



IDAHO FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION



NOVEMBER IS IFOA ELECTION TIME & MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!

Every year in November, as most longtime IFOA members know, it is once again time to decide who we want to honor with the title of Director to help guide the important functions and programs informing us, educating us, and advocating for us as we continue to manage our forested lands as best we can for our own use and enjoyment, as well as providing publicly valued services like cleaned water, cleaned air, wildlife habitat, open space, wood and paper products, carbon sequestration, and hunting or other recreation opportunities!

That's a long sentence, but it shows how much work IFOA helps with, how important it is that we carefully consider our leadership, and how important it is that we become active in accomplishing our goals and responsibilities!

So in mid-November, when you receive your letter from IFOA, please be sure to mark your ballot for Director elections and return your vote by November 30th at the latest.

The Autumn 2025 edition of your IFOA Newsletter has candidate bios and campaign statements for you to review to learn about your Directors.

If your paid-up IFOA membership dues expire at the end of 2025, you will also receive notice in the letter to choose a one-year, three-

year, or five-year choice to keep your membership in full force. If timely, please send your dues renewal before the end of the year. You can conveniently use the return envelope provided to send you ballot or your dues (or both!) by November 30th.

The end of every year is a time we all think about the coming year as well as any contributions we want to make for causes and organizations we appreciate for the good work they do in our interests as well as deserving public services we want to support.

You can add any donation amount you wish along with your IFOA dues renewal. If your contribution is \$100.00 or more, you will become a 2026 IFOA Patron. If you would like your contribution to be a charitable tax-free one, you can make your year-end payment to the IFOA-Education Foundation. Both choices fund worthwhile endeavors to educate and inform everyone (including youth) on the economic, environmental, and social advantages of proper stewardship and management of our precious natural resources.

SEE PAGE 3 for a very worthwhile opportunity to add FREE donations (NO COST TO YOU) to IFOA's Education Foundation as a result of your own online shopping activity!

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2025 IFOA DIRECTORS

Nancy G. Clampet
Madeline David
Robert Easley
Marianna J. Groth
Gary R. Hess
Charles W. McKetta
Cynthia R. Mead
Sandra F. Schlepp
Paul R. Turcott

MEET-A-MEMBER

MERRILL & MURIEL OAKS, OLDTOWN

Along the Pend Oreille River near Oldtown, Idaho Merrill and Muriel Oaks enjoy 160 acres of property they have owned for 76 years. Merrill's family bought the first 40 acres in 1949 and the couple have incrementally added to that over the years, bringing their ownership to the current 160 acres. They have lived on the property year around since 2011 after retiring from careers at Washington State University and the University of Washington, having lived in Pullman for 40 years. Now they are full-time farmers, growing timber and hay. While operated as a business, it is also a way of life for the couple, providing recreational opportunities to share with family and friends and keeping the couple in good health. Muriel adds "We are grateful to Chris Schnepf, the Idaho Master Forest Stewards Program and our forestry colleagues for helping us learn to become knowledgeable and responsible managers of our forest and farm property. We feel very fortunate that the work we have invested in improving our land will be in good hands when we are no longer able to do it, as our son Jordan is interested in assuming control in the future." The Oaks are also considering developing a conservation easement for their property.

The property, both acreage and original farmhouse, are likely one of the oldest intact parcels on the Pend Oreille River from Sandpoint to the Canadian border. The historic, two-story farmhouse was built by shipbuilders (LeClerc or Langille), who also crafted early river boats, barges and steamships to support large mills at Oldtown, Idaho and Cusick, Washington. There is evidence that the property was burned extensively in the 1910 Big Burn fire. The uniqueness of the property arises from the breadth of soil types, water access and terrain configurations. The property starts at river level and gradually increases more than 300 feet in altitude.

There are numerous springs on the property that feed two ponds and provide the household water. The larger pond is located 125 feet higher than the hay field, which allowed the Oaks to develop a natural pressure irrigation system that provides water to their field – no pump and no electricity required! The forest portion of their land is a mix of western redcedar, Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, grand fir, western larch and an occasional western hemlock. The timber is mature forest with continued new plantings resulting in uneven aged management. The Oaks plant hundreds of seedlings yearly in pursuit of an improved forest and thin and limb their trees to minimize fire risk and encourage growth of desirable species. They plant mostly ponderosa pine in dry areas and Douglas-fir, western larch and western white pine in areas with more moisture. When asked if they see timber stand improvement as a worthy endeavor or a task that produces backaches, the answer was "Both! Seeing new seedlings making real progress is rewarding and encourages us to step up and continue the process of regrowth and regeneration. A 'plant-smart' approach reduces the backache aspect of planting. For example, rather than using a hodad for planting new starts, we use a gas-powered handheld auger." The property has a variety of soil types, sun exposure and geographical features that encourage growth of multiple species. Their last timber harvest was in 2021.

The Oaks have two favorite sites on their land, the first being the top portion that has a direct



(Continued on page 3)

MEET-A-MEMBER (CONT.)

(Continued from page 2)

commanding view of Mt. Spokane, Oldtown/Newport and the Pend Oreille River. The other spots are the two natural ponds that support wildlife and water for the hay field. The ponds are also popular with family and friends for swimming and fishing. They have hosted a wedding, a boy scout weekend campout, and have been asked to host a trapping seminar for adolescents in the near future. Trails to accommodate walkers and 4-wheelers as well as maintained logging roads provide access to the entire property.

