

Economic Action ~ Idaho

USDA
Forest Service



*Working together
for healthy forests
and communities*

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In Idaho, people are working together for healthy forests and communities! Last May, an impressive group of partners worked together to study the economics of using small diameter trees removed in fire hazard reduction projects. The study compared the production rates and costs of four different portable sawmills, and experimented with creating high value tongue & groove paneling from the material removed.



With funding from West Central Highlands RC&D, a **National Fire Plan Economic Action grant of \$17,360** and help from Boise National Forest, the University of Idaho and the USDA Forest Products Laboratory, the project was truly a cooperative effort.

The results, issued in December, are helping people make the most out of resources that would otherwise be wasted. The recovery rate for the small sawmills was too low to be economically viable for producing commodity lumber. But specialty niche markets like tongue & groove paneling are another story. The group set to work to solve the main problem with using small diameter wood for this type of product: warping.



With a high-temperature kiln and restraint of 200 pounds per square foot, the wood was dried within 24 hours with very limited warping. In fact, the researchers machined the wood into tongue and groove paneling, a product that currently retails for \$880 per thousand board feet. These promising results show what creative minds can achieve by working together!