

Conserving Idaho forests, one Forest Legacy project at a time

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(MOSCOW) - University of Idaho researchers recently examined Idaho's **Forest Legacy Program**, a voluntary program that enables **private forest owners to sell their development rights** so that the forests will continue to provide **timber and other social and ecological benefits that only forests can provide**. Participating landowners maintain ownership of their land.

The [University of Idaho Policy Analysis Group Issue Brief No. 20](#) titled, "Review of Idaho's Forest Legacy Program," walks through the life of a Forest Legacy project in Idaho and identifies emerging issues and recommendations tied to the Forest Legacy Program.

Idaho's Forest Legacy Program is a federally-funded program administered by the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) in cooperation with communities and land trusts that helps the state acquire conservation easements on private, working forestlands. The intent of the program is to **limit conversion of timber producing, environmentally significant private forestlands to non-forest uses**.

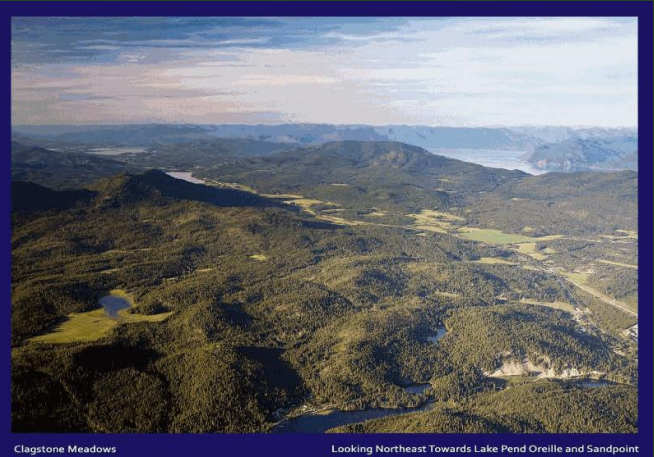
More information on the Idaho Forest Legacy Program is available [here](#).

10 Facts About the Idaho Forest Legacy Program

1. Nearly 3 million of Idaho's 22 million acres of forestlands are privately owned, contributing a significant portion of Idaho's timber supply.

Conversion of these working forests to residential or commercial uses decreases timber production and public benefits. Forest Legacy conservation easements provide a means to ensure these working forests continue to produce timber and provide diverse benefits.

2. More than 90,000 acres of private land in Idaho are enrolled in the Forest Legacy Program. The lands continue to provide benefits such as hunting access, recreation, watershed protection, and wildlife habitat, and will remain in timber production.
3. Money used to acquire conservation easements does not come from tax revenues; the Forest Legacy Program is funded through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund that consists primarily of royalties paid by energy companies for offshore oil and gas leases.
4. Almost all of Idaho's Forest Legacy projects are located in Boundary and Bonner counties in the panhandle of northern Idaho, where forest products are a particularly important part of the economy.
5. Both large landowners (such as timber companies) and smaller family forest owners have participated in the program.
6. Private landowners' participation in the program is voluntary; projects are typically initiated by the landowner. Participating landowners maintain ownership of their land.
7. Lands enrolled in the Forest Legacy Program are most likely taxed as forestland and continue to be so; a Forest Legacy conservation easement does not change the property's current tax category.
8. The goals and objectives that guide implementation of Forest Legacy projects are derived from the Idaho Forest Action Plan, a long-term, coordinated strategy for reducing threats to Idaho's forests.
9. Eligible projects are reviewed and ranked at the state and federal levels, and must have community support to be completed.
10. Properties under Forest Legacy conservation easements are monitored periodically to ensure compliance with easement provisions. Landowners participating in the Forest Legacy Program pay for monitoring through an IDL-administered stewardship fund.



Clagstone Meadows Looking Northeast Towards Lake Pend Oreille and Sandpoint

Clagstone Meadows, an area covered by a Forest Legacy conservation easement. Photo is looking northeast toward Lake Pend Oreille and Sandpoint.

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