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**Continuing Forestry Education for Silviculturists
in the United States Forest Service**
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Abstract: Increasingly complex ecological and social constraints and considerations have elevated the level of competency needed by natural resource professionals. Contemporary continuing education now requires a transdisciplinary approach that not only highlights state-of-the-art knowledge but also hones critical-thinking skills, fosters adaptability and flexibility, and arms the professional with clear and direct on-the-ground applications. In response to controversial forest management practices in the 1960s, the United States Forest Service reassessed forestry practices, eventually leading to significant policy shifts. In addition, the US Forest Service initiated the first continuing education program in the Intermountain West in 1973 with the objective to improve knowledge, skills and abilities for silviculturists. These continuing education efforts expanded to other regions, evolving over time, with only two viable programs in existence by 2001. The US Forest Service requires all silviculturists to be formally certified in order to write management prescriptions, a result of this early reassessment and a critical piece in the process for forest management to occur on national forests. The National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP) was initiated in 2007, and now serves as the core continuing education program for silviculture certification within the US Forest Service. The core program is delivered through a partnership with four universities, and directly addresses the Minimum National Standards for Silvicultural Certification developed by the US Forest Service. This exclusive program has expanded to include participants from other public land management agencies, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Land Management. The rigorous pedagogical style, context, and history of this program will be described, tracing past and future trends in continuing education participation by geographic region of the US. Challenges associated with ensuring that continuing education partnerships between universities and public land management agencies meets high competency standards across a geographically, ecologically, and culturally diverse landscape will be discussed.

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