# Part I – Agency Profile

## Agency Overview

Research mission – investigation into forestry and rangeland resource management problems, forest nursery production, and related areas. Part of the College of Natural Resources, Forest Utilization Research also includes the Rangeland Center with a legislative mandate for interdisciplinary research, education and outreach as suggested by a partner advisory council to fulfill the University's land grant mission (Idaho Code § 38-715), and the Policy Analysis Group with a legislative mandate to provide objective data and analysis pertinent to natural resource and land-use issues as suggested by an advisory committee of Idaho's natural resource leaders (Idaho Code § 38-714).

## **Core Functions/Idaho Code**

The duty of the Experiment Station of the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources is to institute and conduct investigations and research into the forestry, wildlife and range problems of the lands within the state. Such problems specifically include forest and timber growing, timber products marketing, seed and nursery stock production, game and other wildlife, and forage and rangeland resources. Information resulting from cooperative investigation and research, including continuing inquiry into public policy issues pertinent to resource and land use questions of general interest to the people of Idaho, is to be published and distributed to affected industries and interests. (Idaho Code § 38-701, 38-703, 38-706, 38-707, 38-708, 38-709, 38-710, 38-711, 38-714, 38-715)

### **Revenue and Expenditures**

Revenue		FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
General Fund		<u>\$504,100</u>	<u>\$667,400</u>	<u>\$887,100</u>	<u>1,078,800</u>
	Total	\$504,100	\$667,400	\$887,100	\$1,078,800
Expenditures		FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Personnel Costs		\$454,800	\$569,200	\$693,500	\$902,900
Operating Expenditures		\$48,750	\$93,300	\$109,300	\$129,300
Capital Outlay		\$550	\$4,900	\$84,300	\$46,600
Trustee/Benefit Payments		<u>     \$ 0</u>	<u>    \$0</u>	\$0	\$0
	Total	\$504,100	\$667,400	\$887,100	\$1,078,800

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Number of Private Landowners Assisted:				
Pitkin Forest Nursery	1400	1550	1550	1575
Number of Seedling Industry Research Projects:				
Pitkin Forest Nursery	2	3	4	3
Number of:				
<ul> <li>Research Projects:</li> </ul>				
Experimental Forest	11	12	11	11
Policy Analysis Group	7	9	6	9
Pitkin Forest Nursery	10	10	12	10
Rangeland Center	10	15	19	14
<ul> <li>Teaching Projects:</li> </ul>				
Experimental Forest	24	25	24	24
Policy Analysis Group	8	13	8	8
Pitkin Forest Nursery	8	5	6	6
Rangeland Center	9	9	10	13
<ul> <li>Service Projects:</li> </ul>				
Experimental Forest	9	10	11	11
Policy Analysis Group	16	14	7	12
Pitkin Forest Nursery	15	12	15	13
Rangeland Center	11	13	8	9

## Profile of Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided

# **Performance Highlights**

### **Experimental Forest:**

Highlights:

Research – 12 research projects were established, including a commercial harvesting bioenergy study. new research projects evaluating cable logging safety and timber harvest logistics applications of Global Positioning System personnel tracking technology, new entomological research on wood borer beetles, and a large, manipulative experiment evaluating effects of masticated fuels on fire behavior.

Education - Classroom involvement included nine faculty, 12 different class courses, 25 field trips, 20 follow up lab sessions, involving more than 300 students with hands-on experience.

Internships - 13 student interns gained hands-on field experience in timber management, including developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the field. Student interns worked full time during the summer and part-time during the academic year, and were exposed to a wide array of land management experiences involving multiple resources and the challenge of addressing regulatory policies with scientific information.

Outreach - nine outreach and engagement activities include school teachers, logging contractors, professional foresters, non-industrial private forest land owners, and interested Idaho citizens. Hosted activities included field tours for the Idaho Forest Products Commission, University of Idaho Extension programs, and Logger Education to Advance Professionalism workshops.

