

# RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural  
Experiment Station

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## Idaho Living on the Land 2009 Evaluation Report

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY  
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**Living on the Land 2009  
Evaluation Report**

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*Looking forward to many Aha! moments as what  
I've learned gets put into practice and really sinks in*

*. . . we really feel more prepared and motivated to tackle a  
variety of projects that will make us better stewards and neighbors.*

*. . . when I purchase some property I will be taking this living on the land course again.*

*I've planned and dreamed this life style for 30+ years. I'm ready to start now  
that I've got a little piece of property. It's [the course] increased my resolve to "do it."*

*- Program Participants*

*The program continues to demonstrate participant gains in the  
knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to become good land stewards*

*- Program Evaluator*

**Idaho Living on the Land 2009  
Program Evaluation Report**

**Introduction**

This report contains the evaluation findings from the 2009 Living on the Land (LOTL) program. Stated succinctly, the program continues to demonstrate participant gains in the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to become good land stewards.

This report is organized according to the questions used on the *LOTL Post-Test Questionnaire 2009*. Each section addresses a different question and includes aggregate results, site comparison results (if appropriate) and recommendations.

A summary of all recommendations is included at the end of the report.

**Results**

**Participants**

This year the program was held concurrently at three (3) sites in Idaho, Emmett, Meridian and Parma. A total of 74 individuals enrolled in the course, an increase of 14 over last year. Enrollment breakdown was as follows: 26 from Emmett, 24 from Meridian, and 24 from Parma. Of the 74 enrolled, 69 people completed the course: 26 in Emmett (100%), 20 in Meridian (83%) and 23 in Parma (96%; see Figure 1). Thirty-nine (39) participants were women and 35 were men (see Figure 2.)

Figure 1. Participants Per Site

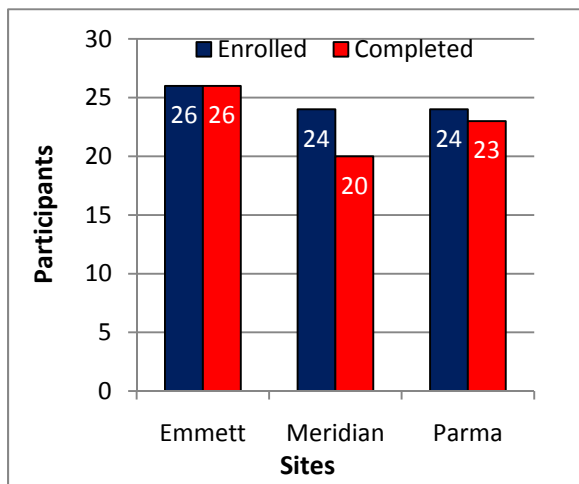
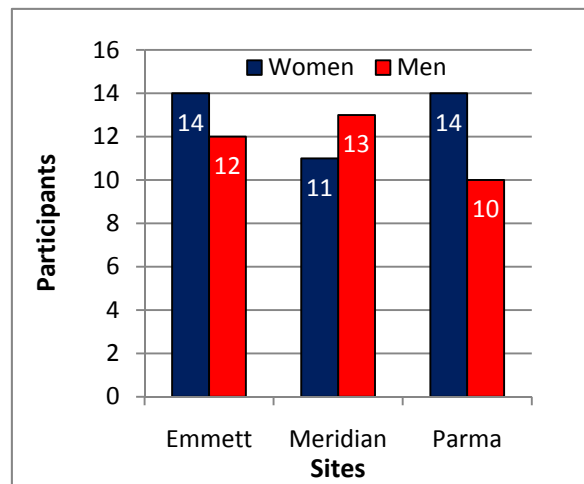


Figure 2. Participant Gender



The *LOTL Post-Test Questionnaire 2009* (see Appendix A) was distributed during the next to last class to participants who completed the course. Participants were asked to complete and return the questionnaires the following week or to return completed questionnaires to the Canyon County Extension Office by May 29th, 2009. Participants who did *not* attend the final LOTL class were mailed questionnaires to complete at home. Reminders to complete the questionnaires were subsequently sent via email and regular mail to class participants to ensure a maximum return rate.

Twenty-three (23) participants completed and returned assessment instruments, for a 33% response rate. Ten (10) questionnaires were received from Emmett (38% return), eight (8) from Meridian (40% return) and 5 from Parma (22% return).

Recommendations.

1. Increase response rate to at least 40%.

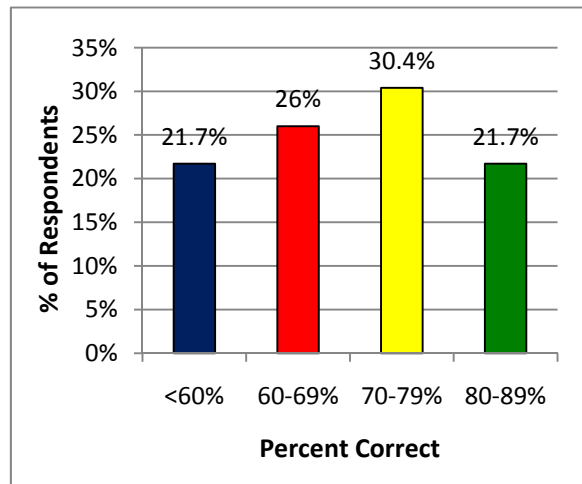
*Please note that not all results reported in this document sum to 23 (the number of respondents) or 100% due to missing responses.*

**Questions 1-15: Knowledge Inventory**

The first part of the evaluation instrument consists of a 15 item knowledge inventory (see Appendix A) designed to measure participant knowledge of the most important course topics. The maximum score possible is 22 points. Scores ranged from 7-19, with a mean of 17.29 points or 79% (see Figure 3).

Site Comparison. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were any response differences between sites. Results indicated *no* statistically significant differences between sites. This finding may be an important indicator of instructor consistency across sites.

Figure 3. Percent of Correct Responses



Incorrect Response Rates. A more thorough review of responses revealed seven (7) questions with less than a 70% correct response rate (Table 1). Question 15 is especially problematic. The question, *which of the following can become pollutants in high concentrations*, instructs respondents to *pick all that apply*. The response set includes seven (7) choices, of which only four (4) are correct. Respondents did a good job selecting the correct answers (91.3%-100% correct), however, response choices “b” and “f” were incorrectly chosen by 43.5% and 87% (respectively) of respondents (Table 1). This may indicate one or more problems: 1) the question is poorly worded, 2) the question did not accurately reflect instructional materials/lessons, and/or 3) the response set is confusing.

Table 1. Knowledge Inventory – Incorrect Response Rates

ITEM	PERCENT CORRECT	PERCENT INCORRECT
Question 1. “Non-Point Source Pollution” refers to	60.9%	39.1%
Question 2. Which best describes the reason septic tanks should be pumped out	47.8%	52.2%
Question 3. How often do most home septic tanks need to be pumped out	68.2%	31.8%
Question 5. The term “Wellhead Protection” usually includes	60.9%	31.9%

ITEM	PERCENT CORRECT	PERCENT INCORRECT
Question 9. Annual weeds reproduce by which of the following methods	69.6%	30.4%
Question 15. Which of the following can become pollutants in high concentrations? (PICK ALL THAT APPLY) [NOTE: The item is broken down by response choice. Correct answers are highlighted in yellow.]		
a. Pesticides	100% (23)	0%
b. Water	56.5% (13)	43.5% (10) incorrectly chose "b"
c. Salt	95.7% (22)	4.3% (1) incorrectly chose "c"
d. Nitrogen	91.3% (21)	8.7% (2)
e. Motor oil	100% (23)	0%
f. Iron	13% (3)	87% (20) incorrectly chose "f"
g. Phosphorus	91.3% (21)	8.7% (2)
h. Don't know / Not sure	100% (23)	0%

Recommendations.