Gray wolves, coyotes, turkeys, black bear, cougar, elk, whitetail deer and an occasional lazy and poorly-sighted grumpy moose wander through the Oaks' property. Over time, Merrill and Muriel have developed more foraging opportunities for some animal species with habitat development. They also have nesting snags throughout the property.

In addition to their forestry endeavors, the Oaks are winter travelers. They have travelled many times to Thailand conducting workshops in support of higher education and doctoral student research and then continued travel for pleasure to countries throughout that region. They have also travelled to New Zealand and Australia.

by IFOA Director Cindy Mead

GOOD NEWS FROM YOUR IFOA-EDUCATION FOUNDATION

You not only support the mission and educational programs of IFOA but also IFOA-EF's important community outreach. EF financially supports important youth-focused forestry education and stewardship programs like the annual Idaho State Forestry Contest and several more. This year the EF board focused on identifying additional youth programs in need of financial support. We have found several and want to do more, especially as Idaho ramps up vo-tech education to engage students with forestry skills needed by family forest owners. Our support means we need to FUNDRAISE, a tired word this time of year, but DON'T STOP READING AS WE ARE NOT ASKING YOU TO OPEN THE WALLET!!!

What EF is asking will COST YOU NOTHING (yes, really!) but can provide a significant boost to EF fundraising. It's not "too good to be true"; it's EF's Raise Right fundraising program that now offers an ONLINE SHOPPING (zero cost) option in addition to gift card sales for nominal fees. ONLINE SHOPPING via Raise Right is simple, seamless and there are no fees or gimmicks (yes, really!).

1) Go to www.raiseright.com or download their app and enroll with the IFOA-EF enrollment code: 3BC3PAUTVUUS.

2) Go to "Online Shopping" and select the merchant you buy from online. Click their logo and you will be transferred directly to their website. Shop as you would if you went directly to the site. Check out as you normally do, even use your cash back credit or debit card to complete your purchase all on the merchant's site.

That's it! The merchants (over 550 participate) will DONATE typically .5%-2% (sometimes more with bonus promos) of your purchase amount DIRECTLY to IFOA-EF for our programs.

Again, there is no cost to our members, but EF benefits from your normal online purchases at places like Best Buy, Cabela's, Kohl's, Macy's, LL Bean, Pet Smart, Chewy, etc., etc. You can even earn donations for EF by making your usual travel reservations online at hotels like Best Western or Holiday Inn Express. The same goes for rental cars. Thank you in advance from your EF board for taking a minute to enroll in Raise Right Online Shopping and supporting our fundraising at no cost to you except a minute or two of your well spent time. PLEASE HELP, our future forest stewards depend on it!

by Paul Turcott, IFOA-EF President

Contact information for family forest owner interests:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>	<u>Website</u>
Idaho Forest Owners Association	755-8168	evpifoa@gmail.com	www.idahoforestowners.org
Idaho Forest Stewardship Program	666-8632	jclark@idl.idaho.gov	www.idl.idaho.gov
Idaho Tree Farm Program	437-4820	admin@idahotreefarm.org	www.idahotreefarm.org
National Woodland Owners Assoc.	703-255-2700	argow@nwoa.net	www.woodlandowners.net

COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2025

IFOA Board Meeting

Coeur d'Alene, Tues., 11/11/2025
 evpifoa@gmail.com

Turning Idaho Trees into Wreaths

New Meadows, Sat., 11/15/2025
 uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar

Turning Idaho Trees into Wreaths

Orofino, Saturday, 11/22/2025
 uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar

Turning Idaho Trees into Wreaths

Moscow, Saturday, 11/29/2025
 uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar

DECEMBER 2025

Turning Idaho Trees into Wreaths

Plummer, Monday, 12/01/2025
 uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar

Turning Idaho Trees into Wreaths

Saint Maries, Thurs, 12/04/2025
 uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar

Current Topics in Forest Health

Orofino, Friday, 12/05/2025
 uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar

IFOA Board Meeting

Coeur d'Alene, Tues., 12/09/2025
 evpifoa@gmail.com

Current Topics in Forest Health

Coeur d'Alene, Friday, 12/12/2025
 uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar

JANUARY 2026

IFOA Board Meeting

Coeur d'Alene, Tues., 1/1/13/2026

IDAHO IS FIRST STATE TO TRY NEW METHOD TO SPOT WILDFIRES

Idaho is trying out technology that promises to detect wildfires faster than traditional methods, and the company behind the technology said it is the first state in the country to do so at this scale. The Idaho Department of Lands, which handles fires primarily on private or state-managed endowment land, began a partnership in August with OroraTech, a German company that uses satellites and thermal imaging technology to identify new fires and predict possible spread. The company said it can detect fire almost in real time.

“By partnering with the Idaho Department of Lands, we’re ensuring that firefighters across the state have access to the most advanced wildfire intelligence available,” said Thomas Gruebler, CEO of OroraTech USA. “With the ability to detect wildfire ignitions that are the size of a small automobile, we are giving Idaho’s first responders every possible advantage in protecting lives, property and the land that defines this great state.” The state paid \$150,000 for a one-year “demo” of the OroraTech program, said Department of Lands spokesperson Sharla Arledge. She said the department will continue to use its current fire detection method, a mountaintop camera detection system, alongside the new technology and will compare notification data from the camera system and other notification methods - like reports to dispatch - against OroraTech’s program to find the most efficient option.

Arledge noted that the department is trying to meet a fire suppression goal of keeping 95% of fires at 10 acres or smaller.

“We are striving to meet that objective, and a key component to a rapid response is notifying the appropriate resources. We are continuously looking for innovative ways of rapidly detecting and reporting the start of a wildfire.”

