

**Recreation Management Degree Program  
Nature Based Tourism Option  
SCHOOL OF FORESTRY, THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA**

<b>TITLE:</b>	Nature Based Tourism
<b>PRIMARY AUDIENCE:</b>	Undergraduate students in Recreation Management with an interest in the relationship between the private sector tourism industry and natural resource management. Focus on a cohort of 25-35 students annually.
<b>SECONDARY AUDIENCE:</b>	Business and environmental studies undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, tourism industry, and citizens of the region.
<b>OUTCOMES:</b>	<p>Undergraduate option conferred upon graduates after completion of all requirements;</p> <p>Integrated and advanced knowledge of social, cultural, political, environmental and economic contexts surrounding tourism in a natural resources setting.</p> <p>Marketable abilities in decision science, planning and management at the micro business level and the macro regional level, and recreation management with business and natural resources.</p>
<b>CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED:</b>	120

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**BACKGROUND**

The B.S. in Recreation Management in the School of Forestry on the campus of the University of Montana prepares students for professional positions developing and managing recreation and park resources located primarily beyond the urban fringe. The strategic plan of the Recreation Management degree program identifies the development of a new, interdisciplinary option in Nature Based Tourism, as a major programmatic response to fulfill the needs of the state related to the increasing demands on natural resources due to population growth and tourism visitation. Over the past several years members of the tourism industry have requested development of a bachelors degree program and this proposed option is one response to these requests.

Much of Montana's tourism industry directly depends on its natural environment, beautiful landscape and diverse wildlife. Therefore, this curriculum is designed to combine an understanding of social, cultural, political, environmental, and economic contexts surrounding tourism in a natural resource setting. Basic skills to participate in tourism planning and marketing at the individual business level and the broader community, regional, and state level will be gained. Students are trained to perform specialized tasks required to operate in a setting of both natural resource management and business operation. The curriculum combines a semester-based course format with experiential education and business/community/state planning and problem-solving experiences. Although it is presented as a package that will provide an academic option to undergraduate recreation management students at the University of Montana, it is intended to be a regional resource for cooperative learning and

problem solving. Course offerings will be at different levels within the undergraduate program and will allow some academic credit for graduate students. The curriculum provides opportunities for interaction between students, business owners, resource managers, and tourism professionals, providing valuable contacts for post-academic endeavors.

The nature based tourism option allows for an extension of the current recreation management degree in an appropriate setting and time. Much of the state's tourism, which has been growing at a steady rate for a decade, is natural resource and environment based. The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (located in the Montana Forest & Conservation Experiment Station within the School of Forestry) conducts research and outreach relating to tourism and will naturally contribute to this academic option. The nature based tourism option provides an opportunity for furthering the understanding of tourism issues related to Montana for students and industry people around the state.

## **PURPOSE**

The Nature Based Tourism option at The University of Montana will enrich research and learning opportunities for students, faculty, and residents of the state and region. The goal is to develop effective professional participants who successfully integrate tourism/business decisions with natural resource and economic concerns. Individuals who possess a greater understanding of the interrelationships between the natural environment and human/business communities will be more capable of managing natural resources while addressing the needs of the visitor through tourism businesses and planning.

## **CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION**

The Nature Based Tourism option will examine the interrelationships and interdependencies among recreation, tourism businesses and the management of natural resources. This recreation, natural resource, and business framework is a circular model of inputs and outcomes. The intersection of these major categories promotes an understanding of the varying societal and personal values people hold and how these values are distributed across different management conditions and decisions. An investigation of the dimension described as "recreation" fosters an appreciation of human behaviors and needs during leisure and touristic pursuits. It includes an examination of topics such as lifestyles, leadership, management and research. A study of natural resources provides an ecological focus to resource issues, concerns, and social values. It includes the sequence of courses providing an understanding of the basic ecological characteristics of recreational lands and their responses to various uses by recreation visitors. A focus on "business/economics" emphasizes functions within a small company needed for a successful operation of a nature based tourism business. It includes basic business concepts in finance, marketing, management, and economics. While the primary audience for nature based tourism is recreation management students, the courses offered are applicable to many students across campus, e.g. business students.