1. Ensure questions with less than 70% correct responses accurately reflect instructional materials and classroom presentations.
2. Consider alternate wording for Question 15 and/or the response set (i.e. replace "choose all that apply" with "choose 4").

**Question 16: Teaching Effectiveness**

Question 16 was designed to assess teaching effectiveness. The question includes five (5) scaled response items. Participants were instructed to: *Please evaluate the overall teaching effectiveness of the Living on the Land Class based upon the following (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

Results indicate participants were very positive about the instructors and the material presented (Table 2).

Table 2. Results: Teaching Effectiveness

ITEM	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. Information shared met audience needs	60.9%	39.1%	0%	0%	0%
2. Overall presentations were clear and well organized	56.5%	43.5%	0%	0%	0%
3. Teaching aids were helpful	60.9%	39.1%	0%	0%	0%
4. The instructors were well informed and kept audience interest	39.1%	60.9%	0%	0%	0%
5. Instructors encouraged questions and interaction with participants	60.9%	34.8%	4.3%	0%	0%

Site Comparison. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were any response differences between sites. Results indicated *no* statistically significant differences between sites.

Recommendations. None.

**Question 17: Knowledge, Preparedness, Understanding and Skill**

Question 17 includes 11 items that instructs participants to *choose the number that best describes your knowledge, preparedness and understanding before and after the LOTL course*. A five (5) point Likert-type scale was used.

Paired samples t-tests were conducted to compare respondents' mean scores before LOTL to mean scores after LOTL. Results indicate statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) improvements on *all* items (see Table 2). This means the probability of obtaining these results by chance is less than 0.1% (Table 3).

Table 3. Knowledge, Preparedness, Understanding and Skill: Paired T-test Results

ITEM	MEAN BEFORE LOTL	MEAN AFTER LOTL	SIGNIFICANCE ( $p < .001^*$ )
<b>Knowledge</b> (1=none, 2=a little, 3=some, 4=a good deal, 5=a great deal)			
a. My Knowledge about land stewardship & resource management	2.41	4.27	.000*
<b>Preparedness</b> (1=not prepared, 2=a little, 3=somewhat, 4=pretty well prepared, 5=really prepared).			
b. My Preparedness to adopt best management practices (soil & water testing, species selection, land management . . .)	2.41	4.09	.000*
<b>Understanding</b> (1=none, 2=a little, 3=some, 4=a good deal, 5=a great deal)			
c. My Understanding of the difference between renewable and nonrenewable soil, water, plant, and animal resources	3.05	4.41	.000*

ITEM	MEAN BEFORE LOTL	MEAN AFTER LOTL	SIGNIFICANCE (P < .001*)
d. <i>My understanding about how my own choices have affected land use, lifestyle and the environment in my community and county</i>	3.19	4.43	.000*
Understanding Total	2.04	4.01	.000*
<b>Skill</b> (1=none, 2=a little, 3=some, 4=a good deal, 5=a great deal)			
e. <i>Collect, submit, and analyze soil, water and forage tests</i>	2.39	4.35	.000*
f. <i>Plan, enterprise budget, and implement animal or crop system(s)</i>	2.00	3.74	.000*
g. <i>Network with small acreage community</i>	1.61	3.87	.000*
h. <i>Find supplies and keep equipment in working order</i>	2.43	3.87	.000*
i. <i>Effectively find and access resources to support your small acreage system(s)</i>	1.78	4.22	.000*
Skill Total	2.79	4.32	.000*

Site Comparison. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were any response differences between sites. Results from three (3) of the nine (9) items indicate statistically significant differences in respondent skills from the three (3) sites *before* they participated in LOTL. Only one (1) item indicated a statistically significant difference between sites *after* the course (Table 4).

Table 4. Knowledge, Preparedness, Understanding and Skill: Differences Between Sites

ITEM	SIGNIFICANCE (P < .05*) BEFORE LOTL	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER LOTL
<b>Knowledge</b> (1=none, 2=a little, 3=some, 4=a good deal, 5=a great deal)		
a. <i>My Knowledge about land stewardship &amp; resource management</i>	.226	.344
<b>Preparedness</b> (1=not prepared, 2=a little, 3=somewhat, 4=pretty well prepared, 5=really prepared).		
b. <i>My Preparedness to adopt best management practices (soil &amp; water testing, species selection, land management . . .)</i>	.205	.285
<b>Understanding</b> (1=none, 2=a little, 3=some, 4=a good deal, 5=a great deal)		
c. <i>My Understanding of the difference between renewable and nonrenewable soil, water, plant, and animal resources</i>	.691	.232
d. <i>My understanding about how my own choices have affected land use, lifestyle and the environment in my community and county</i>	.499	.728
<b>Skill</b> (1=none, 2=a little, 3=some, 4=a good deal, 5=a great deal)		
e. <i>Collect, submit, and analyze soil, water and forage tests</i>	.005*	.071

ITEM	SIGNIFICANCE ( $P < .05^*$ ) BEFORE LOTL	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER LOTL
<i>f. Plan, enterprise budget, and implement animal or crop system(s)</i>	.010*	.202
<i>g. Network with small acreage community</i>	.005*	.305
<i>h. Find supplies and keep equipment in working order</i>	.279	.612
<i>i. Effectively find and access resources to support your small acreage system(s)</i>	.068	.002*

Recommendations. None.

### Question 18: Change in Level of Knowledge

Question 18 instructs participants to: *Please indicate your change in level of knowledge of each of the following topics before taking the 2008 LOTL Class and after taking it (rating scale from 1 [don't know anything] to 5 [know a lot]).*

Respondents' before and after ratings were compared using paired t-test analyses. Results indicate statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) improvement on all items. This means that the probability of obtaining these results by chance is less than 0.1% (Table 5).