The centerpiece of the University of Idaho Experimental Forest (UIEF) is the 8247 acres of forest land on Moscow Mountain that are adjacent to both industrial and non-industrial private forest lands surrounded by dry-land farming in Latah County. Most of these lands were a gift from Potlatch Corp. in the 1930s. Today all but 450 acres are managed as working forests, balancing education, research, and demonstration with production of timber, clean water, fire hazard mitigation, smoke particulate management, and wildlife and fisheries habitat. The UIEF also manages 398 acres on two parcels in Kootenai County, and has a life estate of 1649 acres in Valley County that eventually will come under UIEF management in the future. As noted in the highlights above and details below, these lands provide many research, education and outreach opportunities.

Research conducted on the UIEF in FY2015 included studies by College of Natural Resources faculty, collaborators in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain State of Idaho 2 Research Station. Dr. Robert Keefe, Assistant Professor of Forest Operations, supervises research and management activities on the UIEF, under the direction of the Dean. In FY2014, a number of experiments focused specifically on forest utilization, harvesting productivity, efficiency, cost analysis, and logging safety were conducted. Dr. Keefe has several studies evaluating production and costs associated with utilizing beetle-killed timber in bioenergy development. Dr. Keefe and several graduate students conducted a wide range of studies using real-time GPS positioning technology to improve logging safety, operational production efficiency. This work resulted in submission of a new, \$1.5 million proposal for federal funding to develop real-time positioning technology for wildland firefighters in collaboration with Idaho Dept. of Lands and the Bureau of Land Management. Dr. Tara Hudiburg had multiple large studies on the Experimental Forest evaluating water use by Idaho conifer trees, including characterizing effects of thinning on water use. Dr. Dan Johnson also had an active research program evaluating drought stress in conifer sapling and tree physiological impacts of thinning. Dr. Alistair Smith and Dr. Penny Morgan continued research on characterizing fire behavior following forest stand mastication treatments to reduce fire behavior, under the Joint Fire Sciences Program. Additional prescribed burning associated with the study will be carried out in October 2016. Dr. Mark Coleman, Dr. Steve Cook, and several collaborators carried out a variety of studies evaluating long-term impacts of biomass use in Idaho's forests, and research to understand forest beetle dynamics. Dr. Andrew Nelson installed two new studies to help improve conifer regeneration through efficient use of vegetation management.

Education involving hands-on experience to supplement classroom and laboratory exercises is a significant and valuable supplement to a college education in forest utilization. In FY2015 ten faculty members – College of Natural Resources (8), College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (1), and Washington State University (1) – used the UIEF for at least one field trip session each during twelve different courses, ranging from an introductory freshman orientation to senior and graduate level courses demonstrating current research knowledge, land management practices, and using forest operations equipment. In total more than 300 university students visited the UIEF on 24 field trips, with an additional 20 follow-up laboratory sessions in which data collected during field trips were analyzed.

Internship opportunities for students have been offered by the UIEF since 1972. In FY2014 the UIEF employed 12 students and successfully completed the 42<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year of the Student Logging Crew Program. Staff provide hands-on education as the students helped plan and accomplish the management objectives in the UIEF Forest Management Plan, helping the College fulfill the duties of the Experiment Station as described in Idaho Code § 38-703 *et seq*. Student employee interns were engaged in all aspects of planning an active year of forest management, including extensive planting, pre-commercial thinning, timber harvesting, and wildland fire protection. These hands-on activities are critical for the career development of natural resources students. Work assignments include technology transfer as students learn to employ state-of-the-art equipment and techniques, as well as incorporating their interdisciplinary academic learning in an operational and research forest setting. Upon graduation these student employee interns generally have very high success rates finding employment.

An important outreach and engagement highlight for FY2015 was completion of a demonstration area at the Matthew M. McGovern Memorial Tree Farm that shows private landowners, contractors, and foresters options for implementing the new State of Idaho Class I Stream Shade Rule, enacted in June 2014, This new demonstration site was developed in cooperation with Idaho Dept. of Lands Idaho Dept. of Lands and Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality and is being used as a teaching and outreach tool on field tours and Extension Forestry workshops.

