

2024 Mini College Session Descriptions and Schedule

Morning Sessions (9:30 to 10:30 am & 10:50 to 11:50 am)

Forest Thinning Guidelines

John Goodburn, Ph.D. - Associate Professor of Silviculture, W.A. Franke College of Forestry at the University of Montana

Thinning trees to appropriate spacing to reduce wildfire hazards and increase tree growth and overall forest resilience seems like a simple task. However, thinning guidelines will vary based on tree species, stand conditions, and landowner objectives. John will present thinning recommendations for different situations and outcomes based on decades of experience. He can also answer and help you figure out what will work best for your situation - so come with questions!

Protecting and Stewarding Montana's Native Bees

Abiya Saeed, Montana State Extension Horticulture Associate Specialist

Montana is home to between 500-750 species of native bees, which can be found throughout our diverse ecosystems and landscapes. These important pollinators provide essential pollination services to agriculture, home gardens, and native plant biodiversity. Habitat loss and improper pesticide use can negatively impact pollinators, and creating pollinator-friendly landscapes is a critical component of conserving these important organisms. This presentation will be focused on the diversity of Montana's native bees and their habitat needs, in addition to management practices to protect pollinators in our landscapes.

Insect and Disease Update 2023-2024

Amy Gannon, Forest Pest Management Program Manager, Montana DNRC Forestry Division

The Montana DNRC monitors and troubleshoots tree pests across the state. Amy will provide an update about what different pests are on the increase or decrease, how to identify their damage and management strategies of dealing with them. Feel free to bring samples along for her to diagnose if you have something impacting your trees.

Timber Selling in Montana

Holly, McKenize, Service Forester, Montana DNRC Kalispell Unit

Forestland is an asset for family recreation and wildlife habitat.... but many of us also have marketable forest products that warrant careful consideration as we move forward with thinning treatments to address both wildfire and tree health. In this session, we will look at the different objectives a landowner might have and discuss the balanced decisions for short term and long-term management of the wood fiber growing on your forestland. How long does it take to derive income from forest products? What are some available markets in Montana and how do we get our products there? Am I better off doing my own logging or do I need a contractor with the proper equipment to help me meet all my objectives? How do I time the market for the highest return? Should I leave all my trees for my heirs to log in case they need income after I'm gone? These are common questions, and the answers may vary depending on objectives.

Invasive Weed & Plant Management

Bryce Christiaens & Steffany Rogge, Missoula County Weed District

Gain a better understanding of why invasive weeds become established and persist by learning about ecological-based invasive plant management. The Missoula County Weed District will guide participants through establishing goals for their property while considering existing vegetation, land use, and resource

availability. Invasive plant management is not all-encompassing and can differ from site to site; that said, participants are encouraged to share their successes, trials, and even disappointments during this program. They are learning through others' experiences.

Lunch Break 12:00 to 1:10 pm

Lunch Speaker

Peter Kolb Peter Kolb, Ph.D. - MSU Extension Forestry Specialist will present "Germany Forestry and Culture tour of May 2023, the Old, the New and the Scary".

Afternoon Sessions (1:30 to 2:30 pm & 2:50 to 3:50pm)

Estate Planning

All Afternoon – 1:30 to 3:50

Marsha Goetting, Ph.D. - MSU Extension Agricultural Family Economics

Marsha is the leading expert for Montana estate planning and will give you an overview of how to manage and protect your assets and plan for your future so you can maximize the value you can keep for your retirement and pass on to your kids or others. There is much to learn about this topic.

Thinning Stands Based on Tree Crown Evaluation

Only offered 1:30 to 2:30 session

Peter Kolb, Ph.D. - MSU Extension Forestry Specialist

Reducing forest tree density is an important tool to enhance residual tree growth and health while reducing wildfire, insect, and disease hazards. Choosing which trees to cut and which trees to leave, however, can be a difficult endeavor that really requires making decisions in the forest while looking at tree species composition and individual tree characteristics. This session will examine the main tree species, their growth forms and crown characteristics as a decision-making guide for thinning forests.

Montana Legislative Issues Forest Landowners Should Know About

Only offered 2:50 to 3:50 session

Presented by Montana Forest Owners Association

Learn and discuss the basic laws, taxes, legislative initiatives, and rules that affect forest landowners across the state of Montana, and issues that landowners should be aware of that currently affect their property rights, which might affect them more in the future.

Hazardous Fuels Project Design and Implementation

Allen Chrisman, retired Fire Management Officer, U.S. Forest Service

This class will examine typical forest structures with fuel accumulations; discuss the need for and methods for reducing the risk associated with these fuels and will provide examples of how to implement projects that reduce the risk of severe wildfire, as well as provide for forest health, wildlife habitat, and trees that are free to grow.

Climate and Water Monitoring for Montana

Kelsey Jensco, Ph.D.- Associate Professor of Watershed Hydrology, Montana State Climatologist, University of Montana

Zachary Hoylman, Research Assistant Professor; Assistant State Climatologist, Montana Climate Office, University of Montana

Kyle Bocinsky, Ph.D.- Assistant Research Professor; Director of Climate Extension, Montana Climate Office, University of Montana

Colin Brust, MCO Water Data Specialist

Join the Montana Climate Office for a mini-workshop highlighting key tools for monitoring climate and water resources in Montana. Throughout the workshop, participants will explore several practical tools, including the Montana Mesonet dashboard, drought monitoring for the Columbia and Upper Missouri River basins, and updated climate projections in the Montana Climate Assessment. These tools are specifically designed to collect and analyze data related to climate patterns, precipitation, snowpack dynamics, and hydrological changes across different regions of Montana. Attendees will gain insights into how these tools generate valuable data, aiding stakeholders, researchers, and policymakers in making informed decisions regarding water resource management, drought preparedness, agriculture, and ecological conservation in Montana.

Conservation Easements

Presented by Ben Horan, Associate Director of Five Valleys Land Trust

Many landowners think that placing their land in a conservation easement means giving up control of their property. Contrary to that perception, this course will present the many benefits provided by conservation easements. For example, reduced tax liability and easier transition of ownership from one generation to the next.