Table 5. Change in Level of Knowledge: Paired T-test Results

ITEM	MEAN BEFORE	MEAN AFTER	SIGNIFICANCE ( $P < .001$ )
<i>Small acreage inventories &amp; planning</i>	2.32	4.00	.000*
<i>Planning and Zoning for small acreages</i>	2.17	3.91	.000*
<i>Defensible space around homes</i>	3.32	4.50	.000*
<i>Burning policies</i>	2.35	4.13	.000*
<i>Non-point source pollution of water</i>	2.41	4.09	.000*
<i>Drinking water testing &amp; treatment</i>	3.17	4.43	.000*
<i>Well care and wellhead protection</i>	2.30	4.35	.000*
<i>Septic system maintenance</i>	2.57	4.30	.000*
<i>Irrigation systems</i>	2.17	4.00	.000*
<i>Soil fertility and fertilization</i>	2.26	4.09	.000*
<i>Soil testing</i>	2.35	4.30	.000*
<i>Composting</i>	2.48	4.04	.000*



ITEM	MEAN BEFORE	MEAN AFTER	SIGNIFICANCE (P < .001)
<i>Water rights</i>	2.74	4.09	.000*
<i>Integrated Pest Management</i>	2.09	3.87	.000*
<i>Weed identification &amp; management</i>	2.17	4.17	.000*
<i>Zeriscaping</i>	2.41	3.86	.000*
<i>Forage &amp; Grass production &amp; management</i>	1.74	3.74	.000*
<i>Farm Equipment for Small Acreages</i>	2.35	3.70	.000*
<i>Managing Wildlife</i>	2.41	3.64	.000*
<i>Grazing &amp; pasture management</i>	1.86	3.73	.000*
<i>Planning your market garden</i>	2.00	3.79	.000*
<i>Animal production, care &amp; management</i>	2.25	3.45	.000*
<i>Marketing strategies</i>	1.86	3.76	.000*
<i>Feeds &amp; feeding systems for animals</i>	2.30	3.35	.000*
<i>Whole farm systems</i>	2.05	3.50	.000*
<i>Sustainable Systems Thinking</i>	2.14	3.81	.000*

Site Comparison. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were any response differences between sites. Respondent's knowledge *before* they participated in LOTL differed significantly between sites on five (5) of the items. After course participation, two (2) items demonstrated statistically significant differences in respondent knowledge. It is interesting to note that these were not the same items from the "before" assessment (Table 6).

Table 6. Change in Level of Knowledge: Comparison Between Sites

ITEM	SIGNIFICANCE (P < .05*) BEFORE LOTL	SIGNIFICANCE AFTER LOTL
<i>Drinking water testing &amp; treatment</i>	.015*	.077
<i>Soil testing</i>	.006*	.871
<i>Integrated Pest Management</i>	.041*	.694
<i>Weed identification &amp; management</i>	.008*	.697
<i>Marketing strategies</i>	.014*	.271
<i>Small acreage inventories &amp; planning</i>	.088	.044*
<i>Defensible space around homes</i>	.051	.036*

Recommendations. None.

**Question 19: Practices Planning to Implement**

Question 19 presents a list of 12 land management practices discussed in class. Participants were asked: *Which of the following practices discussed in class are you planning to implement for your property? Check all that apply.* Participants chose the most appropriate response (*Yes, Maybe, No, Doesn't apply*).

Results indicate a majority of participants plan to implement some combination of items. The responses to these items are best viewed in tabular form (Table 7).

*Table 7. Practices Planning to Implement*

ITEM	YES	MAYBE	NO	DOESN'T APPLY
<i>Well care and wellhead protection</i>	78.3%	0.0%	0.0%	21.7%
<i>Nutrients and animal waste management</i>	65.2%	13.0%	0.0%	21.7%
<i>Septic system management</i>	65.2%	8.7%	0.0%	26.1%
<i>Scheduled drinking water testing</i>	60.9%	13.0%	8.7%	17.4%
<i>Pest management</i>	78.3%	13.0%	0.0%	8.7%
<i>Weed control</i>	95.7%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%
<i>Weed ID/Mapping</i>	69.6%	17.4%	8.7%	4.3%
<i>Erosion control</i>	47.8%	17.4%	0.0%	34.8%
<i>Re-vegetation of bare ground</i>	73.9%	4.3%	0.0%	21.7%
<i>Pasture fencing/paddocks</i>	60.9%	4.3%	8.7%	26.1%
<i>Pasture management/maintenance</i>	52.2%	8.7%	4.3%	34.8%
<i>Fertilization System</i>	65.2%	8.7%	8.7%	17.4%

Site Comparison. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were any response differences between sites. Five (5) of the 12 items demonstrated a statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) difference between sites (Table 8).

*Table 8. Practices Planning to Implement: Comparison Between Sites*

ITEM	SIGNIFICANCE ( $P < .05^*$ )
<i>Well care and wellhead protection</i>	.050*
<i>Nutrients and animal waste management</i>	.026*
<i>Septic system management</i>	.005*

ITEM	SIGNIFICANCE ( $P < .05^*$ )
<i>Erosion control</i>	.005*
<i>Pasture management/maintenance</i>	.005*

Question 19 also included the item, *other (please specify)*, and space for respondents to write any other practices they were planning to implement. Seven (7) respondents replied. “Irrigation” was mentioned by two (2) respondents. The following items were mentioned once each: better networking w/other small producers, new crop identification/ implementation, expanding garden and deleting a lot of lawn, composting, trying poultry production, zeriscaping, better planning, journaling & record keeping, maintenance, and wildlife habitat (see *Appendix B, Qualitative Responses* for the complete responses).

Recommendations. None.

### Question 20: Overall 2009 LOTL Class Evaluation

Question 20 instructs participants to rate: *Your Overall 2009 “Living on the Land” Class Evaluation* for two (2) items: a.) *LOTL Usefulness*, and b.) *Knowledge Gained at LOTL*. A five (5) point Likert-type scale was used (1=Low, 5=High).

The overall evaluations were very positive (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). The average score for “usefulness” was 4.68, and the average score for “knowledge gained” was 4.61.

Figure 4. LOTL Usefulness

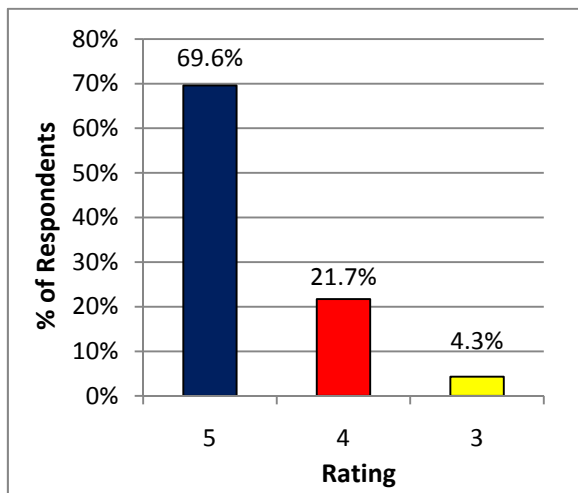
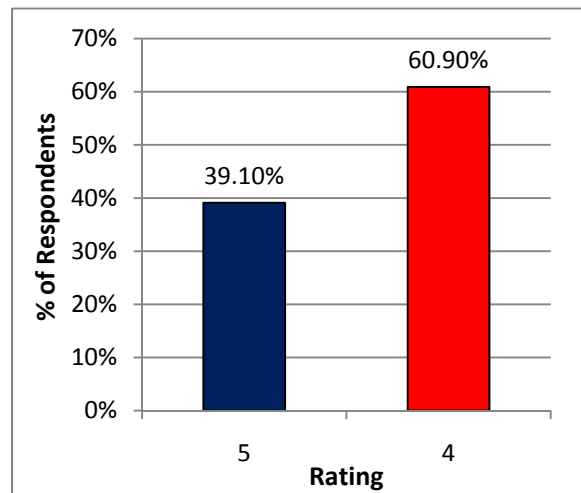


Figure 5. Knowledge Gained at LOTL



Site Comparison. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were any response differences between sites. There were no statistically significant differences in responses.

