

NATURAL RESOURCES (NR)

Degree Offered: M.S., Certificate

This program is offered in Durham.

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment offers a Master of Science program that provides advanced, research-based study in the ecology, biogeochemistry, economics, policy, and management of vital natural resources, including water, soil, forests, wildlife, and agricultural crops. Students take an interdisciplinary approach to their research and use the tools of the natural and social sciences, including geospatial methods, to make fundamental and significant contributions toward local, regional, and global sustainability.

Students are supported by a highly productive and internationally recognized faculty, outstanding laboratory facilities, and a diversity of accessible terrestrial, marine, and freshwater field sites. Research conducted by faculty and graduate students has resulted in UNH being ranked second of 316 North American institutions in scholarly contributions to the field of ecology.

Possible career trajectories are diverse. Some graduates pursue private sector environmental and social science consulting. Others seek positions in planning, environmental protection, research, or resource management with federal or state agencies (e.g., NOAA, USDA, EPA, NRCS), private industry, or with non-governmental organizations. Graduates from the environmental economics option may also find careers in agribusiness or banking. Graduates may choose to pursue advanced study at the doctoral level.

Students may choose to specify one of six options:

NATURAL RESOURCES: Ecosystem Science

Students in the Ecosystem Science option typically have a strong background in environmental science, earth science, ecology, or related fields. Areas of interest include the ecology, microbiology and biogeochemistry of soils, groundwaters, and surface waters, with an emphasis on how the different components of an ecosystem interact to produce system-level responses to management, global change, and other perturbations. Understanding controls on carbon storage, nutrient transformations, water quality, soil health and greenhouse gas emissions is central to much of the research conducted by students in this option.

Natural Resources: Environmental Conservation and Sustainability

Students in the Environmental Conservation and Sustainability option typically have a BS/BA degree or strong background in environmental and natural resource sciences with a keen interest in combining the natural sciences with the social sciences. Those without this background may be accepted upon completion of some additional fundamental courses. Areas of interest include natural resource policy, conservation biology, sustainability, ecological ethics and values, international environmental affairs, and spatial data analysis (remote sensing and GIS).

Natural Resources: Environmental Economics

Most entering students have a BA/BS in economics or environmental/agricultural economics. Incoming students should have, at a minimum, coursework in intermediate microeconomic theory, econometrics, and calculus. Areas of interest include agricultural economics, community

and regional economics, land economics, water economics, and environmental economics.

Natural Resources: Forestry

Students in the Forestry option typically have an undergraduate degree in forestry or natural resource management. These degrees are specifically designed to meet the accreditation standards of a professional society. Those without this background may need to complete some additional coursework as part of their MS program. Areas of interest include forest resource economics and management, biometrics/measurements, forest health, forest ecosystem dynamics, and spatial data analysis (remote sensing and GIS).

Natural Resources: Wildlife and Conservation Biology

The MS option in Wildlife and Conservation Biology is typically pursued by those with a BS in Wildlife, Biology, Zoology, Environmental Studies, or related field. Research often takes an integrated field-laboratory approach to study population ecology and conservation, community and landscape ecology, conservation biology and genetics, and applied wildlife management issues.

Natural Resources and the Environment

The Natural Resources and the Environment option is available to students whose research interests and program of study do not align well with one of the five discipline-specific options.

Admission Requirements

Prior to submitting an application, applicants should contact one or more graduate faculty advisors to discuss programs and funding, and secure a commitment of a faculty member to serve as graduate advisor.

Applicants are expected to have completed either an undergraduate degree in the field in which they plan to specialize or show adequate preparation in the basic support courses of the field. Students with good undergraduate records who lack a background in a particular field may be admitted to a program, provided they are prepared to correct any deficiencies. All entering students must have taken at least one basic statistics course. Applicants have the option to submit current scores (within five years) from the general test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). GRE scores are not required.

Students entering the forestry option may elect to develop concentrations within any of the above-listed areas. Applicants are expected to have backgrounds in forestry or related biological sciences. Students interested in ecosystem science are required to have adequate preparation in chemistry and mathematics as well as biological or Earth sciences. Students interested in wildlife and conservation biology are expected to have adequate preparation in biological sciences, chemistry, and mathematics. Students interested in environmental conservation and sustainability should have a background appropriate for their area of interest. Since environmental conservation and sustainability covers such a broad area, applicants are always reviewed carefully on an individual basis.