In a news release, OroraTech noted that Idaho is the first state to implement wildfire satellite detection on a statewide level. The company has also contracted with government agencies on a smaller level, according to Space-News.com, including Larimer County, Colorado, which is home to Fort Collins. OroraTech said its satellite monitoring is accurate regardless of weather, cloud cover, time of day or other potential obstacles that could interfere with other methods of observing fire activity. Satellite fire detection technology has become more common in recent years, and several companies offer monitoring solutions like OroraTech. Government agencies, including NASA, also use the technology and have been developing their own satellite monitoring for wildfires.

by Nicole Blanchard, Idaho Statesman

IFOA WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS:

Randy Albritton, Sandpoint

Paul Richards, Sandpoint

BOOK REVIEW: *BARKSKINS, A NOVEL*

FAMILY LUMBER EMPIRE, AND PAVING THE WAY FOR A NATION

I can't recall where I read about *Barkskins*, but as the daughter of a forester, the idea of reading about how timber has shaped our nation appealed to me. The book follows two (entwined, at times) families, one Mi'kmaw and one French, from 1693 until almost the present day (though I haven't reached actual nationhood for either the U.S. or Canada) as settlers clear the newly "discovered" land, first for the value of the timber, then for the sake of clearing.

Author Annie Proulx does a beautiful job of inhabiting all of her characters, both the good and the bad, and while there are some baddies in here, the world is rich enough to bypass the noble savage and manifest destiny tropes (though the patois the Native characters sometimes conversed in didn't feel right). The characters can't get past that last one, though, as they (native and settler) clear more and more of the land, looking for profit or a better life.

""And God said replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and every living thing that moveth, and every green tree and herb.""

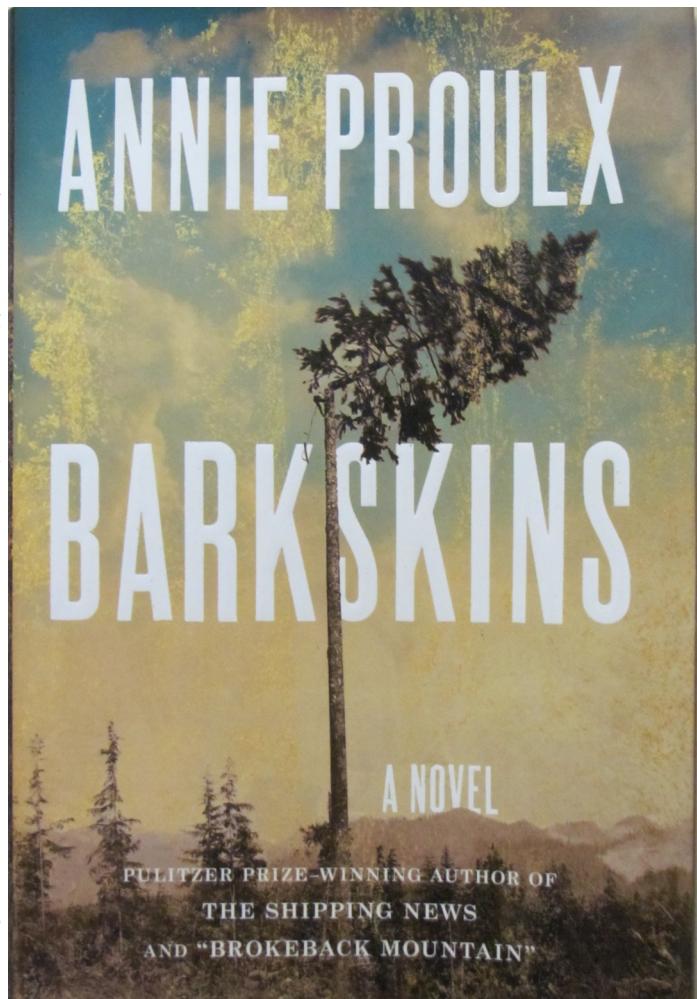
- Hitchbone in *Barkskins* by Annie Proulx

I learned a lot about the early timber trade early in this book as one of the characters travels as far as China to capture a market in a niche he foresees. It boggled my modern mind how he could spend years, between the travel and waiting in country, in pursuit of one market. But it was fascinating to think about where different parts of the world were in terms of "progress," both Europe and China having cleared large parts of their once virgin forests. I've learned about the various jobs loggers had and what happens when you start squaring logs rather than keeping them round for transport. Interesting to me because I come from a part of the world where log trucks loaded with fully round logs with their bark still on are common.

""Take what we can get as soon as we can get it is what I say. I am not interested in fifty years hence as there is no need for concern. The forests are infinite and permanent.""

- Edward in *Barkskins* by Annie Proulx

While I haven't finished the book yet (I have other commitments, i.e., these trains won't dispatch themselves), I have gotten far enough into it where some people are starting to lament the change they are helping create. That in itself is interesting to me as I'm wondering a lot lately about the nature of progress and the role I want to play in it.



""Whitemen never see it was our work. For them hunt and fish is only to play.""

