

Students Afield!

Natural Resources Management 290



Students at Bodenbug Butte near Palmer during the 2002 field trip. From left to right: Svein Harald Sonderland, Jørn Magne Foreland, Maggie Rogers, Andrea Facio, Tasmia Parker, and Matt Neville. Photos by Jeff Werner

The field course Resources Management Issues at High Latitudes, NRM 290, gives students a close-up look at specific natural resources in Alaska during a ten-day trip around the state, with stops and activities at significant resource locales. Last spring the field course participants traveled to the Kenai Peninsula and back to Fairbanks.

“It is one of the few, if not the only course, where students can meet in the field with professionals in many resource areas, many who are movers and shakers in their area of expertise,” said David Valentine, professor of forest soils.

“I thought it was fun. It was interesting and I learned a lot more than I thought I would,” said Tia Callison, a senior who took the field course in 2000.

For completing the ten-day trip and the associated coursework, students receive two credit hours. Grades are based on a daily trip journal that discusses the highlighted management issues, a discussion paper on one aspect of resource management covered during the trip, and an instructor evaluation of the student’s participation and contributions.

All natural resource management majors are required to complete NRM 290, which is designed to provide a broad perspective on resource management issues and to enhance understanding of how resource management relates to environmental, social, and economic issues in the state.

Accompanied by participating faculty, expeditors, and a staff assistant, they travel by bus or vans, stopping along the way to visit commercial and public enterprises based on natural resources.

“The course is an intensive educational experience,” said Deb Segla, the staff member who coordinates the course and handles the logistics. “It is interesting to see students and professors interact with each other as they handle the demanding schedule, miles of travel, and sometimes spartan living conditions.”

During their stops, students participate in on-site analyses of resource management needs, opportunities, and conflicts in various industries: agriculture, forestry, mining, seafood, petroleum, recreation and tourism. Because the course varies somewhat from year to year, it may be repeated with the instructor’s permission. To help offset the cost of travel and board, students pay a materials fee of \$175. The course is open to students of junior standing who have a three-point grade average. Faculty rotate responsibility for and participation in the class.

NRM 290 Itinerary

The field trips vary from year to year, but this itinerary for the 2003 class is typical. The trip ran from 12 May to 21 May.

MONDAY: FAIRBANKS TO DELTA JUNCTION

Topics: bank stabilization and agricultural history, greenhouse management, sport fishing (Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game), creek management, dairy farming and management, wildlife and agriculture interactions, and agricultural research.

Stops: Rika's Roadhouse, Nickay's Green-

house and Truck Farm, Clearwater River, Clear Creek Campground, Dennis Green and Son's pellet mill, Northern Lights Dairy, the Clearwater Watershed Project, the Dept. of Fish and Game bison range, and the AFES mile 1408 Delta Field Research Site.

TUESDAY: DELTA JUNCTION TO PALMER

Topics: fire management, reclamation and conservation on military lands (Alaska Fire Service), climate and glaciers, geology, changing land use, wildlife viewing area, pipeline design and earthquake damage, the fish hatchery process, problems on the Gulkana River (BLM), and research protocol development.

Stops: Fort Greely, Black Rapids Glacier, Sheep Mountain (wild sheep viewing area), Trans-Alaska Pipe-line at Denali fault pull-off, Gulkana River Hatchery, Glenallen BLM office, and UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm laboratory facilities.



Above: Cary de Wit at Tom Williams' reindeer farm at Palmer during the 2002 field trip.



Top left: Plants in a commercial greenhouse at P & M Gardens.



Middle left: Glacier in Kenai Fjords seen from the ship during the 2003 tour.



Bottom left: Students lunching at the Alaska railroad's headquarters in Anchorage during the 2002 trip.

At Right: Hatchery tanks seen on the tour of the Quetekchak Shellfish Hatchery, during the 2003 field trip.



WEDNESDAY: PALMER TO KENAI PENINSULA

Topics: a self-guided nature tour; visitor centers, early history of Russians in Alaska and Alaska economy, natural resource issues, and commercial fisheries issues.

Stops: Bird Point, Kenai Visitor Center, Russian Orthodox Church, Tesoro Refinery, and visit with set net fisherman.

THURSDAY: KENAI PENINSULA COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO HOMER

Topics: resource management issues (Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game), harbormaster viewpoint, charter boat captain (sport fishing industry) perspectives, the administration's new directions, learning center facility overview.

Stops: Clam Gulch, Deep Creek, Homer harbor and the ice plant, Katchemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Kenai Peninsula Learning Center, Moose Pass.

FRIDAY: KENAI PENINSULA LEARNING CENTER AREA

Topics: state and private forestry (USDA Forest Service, Seward Ranger District), effects of recreational land use, birch bark beetle damage, forest management, moose habitat management, fish ladder visit, shell-

Right: Commercial fishing boats in Seward, Alaska, 2003.



fish and fisheries management.

Stops: Russian River Campground, Juneau Creek, Cooper Creek Campground, Quartz Creek Campground, visit to moose exclosures, Tern Lake, Qutekchak Shellfish Hatchery, Seward Fisheries, and Exit Glacier.