Students interested in environmental economics should have a background in both economics and the environment. Four or more undergraduate courses in economics or environmental economics, including intermediate microeconomics and intermediate macroeconomics, are required as well as calculus and statistics.

A Cooperative Doctoral Program

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment participates in the Natural Resources and Earth System Science Ph.D. Program (NRESS), an interdepartmental degree offered at UNH. For further details on this program, please visit the NRESS program page.

<https://colsa.unh.edu/natural-resources-environment>

Programs

- [Ecological Genomics \(Graduate Certificate\)](#)
- [Natural Resources and the Environment \(M.S.\)](#)
- [Natural Resources: Ecosystem Science \(M.S.\)](#)
- [Natural Resources: Environmental Conservation and Sustainability \(M.S.\)](#)
- [Natural Resources: Environmental Economics \(M.S.\)](#)
- [Natural Resources: Forestry \(M.S.\)](#)
- [Natural Resources: Wildlife and Conservation Biology \(M.S.\)](#)

Courses

Natural Resources (NR)

NR 803 - Watershed Water Quality Management

Credits: 4

Principles of land use as they relate to water quality and quantity. Lectures focus on biogeochemical cycles and the watershed approach to land and water resource management. Labs and field trips focus on methods of water sampling and analysis. One year of chemistry is recommended. Lab/field trips.

Equivalent(s): WARM 803

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

Special Fee: Yes

NR 806 - Soil Ecology

Credits: 4

Examines the ecological relationships between soil microorganisms and their biotic and abiotic environment, with emphasis on the role of soil microorganisms in biogeochemical cycling. Specific objectives are to examine the biodiversity present in soil systems, factors controlling microbial community composition and diversity, and linkages between soil microbial communities, soil physical properties, and soil organic matter and nutrient cycling dynamics. Lab.

Equivalent(s): SOIL 806

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

Special Fee: Yes

NR 807 - Environmental Modeling

Credits: 4

Environmental Modeling introduces students to a range of key mathematical and computer modeling concepts and the ways they can be used to address important scientific questions. The course is divided into four topical sections: Population and Community Ecology, Hydrology, Biogeochemistry, and Ecosystems. In each section, modeling concepts and skills are presented together with environmental information to emphasize the linkage between quantitative methods and relevant scientific results.

Equivalent(s): EOS 807

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

NR 808 - Environmental Economics

Credits: 4

Environmental pollution, the market economy, and optimal resource allocation; alternative control procedures; levels of environmental protection and public policy; property right issues.

Equivalent(s): RECO 808

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

NR 820 - International Environmental Politics and Policies for the 21st Century

Credits: 4

Students examine policies for managing human activities to sustain the health of regional ecosystems and planetary life-support systems. Selected problems of the international commons (oceans, marine resources, atmosphere, migratory species); global and regional carrying capacity (population, resource consumption), internationally shared ecosystems (trans-boundary watersheds, water-bodies, tropical forests); and the relevant international institutions and politics for policy formation, conflict resolution, and implementation. Using a policy-analytic framework, students develop case studies to assess international policies and institutional arrangements to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21–Earth Summit Strategy to Save the Planet.

Equivalent(s): EC 820

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

NR 824 - Resolving Environmental Conflicts

Credits: 4

Theories and practices of environmental dispute settlement. Roles of public, non-governmental and governmental organizations. Effectiveness of public participation initiatives in influencing public policy decisions and/or resolving environmental conflicts. Alternative approaches to consensus (policy dialogues, joint problem solving; strategic planning; negotiation, mediation) as well as litigation. Specific cases are critiqued and evaluated; conflict resolution skills are developed. Students observe and/or participate in ongoing local decision processes. Lab.

Equivalent(s): EC 824

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

Special Fee: Yes

NR 829 - Silviculture

Credits: 4

The science and art of establishing, growing, and tending forests to meet multiple objectives. Basics of forest stand dynamics applied to the problems of timber management, wildlife habitat, water quality, and carbon sequestration.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

Special Fee: Yes

NR 830 - Terrestrial Ecosystems

Credits: 4

Processes controlling the energy, water, and nutrient dynamics of terrestrial ecosystems; concepts of study at the ecosystem level, controls on primary production, transpiration, decomposition, herbivory; links to Earth-system science, acid deposition, agriculture.