#### Policy Analysis Group:

Highlights:

*Research* – A new director was hired and began work for the Policy Analysis Group in FY 2015. This provided an opportunity to review research priorities, build relationships with interested stakeholders, and to implement strategies to address pressing natural resource issues important to the citizens of Idaho. Nine new research projects were initiated in FY 2015, of which three were completed.

One completed project featured the role of the forest products manufacturing industry in the Idaho economy; the information was used in the industry's presentation to the Idaho Legislature's Joint Economic Outlook and Revenue Assessment Committee, and provided to legislative members during the Forestry Day luncheon in January 2016. A second completed project provided information to the 2015-2016 Grazing Program Review on behalf of the Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board).

The Policy Analysis Group evaluated the historical financial performance of Idaho's endowment rangelands to inform grazing rate policies. The third completed project evaluated the economic effects of restoring a portion of the Big Wood River in central Idaho.

Notable projects underway include state wildfire suppression funding, evaluating the effect of forest collaboratives, leasing state endowment lands for hunting, and a survey of non-industrial private forest landowners. The impact of wildfire was a topic of considerable interest during 2015 and the subsequent legislative session. The Policy Analysis Group is documenting state wildfire funding, including historical state obligations and fiscal management approaches. Fourteen western states are involved in the study to identify collective state spending and to highlight alternative funding mechanisms. The effectiveness of the forest collaboratives study similarly addresses forest management activities. The study on state recreation leases emerged in 2015 in response to inquiries about using endowment lands for exclusive hunting, and examines related fiduciary obligations and fiscal impacts. Lastly, the survey of non-industrial forest owners will update information on the more than 12,000 family forest owners in the state, including demographics, forest management practices, willingness to harvest timber, and intergenerational land transfer plans.

*Education* – educating students is a small but important responsibility of the Policy Analysis Group. In FY 2015, one graduate and two undergraduate students were hired for a range of projects including investigating other state's approaches to endowment land leasing, updating a directory of state forest products businesses, and conducting a review of community resiliency research findings. Presentations were also made in five graduate and undergraduate courses with the purpose of educating students on the policy process, policy analysis methods, and the responsibilities of the Policy Analysis Group.

*Outreach* – a primary task of the new director in FY 2015 was to reestablish partnerships with traditional stakeholders, and to broaden the scope of partners to inform research, communication outreach, and too broaden the impact of our studies. Five public presentations were given to a broad cross-section of agency and NGO professionals, landowners, and researchers. Several other meetings and conferences were attended to gather information about natural resource issues of concern to different stakeholder groups. Another key task of the Policy Analysis Group was to initiate a study of communication strategies and effectiveness of outreach activities. These efforts are ongoing and will influence future outreach mechanisms and products. Professional service included participation on multiple external committees including the Idaho State Wood Energy Team, associate editor for the *Journal of Forestry*, national chair of the SAF Committee on Forest Policy, SAF National Nominating Committee. Collegiate service included chair of the CNR-Forest Utilization and Research committee reported in this performance report, chair or member of four faculty/staff search committees, member of NRS curriculum committee, and member of new NRS department restructuring effort.

*Programmatic growth* – The Policy Analysis Group received additional legislative funding in the FY 2016 and FY 2017 fiscal cycles. These investments were used to hire one new forest economist and a future research analyst to assist in the tracking of the contribution of natural resources to the Idaho's economy. Additional research capacity, graduate student funding ability, and expertise is significantly expanding the scope and usefulness of our work and the breadth of new projects accepted. These investments will be used leverage additional resources and projects to further meet our legislative mandate.

The Policy Analysis Group continues to meet its legislative mandate to provide objective data and analysis on natural resource and land-use issues of concern to Idaho citizens. The number and scope of research projects highlights our commitment to this mandate, the impact of which is to provide timely information to inform critical land management decisions at multiple levels of government.

All issues are suggested and prioritized by an Advisory Committee comprised of natural resource leaders in the state, as per our enabling legislation. As analyses of current issues are completed, they are replaced by others suggested by the Advisory Committee and interested Idaho stakeholders. Our website was redesigned in FY 2015 to accommodate our priorities and improve access to publications and related materials to a wide audience (www.uidaho.edu/cnr/pag).