- Kuntaw in *Barkskins* by Annie Proulx

I'm also thinking a lot about our family forest - a project my dad manages but that the next generation is starting to get more involved in. I wonder which character I most resemble and whether I should send copies of this book to all the partners.

by Isla R. McKetta from her blog "geography of reading"

FOREST CARBON PROGRAM ENROLLMENT FALLS BELOW SURVEY PREDICTIONS

Several US programs provide smaller-scale forest landowners access to carbon markets where they can earn payments in exchange for stricter timber management. We study participation in one program, - the Family Forest Carbon Program - and find that 1% of likely eligible owners in five high-enrollment counties in Pennsylvania enrolled in the first 3 years, less than what landowner surveys predict. Comparisons of enrolled parcels with those of the likely eligible population reveal a similar average extent of harvesting over the 35 years prior to enrollment. Under the current owner, however, enrolled parcels had 50% more harvesting than comparable parcels. We find that more harvesting in the past 20 years reduces harvesting in the present, suggesting that, absent the Program, enrolled parcels might have less future harvests. The findings indicate that expanding carbon market access is one challenge, enrolling landowners, especially those with high offset potential, is another.

Abstract by Jeremy G. Weber, Yucheng Wang, Natalia Mushegian, Raphael Calel & Adam Usmanov, in Nature.com



Douglas-fir
Ponderosa Pine
White Pine
Western Larch
Cedar

GOT SEEDLINGS?

Lock in your seedling order today,
pickup in CDA or Priest River.
Order online: www.jdforest.com

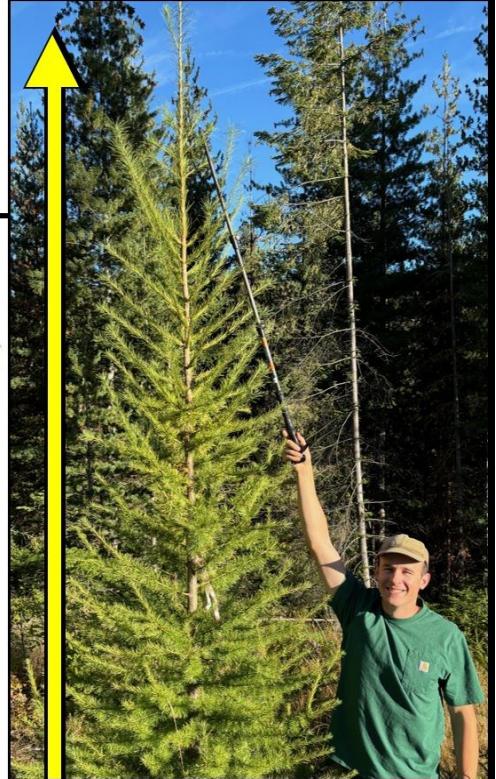


Logging plans? Make a reforestation plan **BEFORE** logging starts. Give us a call at **208-817-9786** for complete management of your harvest and reforestation project.

Email: info@jdforest.com

Order Forms: www.idahoforestowners.org/seedling-program

JDFM is partnering with IFOA to provide quality seedlings with advanced genetics to Idaho landowners using IFOA seed.



14+ feet tall in 4 years!
Same tree plus a year of growth
Planted in April 2021
Photo September 2024

9TH AMERICAN FOREST CONGRESS

As we drove from Ronald Reagan Airport to the hotel, I was busy taking in the beautiful scenery of our National Capital. Iconic monuments like the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Capital Dome reminded me of the vast and vibrant history where the echoes of democracy and progress resonate through the land. Washington, D.C. is a city steeped in heritage and history that shaped our great nation and provided the perfect backdrop for the gathering of 500 natural resource professionals, stake holders, and change makers who are ready to help shape the future of forest conservation and management in America. Through generous support from the Idaho Forest Owners Association, Idaho Forest Owners Association-Education Foundation, Idaho Tree Farm Program, and Selkirk Society of American Foresters I had the honor of attending the 9th American Forest Congress from July 15-18, 2025. I am deeply grateful to those who supported me with my ability to participate in this transformative event and am excited to share some pertinent highlights from my experience.

American Forest Congresses are rare events and since its inception in 1882 there have only been nine. One of the most notable Congresses is the 2nd Forest Congress, where the creation of the United State Forest Service and the Advancement for National Parks was created. Other notable Forest Congress issues include:

1946 - where concerns regarding the next steps for reforestation due to vast wood supply needed for the war effort of WWII were addressed.

1953 - where concerns were raised about forest conservation during a period of rapid industrialization.

1974 - where a focus was placed on environmental challenges faced with modern forest management policies.

1996 - where an emphasis was placed on Forest Health, Biodiversity, and Urban Forestry.

The theme of the 9th American Forest Congress was Healthy Forest and Thriving Communities. While attending the Forest Congress I found that one of the most impactful parts of my experience was participating in the Principles and Resolution Room. This was a true roll up your sleeves opportunity to collaboratively work to redefine and create goals for long term impact. While in these sessions, the group explored critical topics like data-driven forest resilience, the role of storytelling in amplifying forest conservation efforts, stewardship across the landscape, beneficial fire use, old growth for National Forests, access to forest markets, and an increase in support for small to mid-size landownership. Discussions within the room bridged diverse perspectives and disciplines and resulted in 10 Principles and 16 Resolutions that were passed by the full Congress.

I am also proud to relay that I was part of a small group of people who proposed a Resolution on Reforestation. This Resolution highlights the importance and need for domestic tree nurseries to help meet the critical needs for reforestation in the U.S. I am happy to report that our Resolution passed the whole Congress with a 96% approval rating. A copy of all the Principles and Resolutions will be posted to forestcongress.org/resolutions/ soon!