Equivalent(s): EOS 830

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

NR 831 - Agriculture and Environmental Change: Challenges and Solutions**Credits:** 4

Agriculture is the foundation of civilization, providing the food, fuel and fiber needed to sustain a growing human population. From the original land clearing to today, agriculture has profoundly impacted the environment and is now recognized as a major contributor to soil and water degradation and climate change. At the same time, climate change and other large-scale environmental changes are forcing adaptation of agricultural practices. This course examines interactions between agricultural systems and global environmental processes, including climate change, carbon cycling, nitrogen pollution and water resources. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of how agricultural practices contribute to environmental changes from local to global scales and the underlying biogeochemical drivers of change. We will evaluate frameworks like agroecology, regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, and climate-smart agriculture for their potential to mitigate environmental impacts. Students will learn to apply interdisciplinary thinking to develop solutions that balance crop productivity and environmental sustainability in a changing world. The course emphasizes biogeochemical understanding across spatial and temporal scales and couples to agroecosystem management frameworks to consider solutions.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 834 - Tropical Ecology****Credits:** 4

This course introduces students to the ecology of different tropical ecosystems, and involves students in analyzing and interpreting ecological field data and remotely sensed data. An important emphasis is to understand patterns and processes across scales - from individual plants to ecosystems and landscapes. The also addresses important global issues in the tropics, including climate change, land use change, diverse ecosystem services, and sustainable resource management. Completion of a general ecology course is required prior to taking this course.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 840 - Inventory and Monitoring of Ecological Communities****Credits:** 4

Provides an introduction to the major concepts associated with monitoring change in ecological communities. Students develop an appreciation for such issues as: identification of appropriate baselines for comparison; use of indicator species; the tools used to inventory common, rare, and secretive species; how trend data are analyzed; and the implications of failing to detect an indicator species. Restricted to senior wildlife majors others by permission. Lab.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**NR 843 - Addressing Arctic Challenges I****Credits:** 4

Students will gain knowledge on the effect of climate change on Arctic environmental, social, and built systems, and apply transdisciplinary approaches to addressing arctic challenges. This course employs inquiry-based, peer-to-peer, and self-driven approaches. Students will tackle a research project, including in-depth data analysis in R, with the aim of contributing new knowledge in the form of a proposal, peer-reviewed publication, policy brief, outreach product, or other.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 844 - Biogeochemistry****Credits:** 4

Examines the influence of biological and physical processes on elemental cycling and geochemical transformations from the molecular to the global scale, involving microorganisms, higher plants and animals and whole ecosystems; factors that regulate element cycles including soils, climate, disturbance and human activities; interactions among the biosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and atmosphere; transformations of C, N, S, and trace elements.

Equivalent(s): EOS 813, EOS 844**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**NR 845 - Forest Management****Credits:** 4

Forest land ownership; management objectives; forest inventory regulation and policy; forest administration; professional responsibilities and opportunities. Restricted to Natural Resources majors. Lab.

Equivalent(s): FOR 845**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**NR 849 - Forest Inventory and Modeling****Credits:** 4

Applied sampling and statistical techniques for assessing current forest conditions and predicting future growth, yield, and structure. Topics include plot and point sampling, ecological inventory, and evaluation of site quality and stand density.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**NR 851 - Aquatic Ecosystems****Credits:** 4

Energy flow and nutrient cycling in streams, rivers and lakes, with an emphasis on understanding the control of primary productivity, decomposition and community structure by both hydrologic and biotic drivers. Role of aquatic ecosystems in carbon and nitrogen budgets at watershed, regional, and global scales. Impacts of environmental changes such as global climate change and suburbanization on aquatic ecosystems. Lab.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 857 - Remote Sensing of the Environment****Credits:** 4

