

Summer 2026

Idaho Tree Farm Program

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2025-2026

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2025-2026

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2026 Idaho Tree Farm Fall Tour

Packard Family Tree Farm – Viola, ID

September 19, 2026

With the days still warm and your 4th of July sunburn still healing it may be hard to believe, but it's time to mark your calendars for our annual Fall Tour. We will be travelling to Viola this year to showcase our 2026 Idaho Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year, the Packard Family!

The property was purchased in 1948 by Cecil Packard. The ownership originated as a 160-acre parcel that had been high graded before purchase. Originally purchased as a “stump ranch”, the property was used as a cattle operation that also sold Christmas trees. Due to the high grading of the property, logging of the property did not begin until the mid to late 1990's. Since then, logging on the property in the interest of improving stand health has become more of a priority. Today the property totals 630 acres.

The tour will take place on **September 19, 2026 at 1230 Davis Road, Viola, ID 83872** and will begin at 8:00 AM with a coffee & doughnut hour. We plan to leave for the woods at 9:00 AM and finish up around noon with lunch provided by the Idaho Tree Farm Program. Along the way we will visit a variety of forest stands of various ages and species, talk about the history of these stands, look at plantations as well as stands of natural regeneration, see some stand improvements to increase health and vigor, take a look at some recent salvage logging, view the forestry equipment used in the Packard forest, and see some wildlife enhancements.

To get a good head count for our meals, we ask you to **RSVP by August 25, 2025 to Colleen Meek, at admin@idahotreefarm.org**. Also, Larry Packard has offered to let people dry camp on his property the night before the event. For more info or RSVP contact 509-336-0483.

Remember, this is a “rain or shine” event so watch the weather report and bring sturdy shoes for some light hiking and appropriate outerwear.

U of I Extension Forestry News – Welcome, Sara Ashiglar!

We are pleased to welcome Sara Ashiglar as our new Area Extension Educator, covering the 5 northern Idaho counties. Sara comes with a degree in Forest Management from Oregon State University and a M.S. in Forest Biology from the State University of New York-Environmental Science and Forestry. She has managed lands for the Forest Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the BLM for over twenty years and is excited to share her experiences in silviculture, forestry, and forest pathology with the Extension team. Sara spends her free time running, gardening and hiking with her two kids and Australian shepherd.



Idaho Tree Farm Program Survey

Let Us Know What You Think So We Can Serve You Better

Your feedback matters!!

The Idaho Tree Farm Program is committed to continuously improving the value and services we provide to Idaho's Tree Farmers. Whether you've been involved in the program for many years or are a newer member, we want to hear about your experiences, ideas, and suggestions.

Please take a few minutes to complete our survey and share your thoughts. Your input will help guide future program improvements and ensure we continue meeting the needs of Idaho's family forest owners.

Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback and for being a valued member of the Idaho Tree Farm Program.

Idaho Tree Farm: Member Value
and Experience Survey



Hover your camera over the QR code to begin the survey or use the Link:
<https://forms.office.com/q/iE40WjxGXx>



Southern Idaho Forestry Tour Recap (Samantha Buys, District 3 Chair)

The Southern Idaho Forestry Tour got off to an exciting start when the 40 registered attendees quickly grew to more than 70 participants. The community center in New Meadows was filled with landowners, operators, forest managers, and Idaho Department of Lands staff for a day of learning, networking, and hands-on forestry education.

The morning featured presentations on a variety of topics, including the notification and compliance application process, conservation easements, landowner assistance programs, and forest health issues such as insects and disease. The Idaho Department of Lands Forest Health program hosted an educational booth highlighting common forest insects and diseases, while Back Country Equipment showcased forestry tools and equipment available for purchase.

In the afternoon, participants headed into the field to identify bark beetles in ponderosa pine, observe mastication equipment in action, and tour Evergreen Mill to learn more about local forest products and operations.

A special thank you goes to all of the presenters who shared their expertise: Archie Grey (Idaho Department of Lands), Craig Utter (Payette Land Trust), Erin Brooks (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Rachel Hammer (National Forest Foundation), Kyle Stone (Northwest Management), Hannah Hollowell and Noah Lindeman (Idaho Department of Lands), Randy Brooks (University of Idaho Extension), and Jim Wassmuth (Evergreen Mill).

We also extend our sincere appreciation to John Lillehaug, American Tree Farm, Adams Soil and Water Conservation District, and Valley Soil and Water Conservation District for their continued support and generous donations, which helped make this event a success.

We look forward to welcoming everyone to next year's Southern Idaho Forestry Tour in Valley County.



Forest Health Update: Drought, Bark Beetles and Wood Borers

(Hannah Hollowell, IDL Forest Health Program Manager, Entomologist)

In 2025, much of Idaho experienced a moderate to severe drought, and the repercussions are being felt in 2026 through a rise in bark beetle and wood borer activity across many parts of the state. Most native bark beetles are attracted to drought-stressed trees, but drought can also bring more “secondary” pests, insects that don’t commonly kill trees outright. Drought weakens trees enough that even these secondary pests can cause significant tree mortality.