This framework allows the curriculum to advance toward an objective of interdisciplinary education. Knowledge building courses will revolve around compelling, timely, and inherently integrative themes that are tied to natural resources management (for example, concessionaire management within the National Park System). Within this theme, different intellectual traditions, such as the arts, humanities, and sciences, will be brought forward to demonstrate key historical and cultural relationships. Finally, applications of concepts in specific places will temper the expectations of theoretical approaches.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

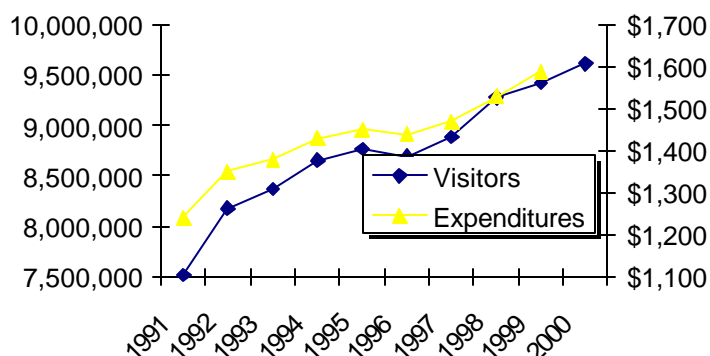
### i. MARKET DEMAND FOR GRADUATES

Tourism in Montana has been growing at an average 3% annual rate since 1990. In 1999, tourism generated \$1.59 billion in direct expenditures from 9.4 million travelers. These expenditures supported 29,900 jobs (5% of Montana jobs) with \$79 million in personal income and \$316 million in state and local tax revenues (ITRR, 2000). Within the Bureau of Census Mountain Region, tourism is forecast to grow at a 2.1% annual rate for the next three years (TIA 2000).

The Nature-based Tourism option capitalizes on the economic role that tourism currently plays in Montana. Almost half of Montana's tourism industry, which has been growing at a steady rate for over a decade, is natural resource based (Yuan and Moisey, 1991). Indeed the top attractions of Montana are the mountains, parks, rivers, and open space (ITRR 1997). In addition, growth of nature-based tourism is projected to outpace tourism in general (WTO 1997).

Figure 1. Tourism visits and total expenditures in Montana, 1990-2000.

Source: Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, The University of Montana.



### ii. EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

In 1999, tourism accounted for about 5% of total employment in Montana (ITRR 2000). Tourism-related employment in Montana is projected to grow an overall 3.2% per year over the next 5 years outpacing the overall Montana employment outlook of 2.2% (Montana Department of Labor and Industry, 2001).

In 2000, the Survey Research Center at the University of Wyoming surveyed tourism businesses within the region (MT, WY, CO, ID, and SD) to determine their perceptions of growth in the tourism industry, the employment and internship opportunities for college-graduates within their business, and the specific competencies that they seek for new employees.

Tourism employers within the region are quite confident that growth within the tourism industry will support the hiring of college-trained personnel. Fifty percent of Montana tourism businesses and 37% of regional tourism businesses reported that they would definitely hire college graduates within the next five years specifically for tourism related positions (Survey Research Center, University of Wyoming, 2000).

**Table 1. Ratings of new employee skills and competencies by Montana and regional tourism businesses.**

Competencies/skills	Mean Score*
Tourism planning/management?	2.01
Recreational activity?	2.04
Staff management/supervision?	2.26
Marketing/advertising?	2.36
Environmental/natural resources?	2.38
Computer/web authoring?	2.46
Economic development?	2.50
Financial/accounting?	2.52
Western culture?	2.58
Western history?	2.64
Lodging/hotel management?	2.92
Food/beverages skills?	3.11
Statistics/decision sciences	3.44
Nutrition/dietetics?	3.75
International/foreign language?	3.86

*Source: 2000 Wyoming Business Tourism Industry Survey, University of Wyoming.*

Scale 1=Very important to 5=Not at all important

The competencies elaborated within the curriculum for the Nature-based Tourism Option were developed based on researching other successful tourism programs in the US and specifically within the region. The competencies tourism businesses are looking for in college trained employees are incorporated within the proposed nature-based tourism option - tourism planning and management, recreation, staff management, marketing, and knowledge of the environment and natural resources (Table 1).