Practical and conceptual presentation of the use of remote sensing and other geospatial technologies for mapping and monitoring the environment. This course begins with the use of aerial photographs (photogrammetry, and photo interpretation) and includes measures of photo scale and area, parallax and stereo viewing, object heights, flight planning, photo geometry, the electromagnetic spectrum, camera systems and vegetation/land cover mapping. The course concludes with an introduction to other geospatial technologies including digital image analysis, global positioning (GPS), and geographic information systems (GIS). Conceptual lectures are augmented with practical homework assignments and hands-on lab exercises. Lab.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes

NR 859 - Digital Image Processing for Natural Resources**Credits:** 4

Introduction to digital remote sensing, including multispectral scanners (Landsat and SPOT) radar, and thermal imagery. Hands-on image processing including filtering, image display, ratios, classification, registration, and accuracy assessment. GIS as it applies to image processing. Discussion of practical applications. Use of ERDAS image-processing software. Knowledge of PCs required.

Prerequisite(s): NR 857 with a minimum grade of B-.**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**NR 860 - Geographic Information Systems in Natural Resources****Credits:** 4

This course in geographic information systems (GIS), covers advanced theory, concepts, and applications of GIS for natural resource and related disciplines. Discussion of database structures, data sources, spatial data manipulation/analysis/modeling, data quality and assessment. Students conduct a project of their design exploring aspects of GIS most useful to them. Lecture emphasizes concepts and applications through a text and selected peer-reviewed articles. Lab uses the latest version of ArcGIS software and provides hands-on experience.

Prerequisite(s): NR 658 with a minimum grade of D-.**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**NR 861 - Environmental Soil Chemistry****Credits:** 4

Chemical transformations in soils are the basis for soil fertility and plant productivity in natural and managed ecosystems, and also influence key ecosystem processes including soil organic matter turnover and soil-atmosphere exchange of trace gases. This class will explore soil chemistry processes and transformations related to soil nutrient cycling, plant nutrient acquisition, and other critical environmental services.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 881 - Agroforestry****Credits:** 4

This course introduces students to the principles and practice of agroforestry—the integration of trees with crops and/or livestock to provide multiple benefits. Students gain knowledge of Indigenous and modern agroforestry systems, their global distribution and characteristics, the scientific principles underlying interactions between trees, crops, and livestock, and their management to optimize benefits. Students explore the potential for agroforestry to serve as a climate-smart, sustainable strategy for enhancing food production and ecosystem services, and gain practical field experience in designing agroforestry systems appropriate for New England.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**NR 882 - Forest Health****Credits:** 4

Forests cover over 30% of the land surface of the Earth and are incredibly important ecologically, economically, and to the health of the planet. While forests show great capacity to withstand disturbance, these ecosystems are increasingly threatened worldwide by climate change, native and introduced insects and disease, poor management practices, land clearing, drought, fire, and pollution. This course offers an overview of the dominant threats to forests, their causes and consequences, and options for monitoring, management, and mitigation.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**NR 887 - Advanced Topics in Sustainable Energy****Credits:** 4

This course will engage students in advanced topics in sustainable energy. Course reviews basic structure of our energy system, energy markets and economics, and the environmental, economic and technological of our energy landscape. Focus will be on electricity and building use with introductions to the transportation system. Students will gain the knowledge to evaluate innovations in technology, policy and financing necessary to implement sustainable energy goals from conservation and efficiency to renewables and energy storage.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**NR 899 - Master's Thesis****Credits:** 1-10

Master's Thesis. Usually 6 credits, but up to 10 credits when the problem warrants.

Repeat Rule: May be repeated for a maximum of 10 credits.**Grade Mode:** Graduate Credit/Fail grading**NR 900 - Teaching Assistantship Practicum****Credits:** 0

This course covers best practices, norms, and expectations in performing the duties of a teaching assistant. Strategies for effective grading, communication with students and instructors, and institutional policies are explored and reinforced.

Grade Mode: Graduate Credit/Fail grading**NR 903 - Approach to Research****Credits:** 2

Provides incoming graduate students with an overview of the scientific method, peer review, and various research approaches and methods. Ethics, institutional and individual responsibilities, and effective communication are also addressed in a seminar and discussion format.

