Lumber Company, Idaho Forest Owners Association, American Tree Farm System, DF Development LLC, Riley Stegner and Associates, Idaho Department of Lands, Manulife, Clearwater Paper, Perkins Coie, the U.S. Forest Service, and Molpus Woodlands Group.

A recording of the event will be posted on the Events page of the SAF – Intermountain Region website. [Active Management Tour | Society of American Foresters - Intermountain Region](#)



Events to Highlight

March 29-31, 2026 Family Forest Landowners & Managers Conference, Moscow, ID

March 30, 2026, Idaho Tree Farm Program Annual Meeting, Moscow, ID

April 21, 2026, Idaho Tree Farm Committee Meeting, CDA, ID

Welcome New Members!

The Idaho Tree Farm Committee extends a special welcome to the newest Idaho Tree Farm Program’s certified members. Thank you to the District Chairs and Inspecting Foresters for promoting membership in the Idaho Tree Farm Program through the American Tree Farm System®.

As a current member, and a steward of the land, we appreciate your current support of the program and your management of the forestland for pride and pleasure. Thank you for your continued commitment to protecting watersheds and wildlife habitat, conserving soil and, at the same time, producing the wood America needs and uses.

Tree Farm Member	Acreage	County	Inspecting Forester
Trish Hartzell	67	Latah	Randy Brooks

Stay Informed....

In case you are ever wondering what is going on at the committee level, our Minutes are now being posted on the Idaho Tree Farm Program website. Just log onto our website for Minutes of previous sessions, contact information, upcoming events, and other news of note to help you in your Tree Farm endeavors.

We're on the Web!

Learn more at:
www.idahotreefarm.org

Have a safe rest of the winter
 (or whatever we are calling this one)

Think snow for now and we look forward
 to seeing you in Moscow at the

**Family Forest Landowners & Managers
 Conference!**

About Our Organization...

The purpose of the Idaho Tree Farm Program is to promote better forest management among family forest owners. The vehicle for achieving this aim is the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), sponsored nationally by the **American Forest Foundation (AFF)**, statewide by the **Idaho SFI State Implementation Committee (SFI SIC)**, and administered by the **Idaho Tree Farm Committee (State Committee)**.