When I wasn't in the Principles and Resolutions Room, I was able to attend some amazing talks by some notable speakers. Wednesday opened with American Forest Foundations CEO Rita Hite and Dr. Cristina Eisenberg discussing some personal experiences and helping to set the stage for the morning's discussions. CEO of the Society of American Foresters, Terry Baker, brought up Chief of the Forest Service Tom Schultz to discuss the challenges, issues, and opportunities the United States Forest Service faces as they move forward. One of the discussions I found the most thought provoking was the morning session with the Honorable Bruce Westerman, Honorable Jimmy Panetta, and Honorable Scott Peters who talked about the importance of bipartisanship in forest policy. It was a refreshing discussion highlighting the importance of working across the aisle. Their discussion was led by David Tenny, CEO of National Alliance of Forest Owners.

Attending the 9th American Forest Congress resulted in so much more than I anticipated. It was a great time of personal growth, networking, and advocating in an arena I hadn't experienced before. I am so thankful for the connections I made as well as the opportunity to help represent Family Forest Owners on such a large scale. The connections I forged and the insights I gained will inform my efforts as I move forward and continue my work with small family forest landowners, finish out my term as Chair of the Idaho Tree Farm Program in December of 2026, and continue to serve as the Inland Empire SAF Policy Committee Chair. I am excited to bring back my knowledge to the community. If you would like to hear more about my experience or explore more about the American Forest Congress, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you for your continued support in my endeavors.

by Hailey Frank-Bennett, IDL Private Forestry Specialist

IFOA DIRECTOR CANDIDATE BIO & CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

NANCY G. CLAMPET

Current profession or job:

Retired- 2020

Previous work or volunteer experience:

Lead Teller, Columbia Bank/PSB, Coeur d'Alene & Post Falls, ID, 2004-2020

Forestry Technician, USFS, Kootenai & Clearwater NF, 1977-1987

Bookkeeper/Accountant, Clampet Excavation LLC, Post Falls, ID, 1991-2022

Education:

BS/Natural Resources, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, 1976

Military service:

N/A

Describe your involvement with your family forest or other forest land:

My family has had Idaho forestland for 122 years. But it wasn't managed, so when my husband and I bought 22 acres in Benewah County in 2004, we wanted to take care of it. The early years of our ownership revolved around tearing down decrepit structures and building a couple new ones, creating fire breaks and clearing brush fields. In 2014, we hired a consulting forester to help us with a timber harvest. Our goal was good cleanup on those acres and leave the best trees. We've been able to bring our acreage total to 39. We had some pre-commercial thinning done, but "lop and scatter" left too much material, so we're piling the residual debris and burning. We have a Woodmizer sawmill, so any trees that die go through a "firewood or board" assessment. What started out as recreational property has evolved into a passion for education, management and associating with (and learning from) like-minded folks.

IFOA membership and activities:

Year joined IFOA:

2014

IFOA offices or positions:

Director, 2023-2025; Vice President, 2023-2024; President, 2025

Membership and affiliation in other professional or volunteer associations and organizations:

Forest Stewardship Program, American Tree Farm Program, Master Gardener, Post Falls Urban Forestry Commission

Other Community or personal activities, including hobbies, if you wish:

NANCY G. CLAMPET'S CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

Our goal has always been to leave our forest in a better condition than when we found it. We continue to educate ourselves and offer that same opportunity to others through invitations to IFOA events. We strive to improve our forest's health, provide for wildlife, leaving plenty of snags, logs, small pockets of thicker growth for shelter and maintain a pond for their drinking and dipping pleasure. We have always immensely enjoyed the IFOA events but they depend on volunteers. I enjoy offering to contribute to the pool with my history of forestry, finances and experience.

ATTENTION IFOA MEMBERS:

In addition to the two 2026-2029 Board Director positions currently being voted for election, there are two more vacant Director positions open on the IFOA Board.

If you are an Active category (forest landowning) member available for appointment as Director or Alternate Director by the IFOA Board (or know someone who is!), *please contact our Executive Vice President at evpifo@gmail.com*

IFOA DIRECTOR CANDIDATE BIO & CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

PAUL R. TURCOTT

Current profession or job::

Retired 2025

Previous work or volunteer experience:

Director of Investments, Oppenheimer & Co., Scottsdale, AZ 85254. Certified Financial Planner.
Tri County Technical Center Endowment Board of Directors (Current)
Bartlesville Library Trust Authority Board (2015-2018)
Volunteer Security Person for Children's Musical Theatre of Bartlesville (2020-2024)
Ford Motor Company (4 years)
Phillips Petroleum Company, Manager of international business development (23 years).

Education:

2013-Present IFOA Programs and U. of Idaho Extension, Ties to the Land Workshop
2006 Certified Financial Planner
1976 MBA Logistics, University of Tennessee
1975 BS Business/Logistics, University of Tennessee

Military service:

N/A

Describe your involvement with your family forest or other forest land:

We purchased approximately 16 acres of mixed conifer forest land and a small cabin on the Moyie River in 2012. I joined IFOA in 2014 as I knew virtually nothing about forestry but wanted to be a responsible steward of our property particularly with regard to forest management and wildlife habitat improvement. I hope our property will become a legacy family treasure, and that my children and their friends can enjoy the rejuvenation I feel walking through the forest.

IFOA membership and activities:**Year joined IFOA:**

2014. I attend the FFL&MC and the FOFD each year.

IFOA offices or positions (committees, etc.):

Alternate Director 2019; Director 2019-present; Chair of ad hoc Technical/Website Committee,
Chair of IFOA Membership Committee.

Membership and affiliation in other professional or volunteer associations and organizations:

Member, 9B Trails; Member NWOA; Member Idaho Tree Farm Program; Member -EF Board
(2024-present)

Other Community or personal activities, including hobbies, if you wish:

Everything grandkids – there are five from 11 to 20. Operate two HIPCAMP sites on our property to expose campers from US and Canada to the beauty of far northern Idaho and provide some basic education about family forest ownership/stewardship. Year-round visits to work in our family forest.