#### Pitkin Forest Nursery:

Highlights:

*Research* – With a recently increasing rate of failure to establish Douglas-fir, western red cedar, and western larch plantations, in conjunction with private stakeholders, staff are continuing to improve the quality of plant material available for reforestation and restoration throughout Idaho. Studies are designed and maintained with the objectives of improving tree seedling cost effectiveness throughout the establishment period. Specific research projects focused on Douglas-fir seedling root growth following planting and ongoing investigations into the ability to enhance this as a means of drought tolerance, an investigation of the tolerance of key forest tree species to herbicide to better understand our ability to control competing vegetation in plantation establishment, and characterization of western red cedar seedling quality as influenced by nursery culture with the aim of increasing cold tolerance and browse resistance. This body of work should provide Idaho's nursery and reforestation industry with continued improvement in plantation establishment success in subsequent growing seasons.

*Education* – Supported 9 graduate and undergraduate students through research at the Pitkin Forest Nursery. These studies were quite broad, including a continuing effort to better understand the reasons that Douglas-fir seedling survival is less predictable than desired in reforestation projects (by examining root system development), enhancing our ability to establish pollinator habitat plots to preserve this important component of Idaho's agri-ecosystems, and determining if there are management decisions that could be readily implemented that would improve survival of western red cedar seedlings in reforestation programs. These projects build on Idaho's reputation as a leader in reforestation practices and help improve our restoration of degraded forests and rangelands. A semester-long seedling growing project completed by undergraduate students in the core Forest Regeneration course provides hands-on learning that translates directly to improved field skills. Continuing to leverage the Reveley Nursery Facility beyond Forestry students, over the course of the year students from the University's Architecture program regularly participated in energy efficiency assessment of the new building, building a cross-campus collaborative understanding of the use of wood in design.

*Outreach* – Conducted several workshops and training sessions aimed at improving forest management practices in Idaho, including the Intermountain Container Seedling Growers Association, which was held in Moscow, ID. Regularly engaging children through activities associated with Arbor Day and pollinator gardens and hosting sessions for land management professionals and laypersons affiliated with reforestation programs provides a strong foundation for improved stewardship of Idaho's forests. A trial on seedling quality assessment (Root Growth Potential) was conducted with Idaho Forest Industry partners that was well received; we anticipate this will result in improved decision making capacity for reforestation.

*Teaching* – Provided research and teaching facilities for several UI courses that require hands-on nursery experience. This provided experience which is sought by forest tree seedling nurseries throughout the United States. Graduates with experience having worked in the nursery readily obtain work upon completion of their degrees. The BS Forest Resources course Forest Regeneration was taught regularly in the new Reveley Nursery Facility which provides ample hands-on learning opportunities that were not previously available.

*Programmatic Growth* – A pilot investigation of seedling quality testing at an operational scale, initiated in response to requests from several members of Idaho's forest industry, resulted in testing of cold hardiness evaluation and seedling root growth characterization. Following the pilot program, a more extensive round of testing will occur in FY17 focusing on root system evaluation.

The Pitkin Forest Nursery continues to actively engage with Idaho landowners, natural resource industries, and citizens. Graduates of the College of Natural Resources with experience working in the Pitkin Forest Nursery are in high demand and continue to find placement in highly desirable fields upon graduation in Idaho and beyond. Strong interest exists from forest industry and small private stakeholders to better know why seedlings fail to establish. The research conducted in at the Pitkin Forest Nursery and in conjunction with our partners, aims to provide more effective reforestation practices, with higher establishment rates and cost savings, for Idahoans. This research provides important information and decision support across the state that helps streamline nursery production practices with the site-specific reforestation needs; as this becomes more complete, Idaho will be State of Idaho

recognized as a reforestation leader in the western USA. In FY2016, nine graduate and undergraduate students were working towards degrees through research conducted at the nursery and/or its associated field sites. Many other students are using the facilities at the Pitkin Forest Nursery as a component of their graduate research on forest nutrition and soil management, fire modeling, and post-fire regeneration.