### iii. STARTING SALARIES

A 1993 study by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER 1993) identified the average salaries for those employed in Montana's tourism sector. The tourism sector is somewhat unique in that there is a larger proportion of small business ownership than compared with other economic sectors. Proprietors within the tourism sector in Montana averaged \$34,300 per year (CPI used to inflate to 2000 dollars). Average salaries for managers and administrators within the tourism sector were \$23,000 (CPI used to inflate to 2000 dollars).

### iv. SIMILAR REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Currently, there are no university-level tourism degrees or options offered within the state of Montana. Western Montana College of the University of Montana offers a two year Associate of Applied Science program in Tourism and Recreation.

The University of Idaho offers a B.S. degree in Resource Recreation and Tourism with a minor in "Tourism and Leisure Enterprises" within the College of Natural Resources. The University of Wyoming currently has no degree program in Tourism but does offer one class in tourism as part of the BS degree in Recreation through the Department of Geography and Recreation. Both the

University of Colorado (offers an area of emphasis in Tourism Management as part of the B.S. in Business Administration, College of Business) and Colorado State University (a concentration in tourism and commercial recreation as part of the B.S. in Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism, College of Natural Resources) offer undergraduate degrees in tourism. North Dakota State University offers a B.S. in Hotel, Motel, and Restaurant, Management within the College of Human Development and Education.

The Colorado State University and the University of Idaho programs are the most similar to the proposed nature-based tourism option. About 10% of the University of Idaho Resource Recreation and Tourism students also take the tourism minor. The Tourism and Commercial Recreation concentration at Colorado State University accounts for about 200 of the 350 undergraduate students within the Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism degree.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF OTHERS**

The Recreation Management degree program will be administered within the School of Forestry of The University of Montana - Missoula. Currently there are 118 undergraduates listed as majors in the Recreation Resources Management option of the B.S. in Recreation Management. The addition of the new option in Nature Based Tourism is likely to draw both new majors as well as allow some undergraduates to move from the Recreation Resources Management option. At present, the Coordinator of the Recreation Management program reports directly to the Dean of the School of Forestry.

The Western Montana College of the University of Montana offers a two year Associate of Applied Science program in Tourism and Recreation. An articulation agreement (2+2) is being developed to facilitate advising of students and efficient transfer of credits between WMC and UM-M.

## **ACCREDITATION**

The B.S. in Recreation Management, as well as the option in Recreation Resources Management, holds current accreditation by the National Recreation and Park Association / American Association for Leisure and Recreation, Council on Accreditation. This is the only accredited baccalaureate program in Recreation, Park Resources and Leisure Services in the State of Montana.

## **NATURE-BASED TOURISM CURRICULUM**

### **i. APPROACH**

First, students will have to meet the general education requirements of the University. Second, the Nature Based Tourism curriculum will be structured around the core requirements within Recreation Management and an additional series of business and tourism courses on the campus of The University of Montana. Courses and experiences will be of two basic forms. Initially, there will be knowledge building courses, designed to integrate multiple disciplines of recreation, natural resources and business. These courses will explore the background needed to understand the social, cultural, economic, political, and ecological implications of nature based tourism. The second type of educational experience is the semester-long internship requirement. Placements will be with an appropriate nature based tourism business or organization usually within a reasonable distance from the Missoula campus. The internships will be administered by the Recreation Management program faculty.

Course sequencing is highly important. There are three ordered phases within the curriculum: (1) Basic knowledge and skills; (2) Conceptual integration; (3) Applied experience (internship) and synthesis. The rationale for the phased structure is to ensure that a baseline of capabilities is

developed prior to the internship, and students will have a subsequent opportunity to evaluate their experiences in a formal, integrative course.

