

Graduate Study in Recreation Resources Management (RRM)
Department of Environment and Society
College of Natural Resources
Utah State University

The Department of Environment and Society (ENVS) in the College of Natural Resources offers M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Recreation Resources Management for students wishing to study issues of wildland recreation management and science beyond the Bachelor's degree. Students choosing this degree program can prepare for careers with a state or federal agency that manages outdoor recreation settings, as a university faculty member with expertise in recreation resources management and research, as a researcher with a government agency or private consulting firm, as a professional with a non-profit organization involved in natural resources and environmental education, or as an outdoor recreation provider in the commercial sector.

We view outdoor recreation as a critical aspect of the broad relationship between human society and the natural environment. This broader view is reflected in our graduate courses and research. Graduate students in RRM will become familiar with a variety of natural resource land and water management issues, grounded in a specific social science discipline, and familiar with relevant research methods and statistical analyses. Students wishing to focus specifically on recreation issues may do so, but we also offer opportunities to focus on other social science aspects of natural resources management: e.g., measuring attitudes toward the environment; assessing social impacts of natural resource use; managing conflict or evaluating public involvement in decision making.

The M.S. degree requires a minimum of 30 credits beyond the baccalaureate and one of two thesis options: the Plan A requires students to complete a research thesis or the Plan B, which is a non-thesis, terminal degree based largely on course work and a professional paper or project. The Ph.D. degree requires a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate, a comprehensive written and oral examination, and a research dissertation.

To facilitate this emphasis on the human dimensions of natural resources and their management, our curriculum in Recreation Resources Management is quite flexible. The student, in conjunction with his/her major professor and graduate committee, builds a specific program of study. Typically students take courses not only in wildland recreation, but also in sociology, policy, research methods, and other social or natural sciences.

The Department of Environment and Society also offers graduate certificates in both the National Environmental Policy Act through the Natural Resources and Environmental Policy Program, and in Natural Resources and Environmental Education through the Natural Resources and Environmental Education Program. Completion of these graduate certificate programs can augment a student's preparedness for specific career interests.

Courses offered within the RRM graduate degree program include:

ENVS 5110—Environmental Education

Covers teaching about natural resources and the environment, and using the environment and natural world to teach other subjects, with a strong emphasis on participation and on practicing teaching methods in both formal and non-formal settings. (Spring Semester; 3 credits)

ENVS 6000—Theoretical Foundations in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment

Focuses on balancing science and social values in ecosystem management and decision-making. Topics include environmental justice, communication and behavior change strategies, landscape perception and attitudes, sociology of resource-dependent communities, and conflict management. (Fall Semester; 3 credits)

ENVS 6130—Policy and Planning Aspects of Wildland Recreation

Examines the historical, legal, political, and economic bases for wildland recreation, and the relationship between outdoor recreation and natural resource-based tourism. Topics include: philosophies of natural resources management; policy formation and implementation; planning aspects, the federal land management agencies; wilderness; state recreation resources; outdoor recreation supply and demand, participation and trends; economic issues; and sustainable development. (Spring Semester; 3 credits)

ENVS 6400—Ecological Aspects of Wildland Recreation

Assesses current knowledge and knowledge gaps concerning impacts of wildland recreation on wildlife, plants, soil, and water resources and processes. Examines strategies for coexistence of recreation visitors and non-human ecosystem elements. (Offered every other Spring Semester; 3 credits)

ENVS 6500—Behavioral Aspects of Wildland Recreation

Social and psychological analysis of visitor behavior in wildland recreation settings. Sources of recreation management problems and practical and theoretical basis for management practices. (Fall Semester; 3 credits)

ENVS 6600—Advanced Natural Resources Interpretation

Examines the planning processes, techniques, and evaluation procedures for using information and education to influence human behavior and increase benefits to visitors in natural settings, and also focuses on the leadership of teams involved in producing interpretive plans and materials. (Fall Semester; 3 credits)

ENVS 6700—Research Approaches in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment

Experience conceptualizing and prioritizing research problems involving human societies, natural resources and the environment. Reviews approaches for creating and testing interdisciplinary hypotheses pertaining to human-ecosystem interactions. Explores methods for integrating social and biophysical data.

ENVS 6900—Natural Resources-Based Tourism (Special Topics)

Examines the role of natural resource-based tourism in relation to wildland recreation focusing on a variety of topics including: positive and negative impacts to the local society, economy, and environment; issues; and trends. Opportunity to become familiar with and utilize the literature related to natural resources-based tourism. (Offered every other Spring Semester; 3 credits)

Core Faculty

Dr. Steve Burr, Associate Professor; Office BNR 289; (435) 797-7094; steve.burr@usu.edu

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Faculty Instructors

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Ms. Barbara Middleton, Instructor, Office NR 240; (435) 797-0151; middleton.bam@gmail.com

For further information on Graduate Study in Recreation Resources Management (RRM) contact any of our core faculty listed above or the Department of Environment and Society, Utah State University, 5215 Old Main Hill, Logan, Utah 84322-5215; Telephone (435) 797-1790; ENVS Website at <http://www.cnr.usu.edu/envs/>.