Recommendations. None.

### Question 21: Better Land Steward

Question 21 asks participants: *As a result of your learning in this class, please explain "how" you have become a better land steward.*

Twenty (20) respondents provided a variety of answers. A complete list of responses is included in *Appendix B, Qualitative Responses*. Responses clustered around three (3) distinct themes, understanding systems, knowledge/skill, and planning/decision-making. Respondents felt that understanding how individual actions affect the environment and other community residents will help guide their actions in the future. They also indicated that simply knowing what to do and/or where to go for help would improve their land practices. Their newfound knowledge and understanding of the systemic impact of their actions will result in proper planning and decision-making ("more calculated, less haphazard").

Recommendations. None

**Question 22:** *Questions were numbered incorrectly. There is no question 22.*

### Question 23: Other Topics

Question 23 asks: *What other topics would you have liked covered during this learning experience?*  
Eleven (11) people provided a variety of responses:

#### Irrigation/water

- How to keep chemicals from return flow farms 'up the ditch' out of our irrigation water
- Expanded coverage of irrigation techniques with emphasis on water conservation
- Actual examples of methods used such as kind of pipes, emitters, etc.
- What to do if your water isn't 'optimal' (i.e., high iron content, etc.)

#### Crops/crop rotation

- Good crops for small acreage
- Specific ideas for crop rotations in non-pasture fields (i.e. wheat, potatoes, other grains)
- Companion planting/ organic solutions

#### Record keeping/small business

- Record keeping and what an accountant might be able to help with (can I write all this off as a new business?)
- How to start a farm business. (the Farmer's Market said I needed liability so I called my homeowner's insurance & they got upset & said if I am farming, I needed a different more expensive policy- it was a mess. They finally said I can call it a hobby if I make less than \$10,000. I'm worried about IRS, SS, etc.)

#### **BETTER LAND STEWARD**

*Have developed the ability to better handle a variety of problems small property owners are likely to face.*

*I'm planting crops in my field instead of letting weeds grow. I'm planting grass on a hill with bare ground. I'm planting native & drought resistant plants & trying to do xeriscaping.*

Alternative energy

- Wind energy (2)
- Solar energy (2)

Miscellaneous

- Examples of farm equipment such as harrowers, plows, etc. I have very little idea of the actual equipment.
- Livestock fencing options and basic construction overview.
- Poultry
- Insect of the week

None Two (2) people stated they could not “think of anything.”

Recommendations.

No overwhelming need was identified, which indicates the course is meeting most people’s expectations.

**Question 24: Logistics**

Question 24 instructs participants to rate several items related to program organization and implementation. A clear majority of respondents felt the items listed did *not* need improvements (Table 9).

*Table 9. Logistics: Results*

ITEM	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT				GREAT
	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Marketing, Advertising, Awareness</i>	0%	13%	8.7%	52.2%	17.4%
<i>Registration</i>	0%	0%	8.7%	39.1%	39.1%
<i>Required snacks once during class</i>	0%	0%	4.3%	26.1%	60.9%
<i>Reminders, communications from organizers</i>	0%	8.7%	4.3%	39.1%	39.1%
<i>Class schedule and sequence</i>	0%	0%	13.0%	43.5%	39.1%
<i>Classroom Arrangements</i>		8.7%	17.4%	26.1%	43.5%

The question also allowed respondents to add comments and suggestions. Eleven (11) respondents had other comments and suggestions:

*Marketing, Advertising, Awareness*

- I signed up after hearing Mary's interview with Stephanie on Mary's radio show. It was just luck that I heard it. No one I have told about it have ever heard of it.
- In all of the above I only note a need for more/better marketing
- Maybe a TV spot on "community events" prior to classes, I found the newspaper ad quite by accident

*Required snacks once during class*

- Snacks were nice to have but would have been OK without

*Reminders, communications from organizers*

- I didn't hear from anyone once the class started

*Class schedule and sequence*

- Enjoyed xeriscaping but it felt oddly placed in the mix; need multiple season photos of same area.
- Maybe you could start in October.
- In the spring it's hard to get done in time to get to class

*Classroom Arrangements*

- The conference room in Meridian could get cold & it was hard to hear at times. Would have been nice to have everyone around the table.

*Other*

- I wish I would have taken this 3 years ago but I didn't have the money. Maybe you could break it into 3 quarters & the fees would be smaller & people would see the benefit. I get up early so by 8:30 I'm exhausted, two-hour classes would be easier. I wish I had had marketing info sooner.
- Really appreciated being able to attend other location classes depending on my schedule!
- Some of the speakers were really technical in their explanations and hard to follow along
- worthwhile class

Recommendations.

1. *Marketing, Advertising, Awareness.* Explore options available to increase program visibility.

**Question 25: Pluses and Suggested Improvements**

Question 25 instructed participants to:

*Please reflect upon your learning experience in the LOTL class. Did the class live up to your expectations? Please identify three pluses and three suggested improvements for future Living on the Land classes.*

Pluses for the 2009 Living on the Land Class. Participant responses are grouped by major themes.

*Enjoyed/Benefitted from Specific Topics*

- Soil analysis (5)
- Forage education (4)
- Water analysis (3)
- Market gardening (3)
- Weed identification (3)
- Landscaping (2)
- Pest management discussion (2)
- Septic systems
- Animal management
- Water rights
- Fertilizer management
- Grazing
- Xeriscaping
- I liked 90% of the topics. For the first time in my life I enjoyed chemistry when we studied composting.

*Instructors/Speakers*

- Enthusiasm, interest, knowledge and variety of instructors (7)
- Specific instructors (5)
- Mary set the right tone with the group and did a great job of making us feel comfortable (2)
- Stephanie helped me feel relaxed & comfortable. She was wonderful.
- The PhD soil scientist from Mtn Home was wonderful, entertaining, just great
- Mr. "Tea" went the extra mile.

*Teaching Aids/Course Structure*

- PowerPoint presentations, hole punched notes, handouts (3)
- Lesson structure/activities (5)
- Presenting properties (2)
- The way it was set up was very cool - if you missed a week you could attend a different location. Good job identifying centrally located areas for the class.

*Resources.* Excellent resource guides (ie handouts, binders, booklets, books, local program, websites local, state & federal agencies) (8)

*Networking.* The ability to network with other people who has small acreages (6)

*Breadth of Topics.* Program touched on all (probably) important/ critical aspects of small acreage farming/living (5)

Suggested improvements for future Living on the Land programs. Responses were clustered around several areas.

*Instructors/Speakers*

- Some presentations could be more than just reading the Power Point info
- Try to use local quest speakers. Specifically from Gem county, not Ada or Canyon
- Some presenters seemed ill prepared- seemed to know subject, but presentations were poorly presented; seemed to need a little more polish

*Topics – Weeds*

- Do two weeds a week. One a garden variety common weed. The second a serious recognized noxious weed.
- Adding skeleton weed to weed of the week. Maybe having two weeds of the week?
- Weed chart should include toxicity, suitability for green manure/composting, if they can be burned, scientific names, seed viability, special caveats, noxious/obnoxious and in which states, treatments (always read & follow directions)
- Scientific names for weeds in weed of the week handouts. At least one class member was confused about the various cheat grasses

**PLUSES**

*I now know to not only look at what is happening on my potential property, but is happening around it.*

*I am forever grateful for becoming aware of the services & resources of some of the agencies.*

*Great guest speakers; It is very helpful to be taught by someone who specializes in the subject*

- Weeds are obviously a big topic, but it would be helpful to have a list of the primary weeds in the valley, identification/description, how to eradicate and prevent them. The Weeds of the West book is good, but difficult to use for identification and it does not provide info on treatments. Maybe Mike Stanton could develop a list based on his weeds discussions.