By actively seeking to be a recognized leader in seedling research and technology transfer, we regularly open our facility for tours and workshops to provide a better understanding of reforestation needs in the state. Through broad offerings of activities for children, land management professionals, and laypersons, we have helped increase understanding of the importance of forestry and natural resource management in Idaho. Forest tree seedling nurseries throughout the United States are seeking graduates with experience such as that gained at the Pitkin Forest Nursery, with a high demand expected to continue as we are best suited to replace a retiring workforce.

#### **Rangeland Center:**

Highlights:

Research – Rangeland Center resources were specifically leveraged to support 14 research projects. Rangeland Center researchers were also involved in about 33 major collaborative projects that contribute to our understanding of rangelands and the communities that rely on them. Research results by Rangeland Center members were published in 53 scientific papers ranging from watershed effects of grazing and fire to foraging habits of rangeland wildlife.

Teaching - 13 significant workshops and university courses directly related to rangeland ecology and management were designed and presented by Rangeland Center faculty. Rangeland Center members also participated in more than 20 workshops/projects to facilitate understanding of rangelands. Rangeland center faculty also offered six university courses for those seeking degrees or certificates related to rangeland ecology, management, and restoration.

Service - Center members served rangeland stakeholders in many ways to provide information about rangelands to individuals and organizations. At least 9 specific service projects were conducted in FY2015. The service projects involved Rangeland Center members serving as rangeland experts on working groups or committees engaged in land management. The groups we served include the Nature Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, Idaho Cattle Association, and County Commissioners for Owyhee and other Counties throughout Idaho. We also assisted the Idaho FFA organization to present career development events for Idaho high school students.

Rangelands are vast natural landscapes that cover nearly half of Idaho. Rangelands account for over 26 million acres in Idaho (48%). Our ability to serve current and future generations of Idaho citizens will be influenced by our understanding of rangelands because these lands are vital to the ecological and economic health of Idaho. The innovative design of the Rangeland Center promotes active partnerships with individuals, organizations and communities who work and live on the vast landscapes known as rangelands. The Rangeland Center is a group of 34 researchers and outreach specialists in the College of Natural Resources and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Our expertise covers several disciplines that affect rangeland management and conservation including grazing, rangeland ecology, entomology, soil science, economics, rural sociology, fish and wildlife resources, invasive plants, forage production, animal science, wildland fire, restoration, and the use of spatial technologies to manage rangelands. Our research and outreach efforts are aimed at creating science and addressing rangeland problems.

The collaborative and interdisciplinary emphasis of the Rangeland Center was recognized in FY2015 when the Center was asked to represent the University of Idaho in a collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and the Wood River Land Trust to develop the Rock Creek Ranch near Hailey, ID. This 10,400 acre working ranch will provide a sustainable rangeland research and education facility to examine interactions among ranching, recreation, and conservation. The ranch will be home to a one of a kind collaborative partnership for important research on contemporary ranching and conservation practices.

In FY2015, members of the Rangeland Center continued work on a long-term research project in collaboration with the Idaho Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game, the Public Lands Council, and State of Idaho 6

other organizations to examine the effects of spring grazing on sage-grouse habitat and nesting success. We completed an important project defining the effects of livestock grazing on wildland fuel in sagebrush steppe ecosystems. This project was conducted collaboratively with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, Owyhee Rural Fire Protection Association, and the Owyhee Sage-grouse Local Working Group. Researchers also completed a collaborative project with Idaho BLM that examined the impacts of wild horses on riparian areas. Rangeland Center researchers also increased efforts in vegetation monitoring to track ecosystem changes resulting from plant invasion and climate change in sagebrush steppe and aspen woodlands.

The signature workshops offered by the Rangeland Center are the Rangeland Fall Forum held in October and the Idaho Range Livestock Symposium held in May. These events are designed to promote innovation and provide actionable information to land managers. Both of these events include a 1-day field tour where participants can view science and conservation projects underway. The Fall Forum in 2015 was entitled "Fuel – Fire – Future" and focused on managing fuel loads and living with wildland fires. The Range Livestock Symposium in 2016 was entitled "Integrating the Needs of Animals, Rangelands, and People" and was attended by over 120 people at four sites across Idaho where the symposium was conducted.

