

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Improving program opportunities in community development and natural resources

### AT A GLANCE

Community development and natural resource UI Extension educators gathered for professional development training to improve communication and increase statewide collaboration.

### The Situation

University of Idaho Extension educators focused on community development and natural resources are working on a variety of innovative programs throughout the state and collaborating to make positive impacts in the communities they serve. These educators have organized an association called the Idaho Association for Natural Resources and Community Development and Extension Professionals (IANCDEP). This state-level association meets in-person annually at the University of Idaho Extension conference and once every two years for professional development “in-service” training. In September 2022, the in-service was held in McCall where 10 participants gathered for a three-day professional development training.

Community development and natural resource UI Extension educators serve geographically dispersed communities that face similar challenges related to resource management, changing community demographics and youth engagement. Meeting in-person is important for educators to develop working relationships, present programs for peer review and spark creativity for future program development.



IANCDEP professionals gather at Payette Lake as part of an in-service professional development training in McCall.

### Our Response

The training shared information related to land use, program evaluation, project implementation, increased knowledge of peer programming and discussed opportunities for collaboration. Participants were introduced to qualitative evaluation techniques to measure social capital, held discussions focused on the Priority Extension Themes within community development and food systems, gave peer-reviewed presentations, visited with local agencies to learn about Valley County projects and opportunities for UI Extension involvement and support. The retreat included the following professional development opportunities:

- Five peer presentations and nine community partner presentations on local community

development and natural resources programs and projects

- A virtual discussion focused on land use and development with Dr. Ryanne Pilgeram, author of the book *Pushed Out*, which chronicles the impacts of the redevelopment of Dover, Idaho
- Three community walk audits in Cascade, Donnelly and McCall with a focus on the accessibility of public infrastructure, UI Extension's contributions towards developing wayfinding signage, placemaking efforts along trails, and evaluating the use of bike and pedestrians spaces
- Personal learning style assessments
- Discussions on leadership, the three pillars of community development and the UI Extension community development evaluation and impact reporting process

### Program Outcomes

IANCDEP participants reported the following outcomes in an online Qualtrics™ follow-up evaluation of the in-service training:

- A review of the community capitals framework was reported as the most applicable content educators could share and apply to their work on a county level.
- Other training content that helped build a shared UI Extension identity included the peer presentations, the book review, 4MAT learning styles assessment created by About Learning and the pillars of community development.
- 71% of the participants said they would recommend this training to peers.

- 55% of participants reported they were more willing to collaborate with participating colleagues, while 18% reported they might increase collaboration post-training.

### Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

UI Extension is appreciative of Valley County organizations for sharing information about local issues and projects and partnering with Extension to address community needs and issues. Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for sharing with the IANCDEP team:

- Shauna Arnold, with the Horizons' Lifestyle and Education Team for being a key partner and "community champion" for many UI Extension partnerships.
- Delta James with the City of McCall for sharing information about Arts as an Economic Development tool.
- Luke LaBella for meeting with the group to discuss the ROC and its community education programs with the public.
- Lenard Long for leading the efforts of citizen Science with the Friends of Lake Cascade to address the Harmful Algae Blooms.
- Beth Kochevar for sharing information about the University of Idaho McCall Outdoor Science School.
- Brian Hines for volunteerism with the Cascade Food Pantry and the Community Garden project.
- Mayor Judith Nissula for time and willingness to partner with UI Extension for programs.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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