*Topics – Other*

- Don't split gardening & animal units- need both on a small acreage
- Not really impressed with "Analyzing Market Cay"
- Probably skip part about gov. assistance programs- did not seem to apply to most participants situations
- Lesson wildfire- this area is mostly irrigated cropland not brush & timber- not something I would worry about
- More on drip irrigation, it's expensive, what works what doesn't
- I would like to see Organic requirements/Natural farming in the class
- More on Composting

**SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

*Hands on experience would be useful in understanding the subjects*

*Eliminate redundant information from one week to week.*

*Local site tours showcasing lessons taught in class (i.e. drainage, pasture management, watering systems, gopher control, etc.*

*Course Structure – Length/Time*

- Would like to see the classes structured to better meet the needs of adult learners. I can handle 20-30 minute lectures. PowerPoint, but 2-3 hours of someone going through a P.P. is way too long. I suggest starting off with a circle and go around & have everyone answer- i.e. assign a reading/article on the topic as homework then start by asking what they thought was interesting or what they wanted to learn more about.
- It was a little long- 19 weeks plus the farm tour is a big commitment, especially once we get into May (school stuff, planting season, etc.) but I don't see how it could be shortened up unless it was 10 weeks & 10 weeks over a whole year in 2 sessions.

*Course Structure – Final Presentation.*

- Too redundant.
- Shorten it.

*Course Structure – Other*

- Local site tours showcasing lessons taught in class (i.e. drainage, pasture management, watering systems, gopher control, etc.
- More time to present personal problems on your acreage. "A trouble-shoot time."
- Time of year
- Facilitators should elicit a brief answer from each participant w/o ?s or comments. Record answers on flip charts. Then have the experts lecture for 20-30 min. max then have another discussion question or activity. Then they can go back and do another 20-30min. hitting key points- real practical info w/ Idaho examples that apply to small acreage when possible.
- Eliminate redundant information from one week to week.
- More discussion time would help as would not scheduling an expert presenter on the class w/ the charette activity to allow enough time for everyone to present w/o feeling too rushed & maybe provide more feed back to people about their plans etc. Also a little more time to debrief about previous topics.



### *Course Materials*

- Make extension videos available for check-out viewing. Being able to see how others have succeeded before us is encouraging.
- Bring soil care sampling tools to class to loan out.
- Hands on experience would be useful in understanding the subjects
- More "samples" of topic material, ie., weed of the week, grass samples (pictures are not necessarily worth a thousand words)

### *Networking*

- Networking list of people who want to stay in touch with others in class or other alumni (with strict rules of not using the list for spamming or other practices)
- Some of the most valuable moments were the breaks because we could talk with classmates. More opportunities for sharing would be good.

### *Miscellaneous*

- True description of the class in the paper. I thought it was going to be more "how to live off your land."
- Nothing we can think of. The class was great!
- Besides pasture, some of us use several acres for "commercial" production. We grow 7 acres of wheat. But I don't really know what we are doing. I understand the soil and watering issues more, but not other growing & harvesting issues.
- Would have liked to know more about our options for this land since we don't want to graze animals, and specific info (or direction to info) about how to grow specific crops, and how to do so sustainably.

### Recommendations.

1. *Topics.* It appears on balance that the topics selected provide a good mix for most participants. LOTL personnel should, however review the complete responses (Appendix B) for *both* pluses and suggestions to determine whether any additions or deletions should be considered for 2010.
2. *Course Structure.* The course structure appears to work well for most participants. There were, however, quite a few suggestions regarding presentation of the *Weeds* module. LOTL personnel should review the complete responses (Appendix B) for *both* pluses and suggestions to determine whether any structural changes should be considered for 2010.

**Question 26:** *Questions were numbered incorrectly. There is no question 26.*

**Question 27:** *Questions were numbered incorrectly. There is no question 27.*

### **Question 28: Other Comments**

Question 28 affords participants the opportunity to add final comments. Eleven (11) people responded to this question, often with multiple comments.

### General Accolades (Course, Speakers, Handouts)

- Thank you all for your time and sharing your knowledge with us
- As new owners of a small farm this course was just what we needed to learn about many aspects of

property management.

- Good job, well worth cost of course; would be interested in other such courses
- It was awesome to have such knowledgeable and passionate speakers.
- Thank you for the time you have put into this class. All of the preparation and material must have been enormous!
- Thanks!
- Very good Class
- I really loved the quality & quantity of the handouts.
- Looking forward to many Aha! moments as what I've learned gets put into practice and really sinks in.

#### Course Structure

- The ability to attend the classes we want to review in the classroom in subsequent classes is a great benefit.
- No suggestions on timing or time of year. This was just right.
- LOVED the fact that a husband/wife could register for 1 fee. This was a really cool activity for us to do together and important for both of us to know these things since we will "live on the land" together - hopefully!
- Timing of the class is very good. Ending in mid May worked out good

#### Course Content

- I am concerned about the emphasis or focus I saw with respect to chemical/herbicide control of annual weeds. Without effort to change the composition toward more desirable plants, chemical control of annual weeds is a never ending job.
- I wish it could have been more positive. A lot was a list of don't do's but not do this.

#### Social

- Excellent cadre.
- I would like more time to socialize & set-up contacts within the group.

#### Other

- I'll be willing to help brainstorm/ format on this. 541-262-3328. [NOTE: it is unclear what this was in reference to.]

#### Recommendations.

1. "Keep up the good work!"

## Summary of Recommendations

### Program Evaluation

1. Increase response rate to at least 40%.
2. Assessment questions are numbered incorrectly. It appears that questions 22, 26 and 27 were deleted from a previous assessment. Unfortunately, the remaining questions were not renumbered to reflect the changes.
3. *Question 15: Knowledge Inventory.*
  - a. Ensure questions with less than 70% correct responses accurately reflect instructional materials and classroom presentations.
  - b. Consider alternate wording for Question 15 and/or the response set (i.e. replace “choose all that apply” with “choose 4”).

### Course Structure and Class Materials

1. *Question 23: Other Topics.* No overwhelming need was identified, which indicates the course is meeting most people’s expectations.
2. *Question 24: Logistics.*
  - a. *Marketing, Advertising, Awareness.* Explore options available to increase program visibility.
3. *Question 25: Pluses and Suggested Improvements.*
  - a. *Topics.* It appears on balance that the topics selected provide a good mix for most participants. LOTL personnel should, however review the complete responses (Appendix B) for both pluses and suggestions to determine whether any additions or deletions should be considered for 2010.
  - b. *Course Structure.* It appears on balance that the course structure works well for most participants. There were, however, quite a few suggestions regarding presentation of the Weeds module. LOTL personnel should review the complete responses (Appendix B) for both pluses and suggestions to determine whether any structural changes should be considered for 2010.