PAUL R. TURCOTT'S CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

If re-elected, I'd like to continue contributing to the Board initiative expanding membership and forest owner awareness of our organization. Continue improving the usefulness of IFOA website: develop a sponsorship model beneficial to members and sponsors and add online IFOA merchandise sales to the website. I also believe it is vital that IFOA continue to be the proactive voice of our membership I monitoring and publicly commenting on government rules, regulations, and red-tape in a time of rapidly expanding government oversight and overreach. Finally, and most importantly, reaching and educating the next generation of family forest landowners through IFOA-EF.

HOW FLAWED STUDIES CAN LEAD TO WRONG, DANGEROUS CONCLUSIONS

With another fire season upon us, several news articles have appeared about the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation wildfire suppression cost audit that indicates - on average - taxpayers have paid \$30+ million in wildfire costs per year. An audit was done of these costs (though it is unclear if this was done by the state or contracted out to a private entity) and indicated that rural private forest landowners are the main beneficiaries and essentially their rural lifestyles and homes are “subsidized” by state funding because they are the main beneficiaries of wildfire suppression.

The audit concluded that rural forest owners ought to pay the bulk of state agency wildfire suppression costs. Nothing could be more misleading and misguided, and the real question that needs answering is how much did the state pay for this so-called audit, who conducted it, and why was there no actual scientific review of the audit before being published?

As a forestry professional, scientist, and rural forest landowner, I have worked with rural forest landowners across both Idaho and Montana for more than 40 years. The vast majority of landowners invested most of their income, work and free time into their properties during their lifetime, with the main goal of protecting and conserving a piece of nature. No exotic vacations to Hawaii, just work on their land in their spare time. They are ranchers, farmers, forest workers, mechanics, shopkeepers and mill workers that were willing to endure living remotely because (prior to COVID), that was where they could afford to buy affordable land and build a house. Most of them enrolled in evening classes (that I have taught for over 40 years) to learn about their forest, practice good conservation for wildlife habitat, forest health, water quality and above all, minimize wildfire risks on their properties. And their efforts have paid off for the benefit of all Montanans.

The egregious fantasy portrayed by the DNRC wildfire cost audit is that the biggest cost associated with wildfire suppression is protecting rural houses. I would expect such a conclusion to be drawn by a bunch of statisticians whose understanding of forested landscapes comes from watching Disney's Lorax. This is why “who did the audit” and “who reviewed it” before it was published is important. The bottom line is that wildfires are landscape phenomenon driven by fuels, weather and topography. If allowed to burn, they can cover millions of acres like the big blowup of 1910 where more than 3 million acres burned in over a week. There are numerous other examples including the Great Oregon fire of 1845, Peshtigo fire in 1871, Yellowstone fires of 1988, and many more recent forest fires here at home including the Valley Complex in 2000 that burned across the southern Bitterroot, and the Lolo Peak fire of 2017 in the northern Bitterroot. Across our modern West, wildfires are expected phenomenon that need to be contained and controlled at some point on the landscape, or they will burn across towns and kill people. This is well demonstrated by the more recent California fires such as the 2018 Camp fire that destroyed the town of Paradise, killed many, and burned an estimated 19,000 structures. Likewise, this year's Palisades-Los Angeles fires that destroyed more than 15,467 homes and killed more people. But it is a big mistake to conflate recent California fires with those of Montana.

I have reviewed almost every forest wildfire that has burned across Montana forested landscapes during the past 30 years based on how and why it burned, and the damage left behind.

The majority of the fires were contained and controlled when they burned onto private forested lands by the excellent work of our fire crews. This is where the statisticians make their horribly wrong main assumption, believing that wildfire fires are only contained in the wildland urban interface in order to protect homes. Clearly, home protection is an important goal. But the majority of wildfires are contained in the WUI because they can be, due to the fuels reduction that private landowners have accomplished, often at their own cost. Plus, private forest lands mostly have easy road access where fire crews and equipment like water tankers and dozers, and fire suppression crews conducting burnouts can be very effective and safe at containing a fire.

So imagine you are a rural forest landowner who has done the work needed to help suppress wildfires, especially if your land borders federal lands where forest fuels reduction work has been hamstrung with endless litigation. Containing wildfires in overgrown dense and dead trees is not possible,

(Continued on page 11)

HOW COULD AI HELP (AND HURT) FORESTRY?

The whole world is buzzing about the potential and pitfalls of artificial intelligence - including those who work in forestry.

AI could revolutionize forestry, making it possible to save more lives and ecosystems through faster and more accurate data analysis. But if forestry professionals aren't careful, AI could also botch critical land-management and policy decisions.

That's why NAU School of Forestry faculty members Alark Saxena, Luke Ritter and Derek Uhey took it upon themselves to understand foresters' relationship with AI: how they're using it now, how they hope to leverage it in the future and what concerns them.

They conducted 20 in-depth interviews with forestry professionals in the Southwest and published their findings in *Forest Policy and Economics*.

"We noticed a great deal of discussion about the potential of AI in forestry, but very little research on how the professionals on the ground actually feel about it," Saxena, an associate professor of human dimensions of forestry, said. "This study was our first investigation into the topic, motivated by the need to understand the human side of this technological shift."

In their interviews with foresters working across academia, government and private industry, the research team discovered that no one in forestry wants AI to replace human expertise or make critical decisions without oversight from real people.

