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BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM IN NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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Since 1991, the School of Agriculture and Land Resources Management has offered a 10-day field trip to Natural Resources Management majors at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. This trip is currently a 2-credit requirement for NRM majors. The course is titled Resource Management Issues at High Latitudes, with scheduled visits to federal, state and local resource management agencies, as well as private forest product, and agricultural enterprises. The course has enroll successfully and attracts non-majors as well.

“Resource Management Planning”, an undergraduate course and “Resource Planning: Principles and Practices”, a graduate course, involve community interaction with current issues and projects. Students develop team reports and make presentations to community representatives.

Other NRM courses have implemented distance delivery technology as optional and required components of semester-long courses. Course evaluations and formal senior exit interviews indicate off-campus experiences are positive and integral in completing formal college curricula. Faculty and staff support for off-campus experiences is a key element in providing a successful course to students. Dependable logistic support is necessary for scheduling, transportation, board and room, and unpredictable circumstances. Academic rigor must be maintained in out of classroom situations, with course requirements outlined prior to trip departure.