### Other

1. “Keep up the good work.”

#### OTHER COMMENTS

*The ability to attend the classes we want to review in the classroom in subsequent classes is a great benefit.*

*It was awesome to have such knowledgeable and passionate speakers.*

***Appendix A: Assessment Tool***

## Idaho Living on the Land 2009 Evaluation

Take some time to reflect on the Living on the Land Class. Your input will help us plan future classes, LOTL Alumni workshops, tours, and professional development programs. Please return this questionnaire by **May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009** to the Canyon County Extension Office, 501 Main Street, Caldwell ID 83605. Thanks!

**At which location did you primarily take the LOTL Course (please check one):**

Emmett                       Meridian                       Parma

1. The term "Non-Point Source Pollution" refers to:
  - a. Pollution of groundwater supplies from a widespread area
  - b. Pollution of groundwater by direct well injection
  - c. Pollution of surface water supplies from a widespread area
  - d. Pollution of surface water supplies from a pipe discharging into them
  - e. Pollution of ground and surface water supplies from a widespread area
  - f. Pollution of ground and surface water supplies from a pipe discharging into them
  - g. Don't know / Not sure
  
2. Which of these best describes the reason septic tanks should be pumped out?
  - a. To prevent tanks from bursting
  - b. To prevent the overflow of liquids
  - c. To prevent the overflow of solids
  - d. They don't need to be pumped
  - e. Don't know / Not sure
  
3. About how often do most home septic tanks need to be pumped out?
  - a. Every 6 months
  - b. Every year
  - c. Every 3 years
  - d. Every 6 years
  - e. Every 10 years
  - f. They don't need to be pumped
  - g. Don't know / Not sure
  
4. Which one of the following should people with private wells generally do about their drinking water?
  - a. Drink only bottled water
  - b. Have their drinking water tested
  - c. Install home water purification system
  - d. Install a water softener
  - e. Drink the well water as it comes out of the tap
  - f. Don't know / Not sure
  
5. The term "Wellhead Protection" usually includes: **(CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)**
  - a. Keeping animals away from your well
  - b. Being sure chemicals are not stored, mixed or used near the well
  - c. Inspecting your well and fixing any cracks or defects around the well
  - d. Being sure pollutants aren't placed on the ground near your well
  - e. Zoning ordinances to prevent polluting land uses
  - f. Don't know / Not sure

6. In which one of the following locations is it most important to grow plants to reduce erosion?
- Rocky areas
  - Flat, wet areas
  - Bare slopes
  - Flat, dry areas
  - Shaded areas
  - Don't know / Not sure
7. Which of these best describes the meaning of "Integrated Pest Management" or "IPM"?
- Using only natural means to control pests
  - Letting weeds, rodents and a variety of insects live in your pasture so you'll have a natural balance of species
  - Controlling pests using cultural (planting pest-resistant species), physical (pulling weeds), natural and biological controls (using predators such as lady bugs) without resorting to pesticides
  - Controlling pests using cultural, physical, biological and chemical controls such as pesticides to provide good pest control and protect the environment
  - Don't know / Not sure
8. When is the best time to apply pesticides to minimize chances of groundwater pollution?
- Just before an irrigation cycle
  - During an irrigation cycle
  - Between irrigation cycles, when soil is not saturated
  - When heavy rain is expected, to help carry it into the soil
  - Don't know / Not sure
9. Annual weeds reproduce by which of the following methods?
- Seeds and seed bank
  - Rhizomes
  - Pieces of roots
  - All of the above
10. Irrigation water can best be delivered to hilly pastures by:
- Using a sprinkler system with timed application intervals
  - Using a sprinkler system to apply water as often as possible
  - Using standard flood irrigation with slide gates
  - Using standard flood irrigation, but with the addition of furrows which run down the slope
  - Using border irrigation techniques
  - Don't know / not sure
11. About how tall should your pasture grasses be before you put your stock out on the pasture?
- As tall as possible - at least one foot high
  - About 4 to 6 inches tall
  - About 2 to 3 inches tall
  - About 1 inch tall
  - Whenever the grass starts to turn green - any height
  - Don't know / Not sure
12. Two main causes of overgrazing are: (pick **TWO**)
- Prolonged drought
  - Exceeding the carrying capacity of the pasture
  - Failure to allow adequate rest periods for forage regrowth
  - Poor choice of pasture grass species
  - Stocking both horses and cattle on the same pasture
  - Don't know / Not sure

13. How often should you apply fertilizers to your pasture? How much should you apply?
- Carefully follow the directions on a commercial fertilizer package
  - You don't ever need fertilizers if you have animal waste on the field
  - Fertilize once a month all through the growing season, and use the amount recommended by the manufacturer so your pasture stays green
  - Get your soil tested for nitrogen and phosphorous so you know how much is needed and how to time the application
  - Don't know / Not sure
14. Which of these best describes a filter strip?
- An area of bare ground between a field/pasture and a creek or pond
  - An area of bare ground between a field/pasture and a septic leach field
  - An area of bare ground around your well
  - An area of ungrazed vegetation between a field/pasture and a creek or pond
  - An area of ungrazed vegetation between a field/pasture and a septic leach field
  - An area of ungrazed vegetation around your well
  - Don't know / Not sure
15. Which of the following can become pollutants in high concentrations?  
(PICK **ALL** THAT APPLY)
- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| a. Pesticides | e. Motor oil             |
| b. Water      | f. Iron                  |
| c. Salt       | g. Phosphorus            |
| d. Nitrogen   | h. Don't know / Not sure |

**16. Please evaluate the overall *teaching* effectiveness of the Living on the Land Class based upon the following:**

<u>circle level of agreement with the statement:</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>		<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	
	SA	A	N	D	DA
A) Information shared met audience needs.....	SA	A	N	D	DA
B) Overall presentations were clear and well organized.....	SA	A	N	D	DA
C) Teaching aids were helpful .....	SA	A	N	D	DA
D) Instructors were well informed and kept audience interest.....	SA	A	N	D	DA
E) Instructors encouraged questions and interaction with participants.....	SA	A	N	D	DA

17. Using the scales shown, choose the number that best describes your knowledge, preparedness and understanding before and after the LOTL Course.

(1 = None, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = a good deal, 5 = a great deal)

	KNOWLEDGE	Before LOTL	After LOTL
A	My Knowledge about land stewardship & resource management	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

(1 = not prepared, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = pretty well prepared, 5 = really prepared)

	PREPAREDNESS	Before LOTL	After LOTL
B	My Preparedness to adopt best management practices (soil & water testing, species selection, land management...)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

(1 = None, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = a good deal, 5 = a great deal)

	UNDERSTANDING	Before LOTL	After LOTL
C	My Understanding of the difference between renewable and nonrenewable soil, water, plant, and animal resources	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
D	My Understanding about how my own choices have affected land use, lifestyle and the environment in my community and county	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

To what extent did LOTL increase your awareness/knowledge of the following skills?