"They are particularly concerned about the 'black box' problem where they can't understand AI's decision-making process, creating serious accountability issues," Saxena said.

"A key concern they shared was the risk of training AI using some agencies' poor-quality or biased data and then trusting its flawed outputs for important land management or policy analysis" - like mandates on where to administer prescribed burns or allow clear-cutting.

But the forestry professionals they interviewed agreed AI could be a useful tool in supporting some aspects of their work. With current labor shortages leaving them overworked and burned out, the workers agreed they'd welcome AI help with monotonous tasks like summarizing information, lesson planning and filling out routine paperwork.

"They also see great potential in using AI for complex data analysis, such as with light detection and ranging, as long as it functions as an assistant that enhances, rather than replaces, the judgment of an experienced professional," Saxena said.

Ritter said he hopes others across the United States and the globe will conduct interviews with forestry professionals to capture a wider range of perspectives on AI. Getting a full understanding of professionals' fears about - and recommendations for - the use of AI could help leaders create policies that guide future forestry work.

"It's challenging to ethically implement AI when we, as foresters, have gaps in our knowledge about how and why it's being used," Ritter said.

"This study highlighted some interesting themes, but we need to keep discussing AI in the classroom and the workplace. We hope this paper provides a foundation for policy changes and further research as AI continues to grow."

by Northern Arizona University

FLAWED STUDIES (CONT.)

(Continued from page 10)

especially if you want to keep fire fighters alive. Thus, you contain fires where fuel breaks or fuels reduction has occurred. There are many rural landowners whose property was used to contain wildfires regardless of how and why they started without any compensation for the losses brought about by fire containment tactics such as fire-line construction, "burnouts" or backburns. And now an "official" audit comes out indicating that these same private forest property owners should pay for the wildland fire suppression costs that protect all communities, including urban towns and infrastructure across Montana. This is like charging the good Samaritan who stops to help a car crash victim for the cost of the ambulance.

All Montana citizens benefit from wildland fire protection because we all can suffer the consequences, even in well-established towns. If we do not control wildfires in the wildland urban interface, we will lose entire towns like those in California where landowners in the WUI have been prevented from practicing forest density reduction and other vegetation control due to state-mandated over-concern for "native habitat" and no concern for the rural residents that live there.

by Peter Kolb, Montana State University Extension Forestry Specialist & assoc. prof. of Forest Ecology and Management.

LETTER TO *CAPITAL PRESS*



Idaho Forest Owners Association
 P. O. Box 1257
 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816-1257
evpifo@gmail.com
www.idahoforestowners.org

September 10, 2025

Capital Press Opinion
 PO Box 2048
 Salem, OR 97308-2048

Dear Editor:

Don Jenkins told readers about rancher perils living under “market concentration” (Capital Press 7/4/2025). This problem is shared by more natural resource sectors than just farmers and ranchers. After National Forest withdrawals from timber supply in the 1980s killed over half the Pacific Northwest sawmills, the forest products sector has similarly concentrated. The increasing plight of family forest owners has just become less newsworthy.

Timber markets in most western states are now dominated by mega-sawmills that negotiate preferential supply deals with industrial forests while setting log prices for “farmer forests” insufficient to cover costs. The 36,000 Idaho family forest timber businesses are slowly going under. Over the last 30 years, log prices have remained constant while inflation has driven logging and hauling costs up rapidly. Even though this forest subsector is the largest non-federal forest area (1.7 million acres in Idaho), annual harvests have dropped 74%.

Family forest landowners are not protected by anything like the 1921 Packers and Stockyards Act. There are legal and theoretical economic ways to rebalance market power. But in such large numbers of independently minded forest owners, there has been insufficient cohesion to attempt them. It may be too late. Family forests are no longer inherited; 92% are sold. While new owners usually have forest values and try to maintain health and habitat, timber dropped to a 10th priority, and it is no longer sufficient to underwrite non-timber objectives.

Our Idaho Forest Owners Association members are representative of this trend. All are dedicated to maintaining healthy forests. Some try to continue harvests that no longer pencil out. Most sell out when urbanized heirs show decreasing interest. The sad part is that most of Idaho’s private forest resources are being benched and all that once healthy biomass will begin to biologically decline.

It is unlikely that new mills could buck existing log market concentration. And realistically, it may be the pattern of the future in all industries, from commodities to consumer goods. Local Mom and Pop stores had spectacularly poor showings against Amazon. If your readers have any advice for us, we’d sure like to hear it.

Sincerely,

Marrion E. Newsam Banks
 Executive Vice President
 Idaho Forest Owners Association
 PO Box 1257
 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816-1257

QUARTERLY LOG MARKET REPORT

Species	July 2025	October 2025
Douglas-fir/western larch	\$400 - \$525/MBF	\$420- \$525/MBF
Grand fir/western hemlock	\$345 - \$500	\$360 - \$500
Lodgepole pine	\$350 - \$490	\$385 - \$490
Ponderosa pine	\$325 - \$475	\$300 - \$390
Western white pine	\$350 - \$450	\$360 - \$460
Western redcedar	\$1,050 - \$1,350	\$1,150 - \$1,500
Cedar poles	*\$2,100*	*\$2,200*
Pulp	\$20 - \$40+/ton	\$20 - \$45/ton
Tonwood	\$45/ton +/-	\$45/ton +/-

Please note that these figures represent prices paid by competitive domestic facilities in the Inland Northwest, based on average-sized logs and standard log lengths - typically 16'6" and 33'. MBF stands for Thousand Board Feet. Be aware that higher prices may reflect rates only in select locations within the Inland Northwest. Additionally, pole values can vary significantly depending on length. Market information is current as of October 23, 2025.

