

Introduction

>> My name is Bill Elliot.

I'm a research engineer in Moscow, Idaho,

and I study forest soil erosion processes and predictions.

I work with my colleagues and we measure soil erosion in the field following disturbances,

What do you do

such as wildfire or thinning or from forest roads, and then we analyze the data.

We bring samples in and we dry them and weigh them

and determine how much erosion rate we're getting.

And then we use that data to develop models to predict erosion.

What have you been working on

When we started this research project, my job was to develop erosion prediction tools that had been started with Ag Research Service.

It ran on a PC.

And we found out very quickly they were really hard to use.

And in order to make it easier, we discovered

that we could actually run these models on the internet.

So we developed a number of internet tools and we are the lead agency in the world to do that.

Predicting erosion

I think the most interesting thing, the thing I'm proudest most

of is we developed an online interface to predict erosion so that people don't need to download erosion computer programs on their computer anymore.

They can go to a website.

They can predict erosion from road segments, from wildfire, hill slopes,

and most recently from watersheds that have either been disturbed by wildfire or watersheds

that have had some kind of management treatment on like thinning or prescribed fire. The models also will predict erosion and sedimentation on down through the stream channel system.

Slide erosion

I've always been interested in soil erosion.

When I was growing up in the midwest and we had--

there was erosion on the farm I was growing up on and my dad put in some conservation systems

and got an award one year for it, and I thought that was really cool, and I ended up pursuing it

as a career and fortunate enough to become involved

in this major erosion prediction development project back in the 1980s,

and it's stuck with me since then.