## ii. COURSEWORK

For the successful completion of the Nature Based Tourism option, students must acquire a basic understanding of recreation, ecological processes/natural resources management and, business/economics.

To develop a foundation in *recreation/tourism*, students must take the following courses:

Rec. Mgmt. 110S	Introduction to Recreation Management
Rec. Mgmt. 217	Wildland Recreation Management
Rec. Mgmt. 210*	Nature based Tourism (new course)
Rec. Mgmt. 230	Programming in Recreation
Rec. Mgmt. 370	Conservation of Wilderness, Wild Rivers & National Parks
Rec. Mgmt. 380*	Rec. Administration & Leadership
Rec. Mgmt. 450	Pre-Practicum Professional Preparation
Rec. Mgmt. 451*	Tourism and Sustainability (new course)
Rec. Mgmt. 460	Practicum in Recreation
Rec. Mgmt. 483*	Commercial Recreation, Marketing & Tourism
Rec. Mgmt. 486	Recreation Research & Program Evaluation

To develop a foundation in ecology and natural resource management, students must take the following courses:

Biology 103N	Diversity of Life & Biology 104N Diversity of Life Lab
Forestry 180	Introduction to Natural Resource Issues
Forestry 200	Natural Resources Measurement Camp
Forestry 210	Introduction to Soils
Forestry 330	Forest Ecology
Forestry 473	Collaboration in Natural Resource Decisions
Forestry 480	Project Design & Analysis

To develop a foundation in business/economics, students must take the following courses:

Economics 111S	Introduction to Micro -Economics
Bus. Admin. 201	Financial Accounting
Marketing 360	Marketing Principles
Marketing 362	Consumer Behavior

\* RECM 210, 380, 451, and 483

**Note:** RECM 210 and 451 combine basic principles of tourism/business with basic principles of ecology and natural resource management. RECM 380 and 483 expand on business principles and require projects in organizational behavior, budgeting, marketing, feasibility studies, and marketing plans. These four courses provide the desired combination of business and the environment.

## iii. INTERSHIPS AND ADVISING

Students will be offered internships in the offices of federal, state, or local government entities (supporting county-level planning efforts, for example); they may join non-governmental or private voluntary organizations; or they may work with independent businesses. Internship assignments will be focused in areas where nature based tourism is prevalent. Organizations that host student interns

must be able to demonstrate an apparent relationship with natural resource issues to be eligible. Internships may occur in either fall, spring, or summer semesters, although students will be required to have completed the core behaviors, basic skills courses prior to placement. Placements will be aligned with normal University of Montana procedures and the Recreation Management practicum program. RECM 460, Practicum in Recreation, is a 9 credit class taken at the same time as the final internship, and has a pre-requisite of 400 previous hours of professional work experience.

## **FACULTY AND STAFF REQUIREMENTS**

### **ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHING**

Participation by a diverse set of faculty members at The University of Montana is an essential ingredient of the Nature Based Tourism option. With this in mind, current courses offered to the entire campus community are used to build the knowledge base in business and natural resources. With the recent addition of a nature based tourism faculty member to the School of Forestry Recreation Management program, there should not be any additional instructional burden on current Recreation Management faculty. Similarly, internships are required of both the Nature Based Tourism students and Recreation Resources Management students, therefore administration of the internship program does not significantly increase the work-load of faculty. The need for new faculty is not anticipated over the initial five-year period.

While all Recreation Management faculty have the ability to advise Nature Based Tourism students, three of the faculty members (Drs. McCool, Nickerson, and Moisey) possess specific expertise in tourism. Each has taught tourism courses, has a good understanding of the needs of both students and industry, and is well suited to serve as an advisor to tourism students. These faculty also conduct research projects and graduate education in Nature Based Tourism. In addition, a teaching assistant will be involved with field trips, class projects, and other instructional activities. Full-time School of Forestry faculty who teach in Recreation Management degree programs are shown below. The first three will have primary involvement in the Nature-Based Tourism option.