Grade Mode: Graduate Credit/Fail grading**NR 905 - Grant Writing****Credits:** 2

The ability to secure financial support for research and outreach activities is becoming increasingly important. This course is intended for graduate and post-graduate level students who need to write proposals for their graduate work or to gain external funding from government agencies. Students will gain in-depth understanding of the proposal writing process through class discussions, insights shared by UNH faculty, and by writing a research proposal following the entire process.

Equivalent(s): SOIL 905, WARM 905**Grade Mode:** Graduate Credit/Fail grading**NR 909 - Analysis of Ecological Communities and Complex Data****Credits:** 4

This course introduces you to a suite of tools appropriate for analyzing and interpreting multivariate data arising from agroecological (and other ecological) research. In this course we cover a variety of multivariate analyses, including clustering, ordination (principle components analysis, nonmetric multidimensional scaling, correspondence analysis), group comparisons (multi-response permutation procedures, PerMANOVA, indicator species analysis, discriminant analysis, mantel test), and other hypothesis-driven techniques, including structural equation modeling.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

NR 911 - Natural and Environmental Resource Management**Credits:** 4

Fundamental economic, aesthetic, and ethical principles involved in the management of natural resources. Ways to apply these principles in the formulation and evaluation of resource management policies, including the management of specific renewable resources, soils, water, forests, and wildlife. (Offered every other year.)

Equivalent(s): RAM 911**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**NR 913 - Hierarchical Modeling in Ecology****Credits:** 4

This course uses modern Bayesian statistical modeling approaches to analyze ecological data, with an emphasis on applied hierarchical models. These models will be used to examine ecological systems and related topics including: population and community dynamics, experimental design, spatial patterns, species abundance and diversity, community organization, metapopulations, and landscape processes. To be successful in the course students should have taken a course in statistics and have working knowledge of the R programming language.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 914 - Data Analysis for Natural Resources and Ecology****Credits:** 4

Principles and practices of data analysis, with application to experimental and observational studies. Topics include study design, exploration of data, principles of statistical inference, statistical hypothesis testing, and approaches to model selection.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 947 - Ecosystem Science: Theory, Practice, and Management Applications for Sustainability****Credits:** 4

This course is designed for graduate students to explore in detail the fundamental principles and practical application of ecosystem science. Emphasis will be placed on understanding historical context as well as the most recent peer-reviewed literature. Writing assignments will emphasize local, regional, and international applications of ecosystem science to address environmental sustainability.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 965 - Community Ecology****Credits:** 4

This course investigates how community properties -- species richness, and abundance distribution -- are influenced by evolutionary history, landscape phenomena such as dispersal and migration, and local factors such as the physical environment, disturbance, competition, predation, and positive interactions. Mechanistic models of community dynamics, including succession, are discussed. The influence of species diversity on ecosystem function is discussed, and all aspects of the course are related to conservation science.

Equivalent(s): NR 865**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**NR 977 - Just Maps: Cartographies of Environmental Justice****Credits:** 4

Maps are ubiquitous. We carry them in our pockets, hang them on walls. We use maps to orient ourselves and rely on them to make meaning of social-environmental information. But whose space and time do maps employ? How do maps construct knowledge and to what social and political ends? What power dynamics do maps reflect and how do they become powerful themselves? This course explores such questions with focus on environmental in/justice. Completion of a GIS/Mapping course required prior to taking this course.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 993 - Natural and Environmental Resources Seminar****Credits:** 2

Presentation and discussion of recent research, literature, and policy problems in the natural and social sciences influencing resource use.

Grade Mode: Graduate Credit/Fail grading**NR 995 - Investigations****Credits:** 1-4

Investigations in Natural Resources may include topics in environmental conservation, forestry, soil science, water resources, and wildlife management.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**NR 996 - Natural Resource Education****Credits:** 2

Responsibilities include set-up, teaching, and grading of one lab section per week or equivalent lecture experience. Meets the teaching requirement for M.S. degree students.

Grade Mode: Graduate Credit/Fail grading**NR 998 - Directed Research****Credits:** 1-4

Student designs and conducts original research that culminates in a paper of publishable quality. Alternative to NR 899 for those choosing non-thesis degree option. IA (continuous grading).

Repeat Rule: May be repeated for a maximum of 4 credits.**Grade Mode:** Graduate Credit/Fail grading

Faculty

[Natural Resources and the Environment Department Faculty](#)