

Natural Resources and Environmental Issues

Volume 9 *University Education in Natural Resources*

Article 35

2002

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Recommended Citation

Baker, F. A. and Shaw, J. (2002) "Developing a field experience for natural resource majors," *Natural Resources and Environmental Issues*: Vol. 9 , Article 35.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/nrei/vol9/iss1/35>

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DEVELOPING A FIELD EXPERIENCE FOR NATURAL RESOURCE MAJORS

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ABSTRACT: Conversion from quarters to semesters allowed us to reinvent the field experience for College of Natural Resource majors. The new field experience strives to teach students the fundamental measurement skills needed for a summer job and to provide field experience and opportunities for teamwork. “Camp” operates for four weeks following spring semester, allowing students time to obtain summer jobs with university, state, and federal employers, which capitalize on students’ newly acquired field skills. The modular curriculum focuses on breadth of skills and uses technology to integrate them. Topics include map and compass, GPS, GIS, soil science, wildlife measurements, basic ecology, disturbance ecology, stream and watershed measurements, social and biophysical recreation measurements, plant identification and forest inventory methods. Students maintain journals and document their experiences using digital photography. Students spend the last four days in a self-guided resource data collection exercise that ranges from traditional timber surveys to stream assessments to recreational user surveys. Students analyze their data, and present their results to peers and CNR faculty in a PowerPoint presentation complete with ArcView maps and digital images of their study area.