- **Dr. Stephen F. McCool,**  
Professor, Recreation Management
- **Dr. Norma P. Nickerson,**  
Associate Professor; & Director - Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research
- **Dr. R. Neil Moisey,**  
Assistant Professor, Nature-based Tourism

Other full-time faculty who teach in the Recreation Management degree program :

- **Dr. William T. Borrie**  
Associate Professor & Coordinator, Recreation Management
- **Dr. Wayne A. Freimund**  
Arkwright Associate Professor of Wilderness Studies & Director - Wilderness Institute
- **Dr. Michael E. Patterson**  
Associate Professor, Human Dimensions of Recreation & Wildlife Management
- **Dr. Perry J. Brown**  
Professor & Dean, School of Forestry

## **CAPITAL OUTLAY, OPERATING EXPENDITURES, AND PHYSICAL FACILITIES**

Essentially, operating needs are to be met by current resources provided for majors in the present option in Recreation Management. Current expenditures are anticipated to be sufficient to cover the new Nature Based Tourism option. Financial resources formerly assigned to a Recreation Program

Services option (now fully eliminated) will shift to this option. Present library resources developed to meet the needs of the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, the University Travel Research Program, and current Recreation Management undergraduate and graduate students are adequate. No special or additional clinical, laboratory or computer equipment is anticipated to be needed. Existing facilities and space within the School of Forestry are sufficient to house this option.

### **EVALUATION OF PROPOSED PROGRAM**

The following faculty committees have reviewed and approved this Nature Based Tourism option to the Bachelor of Science, Recreation Management::

- School of Forestry, Academic Affairs Committee
- School of Forestry Faculty
- School of Business Administration, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
- UM, Professional Schools sub-committee, ASCRC
- UM, Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee
- UM, Faculty Senate

### **REQUIRED COURSES (RECOMMENDED COURSE SEQUENCING)** **Recreation Management Program** **Nature Based Tourism Option**

<b>First Year</b>							
<b>Fall</b>			<b>Cr.</b>	<b>Spring</b>			<b>Cr.</b>
ECON 111S	Intro. to Micro -Economics	3	SOC 110S	Principles of Sociology	3		
CHEM 151N	General Chemistry	3	BIO 103N	Diversity of Life	3		
RECM 110S	Intro. to Recreation Management	3	BIO 104N	Diversity of Life Lab	2		
ENEX 101W	Composition	3	FOR 180	Intro. to Natural Resource Issues	2		
MATH 117*	Probability & Linear Mathematics	3	General Education or Electives		4		
			<b>15</b>				<b>14</b>
<b>Summer</b>							
FOR 200	Natural Resource Camp	2					
<b>Second Year</b>							
<b>Spring</b>			<b>Fall</b>				
FOR 210	Introduction to Soils	3	RECM 217	Wildland Recreation Mgt.	3		
MATH 241*	Statistics	3	RECM 210	Nature Based Tourism	3		
FOR 220W	Technical Writing	2	BAD 201	Financial Accounting	3		
RECM 230	Programming in Recreation	3	COMM 111A	Public Speaking	2		
General Education or Electives		6	General Education or Electives		3		
			<b>17</b>				<b>14</b>



### Third Year

#### Spring

FOR 330	Forest Ecology	3
RECM 450	Pre-Practicum Professional Prep.	1
MKTG 360	Marketing Principles	3
General Education or Electives		6
		<b>13</b>

#### Fall

MKTG 362	Consumer Behavior	3
RECM 380	Rec. Admin. & Leadership	4
RECM 370	Cons. of Wilderness, Wild Rivers	3
General Education or Electives		3
		<b>13</b>

#### Summer

RECM 460	Practicum in Recreation	9
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### Fourth Year

#### Spring

FOR 473	Collaboration in Natural Res. Dec.	3
RECM 483	Comm. Rec., Mktg, Tourism	3
SOC 470	Society and Envir. [recommended]	3
General Education or Electives		3
		<b>12</b>

#### Fall

FOR 480	Project Design & Analysis	3
RECM 486	Rec. Research & Program Eval.	3
RECM 451	Tourism and Sustainability	3
General Education or Electives		3
		<b>12</b>

\* Course approved to meet mathematical and symbolic systems competency requirements.

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