The Rangeland Center was actively involved in providing reliable information to land managers through the Journal of Rangeland Applications (http://thejra.info), the Rangelands Partnership (http://globalrangelands.org), and the Rangeland Center Digital Collection (http://digital.lib.uidaho.edu/cdm/search/collection/rangecoll) all in partnership with the UI Library. In addition, we initiated a new information series called Rangeland FAQs with the first issue entitled "How Can the Endangered Species Act Affect Rangeland Activities?" We also worked with the Range Management to present a series of webinars Society for on targeted grazing (http://targetedgrazing.wordpress.com). A collaboration with the Range Science Education Council resulted in an open-access resource for rangeland vegetation assessment available online (http://rangeveg.wordpress.com).

In 2015, the Rangeland Center initiated a strategic plan revision that began with listening sessions at six locations across Idaho. We asked participants about the challenges rangeland managers will face in the next decade. The topics identified were centered on the following focus areas: Fire/Fuels/Invasive Plant Species and Restoration; Rangeland Uses (including grazing, recreation, and energy development, etc.); Rangeland Wildlife; Rangeland Watershed Management (i.e., water quantity and quality); and the Implications of a Changing Climate to Rangelands. Rangeland Center members and Partners Advisory Council are working to assess action areas for Rangeland Center projects to emphasize in the next decade.

# Part II – Performance Measures

Performance Measure	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Current Year			
Goal 1								
Achieve excellence in scholarship and creative activity through an institutional culture that values and promotes								
strong academic areas and interdisciplinary collaboration among them.								
Performance Measure: Number of CNR faculty, staff, students and constituency groups involved in FUR-related								
scholarship or capacity building activ	vities. Indicate	<u>or: number of</u>	in-state wor	kshops and p	presentations	given.		
Experimental Forest	actual	10	11	12	12			
	benchmark	12	12	12	12	12		
Policy Analysis Group	actual	8	13	7	8			
	benchmark	12	12	12	12	12		
Pitkin Forest Nursery	actual	22	20	20	20			
	benchmark	20	20	20	20	20		
Rangeland Center	actual	5	7	22	6			
	benchmark	2	2	2	2	2		

Performance Measure		FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Current Year
Performance Measure: An accountin						
rticles) and services (e.g., protocol						
naterials provided, accessible data esearch studies completed per yea		ket models) (	created and o	delivered. <u>Inc</u>	licator: numb	er of
Experimental Forest	actual	4	5	4	5	
	benchmark	3	3	3	3	3
Policy Analysis Group	actual	16	14	10	10	
	benchmark	10	10	10	10	10
Pitkin Forest Nursery	actual	12	10	5	11	
	benchmark	10	10	10	10	10
Rangeland Center	actual	5	17	20	17	
	benchmark	8	8	8	8	8
Performance Measure: An accountin						
censing, patenting, publishing in re	fereed journa	ls, etc. Indica	ator: number	of refereed jo	ournal articles	S.
Experimental Forest	actual	4	5	4	5	
	benchmark	4	4	4	4	4
Policy Analysis Group	actual	2	2	2	3	
	benchmark	2	2	2	2	2
Pitkin Forest Nursery	actual	5	5	5	5	
	benchmark	5	5	5	5	5
Rangeland Center	actual	2	3	3	2	
	benchmark	2	2	2	2	2
	aching, learn	ing, discover	y, and creativ	/ity.		t enhance
te <u>erformance Measure</u> : Document c overnmental agencies served and	ases: commu resulting docu	ectors throug ing, discover nities served umentable im	y, and creative and resulting pact; non-go	<i>∕ity.</i> g documenta overnmental a	ble impact; agencies and	resulting
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Performance Measure		FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Current Year
Pitkin Forest Nursery	actual	-	-	-	5	
	benchmark	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	5
Rangeland Center	actual	-	-	-	5	
	benchmark	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	5

### For More Information Contact

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