SATURDAY: LEARNING CENTER AT MOOSE PASS TO SEWARD

Topic: resource use for the tourism industry.

Stops: Kenai Fjords National Park boat tour, then travel to Birchwood Camp.

SUNDAY: BIRCHWOOD CAMP NEAR ANCHORAGE

Topics: commercial greenhouse operation, visit to trailhead (Dept. of Natural Resources state park ranger).

Stops: PM Gardens, Eagle River Campground and Flat Top Mountain trailhead, Eagle River Nature Center (or Thunderbird Falls).

MONDAY: ANCHORAGE DAY TRIP AND TRAVEL TO MEIER LAKE

Topics: Alaska Agricultural history, dairy operation, transportation, oil industry careers and issues, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) activities (panel of resource specialists), and turfgrass research.

Stops: Matanuska Maid Dairy, Alaska Railroad and Port of Anchorage, Ship Creek Park, British Petroleum Environmental Research Unit, BLM State Office, UAF Palmer Experiment Farm.

TUESDAY: MEIER LAKE TO DENALI PARK

Topics: Alaska soils, commercial organic farming (produce and beef), bison, elk, and muskox ranching, draft horses, and Denali Foundation research.

Stops: USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Arctic Organics farm, Wolverine Farms, Pitchfork Ranch, Windy Valley Farm, and Denali Park.

WEDNESDAY: DENALI PARK TO FAIRBANKS

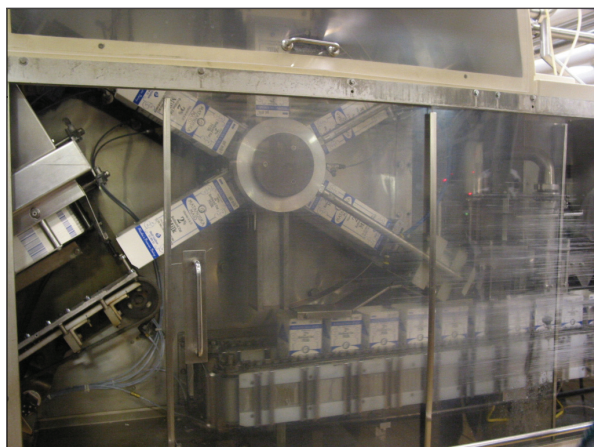
Topics: national park visitor usage and coal mining.

Stops: Denali National Park headquarters and visitor center, Usibelli Coal Mine, and return to Fairbanks.



Above: tanks of milk at the Matanuska Maid dairy, seen during a tour of the dairy in 2002.

Right and far right: assembly line packaging of the milk.



NRM 290 Student Information

Keep in mind that this is a field course. Pack your gear accordingly. Space will be tight so keep your luggage to a minimum, use internal frame backpacks or duffel bags if at all possible. We will be sleeping on the floor in classrooms at two colleges and one school. The other accommodations will be in rooms or cabins in commercial lodgings. Faculty, a graduate student expeditor, and staff assistants will be with the group for the full 10-day trip. We expect participation from everyone in loading and unloading, cooking and cleaning up after meals, keeping accommodations and vehicles clean. You are responsible for your own personal gear. Washers and dryers are not available.

Weather

We will be traveling from a continental climate zone (Fairbanks) where the weather is dry and possibly sunny to a maritime climate zone (Kenai Peninsula) where the weather is wet and often cold. Bring appropriate gear to accommodate changing climate conditions.

Bring the following:

Necessities:

- Sleeping bag and pad
- Towel, wash clothe & soap
- Personal water bottle
- Warm clothes for layering
- Rain gear
- Hats and gloves
- Shoes for walking (trails and city)
- Interior frame pack or duffel bag – NO exterior frame packs
- Ziplock or plastic bags
- Notebook and writing materials
- Good appetite
- Sense of humor

Recommended:

- Camera, film, binoculars

Optional:

- Small tape recorder, cell phone, CDs

Not recommended:

- Laptops – we are not responsible for damages.
- Instructors will have 1-2 available if needed.



Meals and Other Expenditures

You will be responsible for paying for restaurant meals. All will be at moderate to low priced restaurants. At some of our stops there will be opportunities to purchase books, supplies, souvenirs, and miscellaneous items. Plan to bring **at least** \$100 in cash with you. Not all vendors take credit cards or checks and opportunities for cash machine access are few.

Notification to Instructors:

Notify instructors of food allergies/special needs, medical or other special requests in advance. Reasonable requests can be accommodated. We carry first aid kits and cell phones in case of an emergency.

Additional Comments

- Absolutely no drugs, alcohol or firearms are allowed on university-sponsored trips.
- Most overnight stops are non-smoking facilities, as are vehicles.
- Instructors are responsible for your safety and are authorized to send students home early, at student expense, if violations occur that warrant such action.
- All students must stay with the group. Temporarily leaving the field trip individually is not permitted.
- Appropriate dress, attitude and daily hygiene are very important since you will be meeting with prospective employers and industry representatives.