(1 = None, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = a good deal, 5 = a great deal)

	SKILL	Before LOTL	After LOTL
E	Collect, submit, and analyze soil, water and forage tests	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
F	Plan, enterprise budget, and implement animal or crop system(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
G	Network with small acreage community	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
H	Find supplies and keep equipment in working order	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
I	Effectively find and access resources to support your small acreage system(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5



**18. Please indicate your level of knowledge of each of the following topics before taking the 2009 LOTL Class and after completing the course? 1 (don't know anything) to 5 (know a lot).**

<i>LOTL Topic Covered</i>	<i>Before Class</i>					<i>After Class</i>				
Small acreage inventories & planning	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Planning and Zoning for small acreages	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Defensible space around homes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Burning policies	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Non-point source pollution of water	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water testing & treatment	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Well care and wellhead protection	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Septic system maintenance	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Irrigation systems	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Soil fertility and fertilization	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Soil testing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Composting	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Water rights	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Integrated Pest Management	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Weed identification & management	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Zeriscaping	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Forage & Grass production & management	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Farm Equipment for Small Acreages	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Managing Wildlife	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Grazing & pasture management	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Planning your market garden	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Animal production, care & management	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing strategies	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Feeds & feeding systems for animals	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Whole farm systems	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainable Systems Thinking	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**19. Which of the following practices discussed in class are you planning to implement for your property in the next year? Check all that apply.**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Doesn't apply</u>
Well care and wellhead protection	___	___	___	___
Nutrients and animal waste management	___	___	___	___
Septic system management	___	___	___	___
Scheduled drinking water testing	___	___	___	___
Pest management	___	___	___	___
Weed control	___	___	___	___
Weed ID/Mapping	___	___	___	___
Erosion control	___	___	___	___
Re-vegetation of bare ground	___	___	___	___
Pasture fencing/paddocks	___	___	___	___
Pasture management/maintenance	___	___	___	___
Fertilization System	___	___	___	___
Other (please specify): _____				

**20. Your Overall 2009 "Living on the Land" Class Evaluation:**

LOTL Usefulness:	Lowest	1	2	3	4	5	Highest
Knowledge gained at LOTL:		1	2	3	4	5	

**21. As a result of your learning in this class, please explain "how" you have become a better land steward.**

**23. What other topics would you have liked covered during this learning experience?**

**24. Please circle the number for each item that matches your opinion.**

	Needs Improvement			Great	
Marketing, Advertising, Awareness	1	2	3	4	5
Registration	1	2	3	4	5
Required Snacks once during class	1	2	3	4	5
Reminders, communications from organizers	1	2	3	4	5
Class schedule and sequence	1	2	3	4	5
Classroom Arrangements	1	2	3	4	5

Comments and Suggestions:

**25. Please reflect upon your learning experience in the LOTL class. Did the class live up to your expectations? Please identify three pluses and three suggested improvements for future Living on the Land classes.**

Pluses (+) for the 2009 Living on the Land Class

1.

2.

3.

Suggested improvements (▲) for future Living on the Land programs

1.

2.

3.

**28. Other Comments:**

Thanks! Your team looks forward to continued learning with you!

**To enrich education through diversity the University of Idaho is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educational institution, University of Idaho, Oregon State University, Rutgers University, Western SARE, 50 + partners and U. S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating.**

***APPENDIX B: Qualitative Responses***

**Question 19:** *Which of the following practices discussed in class are you planning to implement for your property? Check all that apply. Participants chose the most appropriate response (Yes, Maybe, No, Doesn't apply).*

Other

- better irrigation method
- better networking w/other small producers. new crop identification/ implementation
- Expanding garden deleting a lot of lawn
- irrigation management
- start composting
- trying poultry production, same zeriscaping better planning, journaling & record keeping and maintenance
- wildlife habitat

**Question 21:** *As a result of your learning in this class, please explain "how" you have become a better land steward.*

- better knowledge of resource/services availability - knowing who to ask or where to seek information/ help - better knowledge of 'whole systems' approach of how to implement - better knowledge of how to implement more effective/ lower impacts pest management (IPM approach)
- composting manure -changing from flood irrigation to sprinkler -weed control
- 20 comment: for me, its a 5 because I had so little knowledge to start. I still don't feel perfectly comfortable living on acreage but definitely appreciate having resources for help and "a little" knowledge.
- a better understanding of how important it is to have a weed and pest control plan in order. learning its ok to take your time, not everything had to be done yesterday. "I can enjoy the journey". Putting together a project for a Riparian restoration
- Better understanding of local support systems and programs. more cooperation w/ neighbors
- Better watering practices. Weed control. Pest control. Soil improvement. Pasture management & grazing.
- Excellent resources, more knowledge of pastures, irrigation, local burning laws
- Have developed the ability to better handle a variety of problems small property owners are likely to face.
- I can see the need for management in ways that I couldn't before. I know some of the principles of management of various systems. I know where to get information and help with management.
- I have access to more information and resources. I recognize more weeds, enabling me to treat accordingly. Building in previous knowledge, confirming what I know needs to be done.
- I have taken steps to reduce erosion & topsoil loss through run off control (drain pipe) and pasture management. I learned & am implementing timing to reduce weed propogation. I am not using pasture fertilizer out of the bag, but may instead custom order only what I need in order to reduce unnecessary fertilization. I am looking for a good source of organic fertilizer & a means to spread it. I am planting native trees/shrubs on sloped land to provide for wildlife habitat.
- I think before using chemicals/fertilizers/pesticides carefully about alternatives, timing, effects, etc. I feel like I have a better understanding of market gardening - that it is probably more work than I can do at this time but may be a future goal. I am better about record-keeping and more thoughtful about weed-control. I now have my "foot in the door" and I think I know better where to go for more information and resources.

- I will be able to identify weeds better, understand that all this takes time, patience and more time. to better utilize fertilizers, animal waste, and do the best I can.
- I've planned and dreamed this life style for 30+ years. I'm ready to start now that I've got a little piece of property. It's [the course] increased my resolve to "do it".
- I'm planting crops in my field instead of letting weeds grow. I'm planting grass on a hill with bare ground. I'm planting native & drought resistant plants & trying to do xeriscaping.
- more aware of the Land around me
- pasture grass needs & setting up a [sic] animal rotation program.
- The class provided so much information and resources on such a broad range of topics that we really feel more prepared and motivated to tackle a variety of projects that will make us better stewards and neighbors. It was great to be able to take the class as a team so we're both on the same page with our new goals & tasks. The planning activities helped us focus on what we could begin doing right now, but also on some longer term goals that we can work on with our new knowledge gained.
- Totally becoming even more aware of weed control
- Using the knowledge from each class and understanding how to improve. The different systems that apply. Getting the best and most of all of the resources.

**Question 25:** *Please reflect upon your learning experience in the LOTL class. Did the class live up to your expectations? Please identify three pluses and three suggested improvements for future Living on the Land classes.*

#### Pluses

1.