Insect biology plays a role in why drought-stressed trees are so susceptible to insect pests. Many insects, bark beetles and wood borers included, use chemical cues to help navigate to a host tree and to communicate with other insects of the same species. Beetles can detect chemical cues (volatiles) that a host tree releases when it’s stressed, and they can then release their own chemical cues (pheromones) to communicate with other beetles in the area. Pheromones are used to attract or repel other beetles as needed, to synchronize mass attacks on trees but avoid overcrowding once a tree is infested.

Tree defenses play another role in susceptibility to bark beetles. A good example of this occurs in pines, which respond to beetle attack by producing sticky resin that can flush beetles out from underneath the bark. This resin is commonly seen as pitch tubes on the outside of the bark where beetles have attacked, although not all bark beetles elicit this tree defense response. So what happens when a pine has limited water during a drought? It can’t produce enough resin or pitch to effectively deter beetles. The consequences of drought can be especially devastating when trees are growing too densely and competing for what limited water is available.

Drought-stress delivers a one-two punch by making the tree more attractive to beetles (through stress volatiles) and lowering the tree’s defenses against beetles (through reduction in defensive resin). Previously we have covered many of the primary bark beetles in Idaho (such as western pine beetle, Douglas-fir beetle, and pine engraver). But drought can weaken trees to the point that even secondary beetles may become tree-killers.

Secondary Bark Beetles

Following the 2025 drought, we have received an increase in reports of Douglas-fir damage and mortality across many areas of north and central Idaho. Much of the damage, however, has been topkill of mature trees, or mortality of pole-sized trees and saplings. While Douglas-fir beetle, our primary bark beetle infesting mature Douglas-fir, was the culprit of some mortality, the topkill and mortality of younger trees was largely attributed to secondary bark beetles. These include beetles in the genus *Scolytus* (*S. unispinosus* and *S. monticolae*) and the genus *Pseudohylesinus*. These secondary beetles prefer attacking Douglas-fir trees where bark is thinner, either higher in the crown or on younger trees; they also prefer trees growing on rocky or shallow soils and on drier aspects.

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Drought, Bark Beetles and Wood Borers (Continued from page 4)



While the extent of damage from these secondary bark beetles this year was not quite as stark as what followed the 2015 drought, the damage is still raising concerns for many landowners. These beetles are closely associated with drought, and may continue to cause topkill or mortality of smaller trees in future dry years, occasionally even killing mature Douglas-fir trees outright during severe droughts.

(Picture to the left) Figure 2. *Topkill in scattered Douglas-fir trees in Rathdrum, likely caused by secondary bark beetles.*

Wood Borers

In a few stands in north Idaho this year, particularly areas with rocky or shallow soils, we received reports of large Douglas-fir trees with green needles but significant woodpecker activity. Peeling back the bark revealed flatheaded wood borer galleries (family Buprestidae). No signs of bark beetles, not even Douglas-fir beetle, were seen on these trees. The combination of poor soils and drought acted as acute stressors which attracted wood borers and allowed them to act atypically and infest even these green Douglas-fir trees.

(Picture to Right) Figure 1. *Woodpecker damage on Douglas-fir tree that was infested with flatheaded wood borers. Photo Credit: Chris Gerhart. IDL.*



Managing Forests in Drought

Different tree species have different tolerances for drought. Douglas-fir and grand fir prefer more moisture but are often growing on drier sites than where they historically have grown. Drought is more influential on these species that may already be stressed by site conditions. On the other hand, ponderosa pine is one of our most drought-tolerant species and tends to be less affected unless other underlying conditions, like overcrowding, are stressing trees.

It would be impossible to completely combat the effects of drought, but there are a few strategies that can help. First and foremost, grow the right tree on the right site. South- and west-facing slopes or shallow rocky soils tend to be driest, so promote drought-tolerant species on drier sites. Thinning a stand to reduce overcrowding and competition can also benefit trees. By reducing competition, the remaining trees have better access to water, light, and nutrients to grow more vigorously. This makes the trees more resilient to drought and more resistant to many insect pests. While drought conditions are beyond our direct control, we have tools to improve tree health through these silvicultural strategies.



Events to Highlight

Sept 19, 2026, Idaho Tree Farm Program Fall Tour, Viola, ID

Oct 20, 2026, Idaho Tree Farm Committee Meeting, CDA, ID

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

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)**.

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
Karn Family Holding Trust	28	Kootenai	Hailey Frank-Bennett

**Have a safe rest of your summer
and we look forward to seeing you
in Viola at the Fall Tour on
September 19th!!**

**Remember to RSVP to Colleen by
August 25
at admin@idahotreefarm.org
so we can be sure to have a lunch
for you!**

