

Utah Forest News

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17th Annual Forestry Practices Tour held in Logan Canyon, Utah

Another successful Forestry Practices Tour took place on September 6, 2018. Thirty attendees joined Morgan Mendenhall, Bear River Forester for the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, and Darren McAvoy, Extension Assistant Professor of Forestry, and others on a tour that included an insider's view of local projects on state, USFS, and private land. Here's a synopsis of what we toured:

- We visited the 320-acre Beaver Creek Timber Sale, just east of Beaver Mountain Ski Area in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Forestry

Annual Forestry Tour makes stops at timber sale, active logging operation, hand thinning project and a private shaded fuel break effort - all in northern Utah



Forestry Practices Tour Group gathers at the Beaver Creek Timber Sale.

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Program Manager Adam Robinson (State Trust Lands Administration) gave an overview of the background and progress of this timber harvest.

- We traveled to the Log Cabin Ridge Overlook to learn more about the Red Ryder Vegetation project. This project used a combination of thinning and prescribed fire to improve vegetation structure, species composition, and age classes to improve habitat and resilience to future insect and disease infestation for more than 13K acres. This area has experienced substantial tree mortality due to mountain pine beetle infestation.
- We visited an active timber harvest operation by Thompson Logging on School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) land at Temple Flat, where lodgepole pine is being harvested. Thompson Logging began harvesting this SITLA parcel in 2014 and will be completed in the fall of 2018.
- We toured the Bug Lake Project where Morgan Mendenhall explained the details of this collaborative effort between DFFSL and private landowner, Jr. Goring, where more than 20 acres of 40-year old lodgepole pine have been



Excavator with a dangle head processor in use at the Thompson Logging operation at Temple Flat, Utah.



Morgan Mendenhall, Bear River Forester for the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, explains the Bug Lake Project.



Feller buncher in use at the Thompson Logging operation at Temple Flat, Utah.

thinned by hand to improve forest health, create wildlife habitat, and increase grazing opportunities.

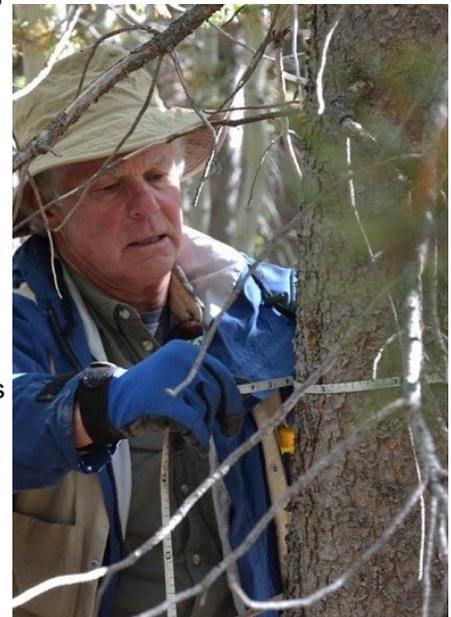
- The last stop of the day was on the Rex property where we looked at a shaded fuelbreak project where several acres of subalpine fir were removed to reduce hazardous fuels, improve forest health, and to increase grazing and wildlife habitat opportunities.

The annual Forestry Practices Tour takes place each fall and is open to the public. For more information and to stay informed of upcoming tours and workshop opportunities, join our mailing list <http://forestry.usu.edu/mailling-lists>

Distinguished Forestry Professor, Dr. Jim Long receives National Award

Dr. James (Jim) Long, Professor at Utah State University, was recently awarded the “Award in Forest Science”

by the Society of American Foresters. Dr. Long has led an exemplary, 35-plus-year career in forest science and silviculture. The impacts of Jim’s research program include applications that are literally used on a daily



basis by professional foresters in the Western United States and around the world. Dr. Long’s work on practical approaches to stand density management are broadly implemented and serve as a foundation for silvicultural prescriptions across the United States. These approaches have served as a model for the advancement of forest science.

While Dr. Long is well known for his publications (including all SAF journals) and multiple years as editor for two prominent forestry journals, a measure arguably more meaningful than H-indexes (37) is his impact on students. Jim’s “students” broadly include undergraduates, graduates,

professionals, and researchers, which is a result of having led an internationally renowned research and educational program, chaired the National Silviculture Instructors Subworking group (1990-2005), coordinated the Continuing Education in Ecosystem Management (CEEM), and served on numerous USDA and BIA Silviculture Certification Panels. Jim has always sought to incorporate the results of his fundamental research into management and application, but more importantly has stayed abreast of changing resource-management paradigms, bridging an important gap between constantly evolving management needs and the emergence of new science. Although Dr. Long will retire next year, his legacy will be demonstrated through his students and their careers.

*-By John Riling, Forest Silviculturist,
U.S. Forest Service, Boise National Forest*

Promoting forest resilience - One acre at a time

Utah Landowner, Curtis Rex is taking forest restoration on his 680 acres of property in Northern Utah seriously – one acre at a time. Currently underway is a 5-year, 70-acre restoration project made possible through a unique cost-sharing partnership between the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Rex. The 680-acre property belonging to Rex lies in the Upper Bear River Watershed in Northern Utah and has been frequented by Rex and his family for multiple generations. Currently a resident of Evanston, WY, Rex grew up in Randolph, UT, and his family has spent time recreating and ranching in the mountains on this family property since the 1920s. Recently he noticed many of the trees were dead and falling each year. He became concerned for the longevity and the health of the forest and wanted to be proactive in his effort to protect the land. Because of this, Rex reached out to Utah

Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands Bear River Area Manager, Blain Hamp, to discuss options for improving the health and resilience of the forested areas, especially those surrounding the cabin they had recently built. Hamp supervised an inventory of the forest in 2011 to gain a better understanding of the current condition and composition of the forest. Together they created a Forest Stewardship Plan with the following objectives:

- ⇒ Increase tree diversity
- ⇒ Improve wildlife habitat
- ⇒ Reduce forest fuel loads
- ⇒ Apply a holistic ecosystem based approach to forest management

Rex worked closely with NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist Aaron Romesser to find appropriate cost-sharing options to help get the restoration work off the ground. Romesser successfully linked Rex with special funding from the NRCS, specifically within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to initiate the work. This voluntary EQIP program helps landowners initiate conservation actions that benefit both the producer and the environment. They were successful in leveraging the comprehensive Forest Stewardship Plan and a silvicultural prescription created by Hamp. Rex began working shortly after receiving the funding support.

Starting in 2016, Rex and his team created a firebreak surrounding the cabin and successfully thinned three acres of dead trees. He aims to thin another 10 acres before the end of 2018 and will continue these efforts until 2021. By clearing the dead and dying trees, he is chipping away at objectives from the stewardship plan: creating wildlife habitat and reducing fuel loads. These actions promote regeneration of aspen, Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine, open up areas for understory growth, and as a result, provide forage for wildlife and livestock.

Additionally, Rex is a member of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) Walk-in Access Program (WIA). The Walk-in Access Program is a unique partnership between the UDWR and private

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Before: This is the typical situation on much of the 680-acres owned by Curtis Rex: dense vegetation, excess dead and downfall trees = poor habitat and increased fire danger. Photo credit: Aaron Romesser.



After: This firebreak was created by Curtis Rex and his crew. It surrounds the family's cabin. Photo credit: Aaron Romesser.

Notes from the field: Brian Head Fire - One year later

In the previous Utah Forest Newsletter (Utah Forest News, 23;2: <http://forestry.usu.edu/files/utah-forest-newsletter/utah-forest-newsletter-2018-2.pdf#page=4>), we provided context for the fire recovery and monitoring project on the Brian Head Fire in Southern Utah that burned 72,000 acres in 2017. The lead investigator, USU Assistant Professor, Dr. Larissa Yocom, is currently investigating the factors impacting the success (or



All photos in this series were taken by Dr. Karen Mock, in September, 2018. They demonstrate the presence of aspen seedlings within the boundary of the Brian Head Fire in Southern Utah.



failure) of tree regeneration within the perimeter of this fire.

Coupled with this main objective, is an aspen project where USU Professor Dr. Karen Mock will be working with Yocom to plant and monitor aspen



seedlings on the site. In September 2018 Mock found many widespread areas where aspen seedlings were regenerating within the fire boundary, especially in the burned soils. The team of researchers will continue to monitor these occurrences, as well as provide updates to the bigger recovery and monitoring project.

*-Megan Dettenmaier,
USU Forestry Extension Educator*

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landowners where landowners (enrolled in the WIA program) receive monetary compensation in exchange for public access to hunt, trap or fish on their land. Improving wildlife habitat on the property has numerous benefits for both Rex and the public. Rex has committed to monitoring any changes in wildlife activity he observes; initial observations suggest that a significant amount of grass and forbs have started growing in the areas that have been thinned – which is a good sign for wildlife and potential livestock operations.

A Catastrophic Wildland Fire Reduction proposal has recently been submitted to help with Balsam Woolly Adelgid (BWA) concerns. (See Utah Forest News, 23;1; <http://forestry.usu.edu/files/utah-forest-newsletter/utah-forest-newsletter-2018-1.pdf>). If awarded, these

funds will help to assess the impacts of this pest, and offer a funding mechanism for additional silvicultural practices that will help meet the objective Rex is hoping to accomplish.

Rex's habitat improvement is a long way from being finished – in fact he has until 2021 to complete the work - but the multiple partnerships and success he has observed so far are encouraging. He has no plans to slow down or taper off these restoration efforts, in fact he plans to seek additional funding to expand these efforts well into the future. Rex believes that:

“God entrusted us to be stewards of the land, and we ought to do everything we can to keep it healthy and productive.”

Rex recognizes the steps he's taking on his property in northern Utah may amount to a drop in the bucket when it comes to large-scale forest restoration, but perhaps his contribution may inspire other landowners to find similar opportunities for forest stewardship and habitat improvement. This collaboration is one example of what is possible when landowners leverage the best available science, resources, on-the-ground experts, and funding sources possible. To learn more, visit the following websites: <https://ffsl.utah.gov/index.php/fire/catfire>; <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/equip/>

-Megan Dettenmaier,
USU Forestry Extension Educator



These photos were taken mid-way through the creation of the firebreak on the Rex property. Photo credit: Aaron Romesser.

Region-wide juniper mortality in southeastern Utah

Juniper trees are dying in large numbers in southeastern Utah – and no one knows why. Observations of this widespread juniper mortality have also been reported in southwest Colorado, northern Arizona and Nevada. The widespread die off of these (usually-hearty) juniper trees has forest health specialists, entomologists, ecologists and others scratching their heads. A group of scientists will visit southeastern Utah at the end of November to assess possible factors, including drought-related tree stress, insects, and diseases, which may be contributing to this regional phenomenon. Stay engaged with Utah Forest News for more information.

Contact Us

Do you have a story idea for the next edition of Utah Forest News? Have feedback about any story in this issue? Get in touch with us.

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