- Covered a lot of topics
- Enthusiasm and interest of instructors in subject matter very high, though some not effective presenters.
- Excellent resource guide ie., handouts, booklets, websites local, state & federal agencies
- Expertise of Research Center speakers was the BEST!
- great understanding of support programs in local area
- greater knowledge of a broad spectrum of topics it was a fabulous overview for us and I'm sure those with more experience going in also learned more.
- I felt so shy & nervous but Stephanie helped me feel relaxed & comfortable. She was wonderful.
- I took this class to gain some knowledge before buying a piece of property. I now know to not only look at what is happening on my potential property , but is happening around it. What weeds are growing next door. What's happening to the water flowing upstream. I know to test the soil and how to test it. To test the water and make sure the wellhead is protected. I also know that when I purchase some property I will be taking this living on the land course again.
- Learning about water rights.
- Learning responsibility of taking care of property. I only had a vague notion of soil tests, septic systems, forage tests, etc.
- Lots of information, It's great to have all this material to have as a reference
- Meet people who are interested in the land and getting the most out of your land.
- My knowledge on "how to" was very limited. With all of the resources that were presented. The education has been priceless.
- Our facilitator, Mary, set the right tone with the group and did a great job of making us feel comfortable.

- PowerPoint presentations & hole punched notes.
- program touched on all (probably) important/ critical aspects of small acreage farming/living
- Same as in question 21.
- Soil and water analysis - Now I understand better what to look for and the value of having such info.
- Tractors & machinery. Mr. "Tea" really went the extra mile.
- Varied, specialized speakers.

2.

- A lot of good information plus all the handouts so we can look back to refresh our memories.
- Class involvement in goal setting, forage education
- Covered a lot!
- enjoyed hearing from a lot of different speakers- thanks to everyone who participated!
- For the first time in my life I enjoyed chemistry- when we studied composting.
- greatly increased awareness of sources of information, resources, and help (advice); class materials will retain value for future reference
- I am forever grateful for becoming aware of the services & resources of some of the agencies. My creekbed (?) rehabilitation projects are now going to happen.
- I do know that LoLT is only the tip of the iceberg. But it has been a big help and start on being a much improved land steward.
- I liked 90% of the topics & the opportunity to ask such knowledgeable subject experts questions.
- Interactive Kinesthetic lessons.
- Learning about animal management.
- Market gardening how-to.
- Networking, connections to other farmers, etc.
- Testing of water, soil & forages
- The ability to network with other people who has small acreages.
- The PhD soil scientist from Mtn Home was wonderful, entertaining , just great
- types of markets for garden sale
- Weed identification is very valuable
- weed of the week was good

3.

- 3 real stand-out classes - MIR-soil; Scott Jensen - grazing; Ariel & Tony - xeriscaping
- good selection of presentations; interacted well w/class
- Great guest speakers; It is very helpful to be taught by someone who specializes in the subject
- I would recommend this course to all
- Lack of required homework and testing nice. Presentations were sort of fun; perhaps consider adding another one.
- Landscaping
- Learning about fertilizer management.
- Natural Landscape
- networking
- Pest management discussion
- Seeing how other people are being successful in making their land work for them plus receiving suggestions and methods of what works for them.
- Soil, water, forage tests
- The marketing suggestions were very helpful. (I benefitted from every class!)



- the way it was set up was very cool - if you missed a week you could attend a different location.  
Good job identifying centrally located areas for the class.
- We enjoyed the charette activities and the discussions with others in the class who were in the same boat- What their plans were, etc.
- Well-informed instructors

Extra Comments

- I really liked presenting our properties. I liked the IPM when we got in groups & looked up something & shared.
- Loved the Weeds of the West book, binders, handouts, farm tour & breaking up weeds of the week.
- Mary was a great facilitator.

## Suggestions

1.

- Besides pasture, some of us use several acres for "commercial" production. We grow 7 acres of wheat. But I don't really know what we are doing. I understand the soil and watering issues more, but not other growing & harvesting issues.
- Don't split gardening & animal units- need both on a small acreage
- I really enjoyed the weed of the week. The "weeds of the west" book was a great help. Some ideas I'd suggest would be: Do two weeds a week. One a garden variety common weed. The second a serious recognized noxious weed.
- I would change some of the subject matters. To be more specific for their area or be urban or rural area.
- It was a little long- 19 weeks plus the farm tour is a big commitment, especially once we get into May ( school stuff, planting season, etc.) but I don't see how it could be shortened up unless it was 10 weeks & 10 weeks over a whole year in 2 sessions.
- Local site tours showcasing lessons taught in class (i.e. drainage, pasture management, watering systems, gopher control, etc.
- Make extension videos available for check-out viewing. Being able to see how others have succeeded before us is encouraging.
- More time to present personal problems on your acreage. "A trouble shoot time."
- Networking list of people who want to stay in touch with others in class or other alumni (with strict rules of not using the list for spamming or other practices)
- Not really impressed with "Analyzing Market Cay"
- Nothing we can think of. The class was great!
- Probably skip part about gov. assistance programs- did not seem to apply to most participants situations
- See comments on scheduling.
- Some presentations could be more than just reading the Power Point info
- Time of year
- try to use local quest speakers. specifically from Gem county, not Ada or Canyon
- Would like to see the classes structured to better meet the needs of adult learners. I can handle 20-30 minute lectures. PowerPoints, but 2-3 hours of someone going through a P.P. is way too long. I suggest starting off with a circle and go around & have everyone answer- i.e. assign a reading/article on the topic as homework then start by asking what they thought was interesting or what they wanted to learn more about.

2.

- Adding skeleton weed to weed of the week. Maybe having two weeds of the week?
- Bring soil care sampling tools to class to loan out.
- Facilitators should elicit a brief answer from each participant w/o ?s or comments. Record answers on flip charts. Then have the experts lecture for 20-30 min. max then have another discussion question or activity. Then they can go back and do another 20-30min. hitting key points- real practical info w/ Idaho examples that apply to small acreage when possible.
- Final presentation was too redundant. Shorten it. May need a microphone also.
- Hands on experience would be useful in understanding the subjects
- Lesson wildfire- this area is mostly irrigated cropland not brush & timber- not something I would worry about
- more "samples" of topic material, ie., weed of the week, grass samples (pictures are not necessarily

worth a thousand words)

- more on drip irrigation its expensive what works what doesn't
  - Some of the most valuable moments were the breaks because we could talk with classmates. More opportunities for sharing would be good.
  - some presenters seemed ill prepared- seemed to know subject, but presentations were poorly presented; seemed to need a little more polish
  - True description of the class in the paper. I thought it was going to be more "how to live off your land."
  - Weed chart should include toxicity, suitability for green manure/composting, if they can be burned, scientific names, seed viability, special caveats, noxious/obnoxious and in which states, treatments (always read & follow directions)
  - would have liked to know more about our options for this land since we don't want to graze animals, and specific info (or direction to info) about how to grow specific crops, and how to do so sustainably.
- 3.
- Eliminate redundant information from one week to week. The end wrap-up session was too long & already done.
  - I would like to see Organic requirements/Natural farming in the class
  - More discussion time would help as would not scheduling an expert presenter on the class w/ the charette activity to allow enough time for everyone to present w/o feeling too rushed & maybe provide more feed back to people about their plans etc. Also a little more time to debrief about previous topics.
  - More on Composting
  - Scientific names for weeds in weed of the week handouts. At least one class member was confused about the various cheat grasses
  - Weeds are obviously a big topic, but it would be helpful to have a list of the primary weeds in the valley, identification/description, how to eradicate and prevent them. The Weeds of the West book is good, but difficult to use for identification and it does not provide info on treatments. Maybe Mike Stanton could develop a list based on his weeds discussions.