As shown in the table above, log market activity has remained relatively stable in recent months, apart from western redcedar and ponderosa pine. The stagnant conditions largely reflect high mill inventories and a sluggish lumber market. Cedar prices have risen due to classic supply-and-demand pressures, while ponderosa pine values have settled back to their historical range following a brief log shortage earlier this summer. Little change in overall market conditions is expected in the coming months.

by Mike Wolcott, ACF, Certified Forester

This information is provided by Inland Forest Management, Inc., a forestry consulting company. For additional information, they can be contacted at 208-263-9420, IFM@fwforestry.com or www.inlandforest.com.

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THE BOARD WALK: AUG, SEPT, OCT

AUGUST 2025

- ♦ No meeting held.

SEPTEMBER 9th, 2025

- ♦ The 2026 Family Forest Landowners & Managers Conference planning has begun. Planning meeting dates for the FFL&MC are September 17th, October 16th, November 19th, and December 17th, held in the Wolf Lodge Room at the Coeur d'Alene Idaho Dept of Lands office and via Zoom.
- ♦ Nominations for IFOA Board Directors are open and any member interested can please contact our EVP Marion Newsam Banks for information.
- ♦ IFOA-EF donated \$500.00 to Idaho Project Learning Tree.

♦ Idaho Farm Bureau submitted a proposal to IDL to open negotiated rulemaking for a draft rule in accordance with the Forest Practices Act Section 38-1304(f) which requires the timely salvage of dead or dying timber for any lands where the forest ownership is greater than 2,000 acres. Because by statute, rulemaking must be reviewed through the Idaho Forest Practices Act Committee (FPAC), IDL referred the request to FPAC, that formed a subcommittee that will meet to develop options for FPAC to consider. Counties can participate via Good Neighbor Authority, so this could be an option. The state can enforce state code on counties - where they cannot on federally managed lands.

♦ President Trump proposed rescinding the roadless rule and keeping roads open in the forest for possible firefighting and harvest activity. There is a proposal comment time deadline of September 19th. IFOA will have a letter drawn up. Our EVP and our Legislative Committee chair will work together to prepare a letter to send.

♦ IFOA needs to fill an opening for representation on the Idaho Lands Coordinating Council (ILRCC). Director Schlepp volunteered and a nomination was made pending IDL approval.

♦ IFOA's Forest Seedling Program had a nice harvest of improved seed from this year's IETIC cone harvests.

The Douglas-fir and western larch orchards are doing well. Seed prices are holding stable.

♦ Cleve and Shelly Edmunston attended the September meeting. They shared information on associated Logging Contractors' (ALC) education opportunities and experiences.

IFOA and ALC both want to help our IFOA Recommended reappointment of IFOA member Dennis Parent Logging Contractors' (ALC) education opportunities and experiences.

♦ Member Harry Craviotto volunteered to (statutorially) represent IFOA on the Committee on Forest Taxation Methodology. He will attend the December 1 meeting of the CFTM in Boise.

♦ Low forest markets being a top concern and item for all the forest owners, Director McKetta is working for forest owners to try and find some action solutions. He will be meeting with UI's Greg Latta to start considering next steps. IFOA sent a letter to Capital Press making others aware we have the same difficulties as other agriculture industries with economic and resource processing availability. Director McKetta, meeting with Greg Latta, hopes to research these topics for actionable solutions:

1. Functionality of the log market economy in Idaho.
2. All Idaho timber ownership supply.
3. A new family forest owner survey to include dynamics and insight.
4. Excess biomass solutions

♦ IFOA Legislative Committee Chair recapped the Idaho Farm Bureau's proposal for a draft rule in accordance with the Forest Practices Act Section 38-1304(f), (see Septembers boardwalk column). IDL's Endowment Lands Bureau Chief Jim Elbin proposed language that copied the statue where landowners of 2,000 or more contiguous acres be required to salvage dead and dying timber. The problem is enforcement, because the method of rule enforcement is only through the state's commercial harvest compliance requirement. One idea being considered is to have counties participate with Good Neighbor Authority agreements with the USFS and BLM.

♦ Merchandise from IFOA will add a new item! A Buck 110 Hunter knife with IFOA engraving is being offered. *by IFOA Secretary Sandra Schlepp*

OCTOBER 21st, 2025

♦ IDL Private Forestry Specialist Hailey Frank-Bennet attended the 9th American Forest Congress in Washington, D. C. Hailey presented her experience and information from attending. She thanked IFOA and Idaho Tree Farm for supporting her to attend. She gave a full report, including a written report of the principles and resolutions which were covered at the Congress. You can find the information on the internet at 9th American Forest Congress to see all the matters they worked on. Hailey did a great job working for all family forest owners.

♦ The FFL&MC planning is still ongoing. Possible topics considered include the Yukon to Yellowstone wildlife corridor, National Woodland Owners Association top 10 concerns of private forest owners, possible economic impacts of proposed federal forest harvesting, Tribal Forestry.

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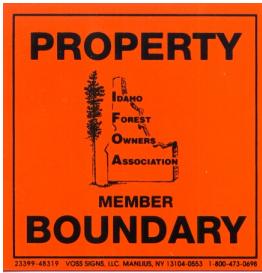
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Autumn 2025

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Annual dues are \$45 for an individual, family, partnership, or corporation; \$123 three years; \$205 five years. Please make checks payable to the IDaho FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Autumn 2025