

What can I do with a degree in...

# NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT?

## What is **NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT?**

The knowledge from a natural resource management degree will enable students to design sustainable solutions to address natural resource conservation and management problems.

Located in the heart of the southern Appalachians and surrounded by 6,000-foot peaks, national forests, national parks, and some of the highest biological diversity in the world, our program boasts a natural laboratory for hands-on teaching and learning. Few places can match Western Carolina's location for studying the protection and wise use of our natural resources.

## What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

**Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in  
Natural Resource Conservation and  
Management**

**Minor in Natural Resources Conser-  
vation and Management**

## Why study **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT?**

The NRCM program focuses on preparing students to evaluate forest, soil, and water conditions and to apply techniques used in the protection and restoration of terrestrial and aquatic systems, as well as prepares students for careers in the conservation and sustainable management of forested lands and the resources they support.



## What is the **ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Students declare a major in Natural Resources and Conservation Management with the Advising Center, located in Killian Annex. Please make an appointment with your advisor via your MyWCU or speak with a faculty advisor.

## What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Depending on your courses of study and other qualifications, our graduates are prepared to become a variety of professionals including educators, aquaculturalists, conservationists, crop production and pest managers, forester, forest recreationists, landscapers, researchers, wildlife officers, park rangers, and fishery technicians.

**NOTE:** Advanced degrees may be

required for some of the listed professions. Please see a Natural Resource advisor for more information.

## Who employs **NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT** graduates?

Our graduates gain employment with state and federal forest and wildlife management agencies, conservation organizations, forestry consulting firms, soil and water conservation districts, environmental consulting firms, and many other organizations.

# MAJOR MAP

**How to use this map:** Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

## 1st YEAR

## 2nd YEAR

### EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

Many first-year students in the Natural Resource Conservation and Management major will focus on introductory courses in the major. Students should take NRM 150, NRM 210, BIOL 150, and MATH 170 in their first semester. NRM 213, NRM 240 and BIOL 241 should be taken in students' second semester.

[Check out the 8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Students in their second year will continue with liberal studies electives and complete their core courses in the major. This second year, students should take CHEM 139 and NRM 255 in their first semester and GEOL 305 and NRM 351 in their second semester. Students can also be working on completing courses in any minor. [Check out the 8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

### GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.

Get involved with the Forestry and Wildlife Club.

If you are thinking about attending a graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required in graduate school admissions.

Engage deeper with [DegreePlus](#); choose an additional competency to complete

### BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Spark Award](#), a program aimed to encourage students to be connected with their community.

Job shadow with professionals in the career area you wish to pursue.

Volunteer with area non-profits or organizations which interest you.

Consider the [study abroad programs related to Natural Resources Conservation Management](#). Talk with a study abroad advisor about targeted experience for your concentration.

### PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Attend the [Catamount Career and Networking Day](#) to identify summer, part-time, or internship opportunities for additional hands-on opportunities.

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years with their admission requirements so that you are aware of the expectations.

## Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Anthropology  
Biology  
Criminal Justice

Geography  
Geology  
Parks & Recreation

### 3rd YEAR

Third level courses focus on upper-level Natural Resource Conservation and Management courses, special topics relating to your career path, or your chosen minor. Students should plan on taking around 6 credit hours of NRCM electives (2 courses) in each semester this year. [Check out the 8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Consider internship experiences that will give you practical and hands-on experience to put on a resume.

Consider networking with professionals in your field such as the Appalachian Society of American Foresters, NC Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, NC Chapter of the Wildlife Society, or the Association of Southeastern Biologists.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#)

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Apply for internships. Utilize the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) for MCAT, GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour medical/ graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.

### 4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will complete the major coursework requirement, as well as your chosen minor electives. Students should take the senior capstone NRM 440 or senior thesis NRM 499 course in their final year. Be sure to [check out the 8-semester plan](#). Make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Join professional Natural Resource Conservation organizations such as the Appalachian Society of American Foresters, NC Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, NC Chapter of the Wildlife Society, or the Association of Southeastern Biologists.

Network with employers and non-profits at the CCPD Career Fairs.

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and [apply for jobs](#) between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by using the [CCPD](#).

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

# MORE INFORMATION

## INTERNSHIP Information

At Western Carolina University there are numerous internship opportunities for students. In some cases internships are established through a faculty member in the student's major. Oftentimes students find part-time jobs in an area related to their field of study. When this happens, students should discuss with their academic advisor the possibility of receiving college credit. Generally, three hours of general elective credit can be earned for a minimum of 156 hours of experience.

There are a few paid internships available to support students who participate in research projects or stewardship activities related to natural resource conservation and management. Interns are paid by the hour; additional support may be available for equipment, supplies, and travel. Visit the [department's website](#) for more information.

## SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- outdoor knowledge
- interpersonal skills
- critical thinking and evaluation
- complex problem solving
- observation
- data collection
- written and oral communication
- professional teamwork
- geospatial skills
- field science methods
- laboratory instrumentation

## KNOWLEDGE Base

This program will prepare students to:

- understand forest, soil, water, and wildlife systems, as well as, techniques for assessing and monitoring their condition.
- interpret information and how to apply knowledge to new situations
- problem-solve and make well-reasoned decisions, think creatively and search for, identify and consider all sides of an issue
- analyze and interpret a wide range of information and data to discuss, support and/or reject ideas, opinions, reports, theories and proposals

## Professional RESOURCES

- National Park Service: [nps.gov](http://nps.gov)
- US Forest Service: [fs.usda.gov](http://fs.usda.gov)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service: [fws.gov](http://fws.gov)
- Student Conservation Association: [thesca.org](http://thesca.org)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service: [nracs.usda.gov](http://nracs.usda.gov)

## QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the Natural Resource Conservation and Management program at 828-227-7367 or visit [naturalresources.wcu.edu](http://naturalresources.wcu.edu).

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or [careerservices@wcu.edu](mailto:careerservices@wcu.edu).