



College of Forestry

Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society

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Introduction to Master of Natural Resources (MNR) program

The MNR degree is designed to engage university scientists and world-wide natural resources professionals in a process that integrates diverse perspectives to address natural resource challenges at the state, regional, national, and international levels. The MNR degree will assist agency and industry personnel in meeting their self-improvement goals.

The MNR is a 45 credits interdisciplinary degree program taught entirely online through Oregon State University Extended Campus. The MNR is a professional degree that is offered as a non-thesis option only, similar to Master of Business Administration, Master of Agriculture, or Master of Forestry.

The curriculum will facilitate learning by natural resources professionals who work in settings that require cross-disciplinary competency to find solutions to natural resource problems. Integration of multiple disciplines occurs through the curriculum, assignments, and case study project.

The MNR program appreciates the contributions of the MNR advisors in mentoring and guiding students complete their program of study. The program will provide an honorarium of \$2000 acknowledging the contributions of the MNR student advisor.

Guide to MNR Student Advisors

As a Graduate degree program, every student enrolled in the MNR program will have a major (topic) advisor who will guide his/her program of study throughout the degree program. Advisors must be members of the Graduate School faculty. Duties include:

1. Check-in with the student at least quarterly by email, skype, or other form of communication.
2. Guide student in preparing program of study and file with the Graduate School and the MNR program. The program of study will include student area of emphasis (18 credits), interdisciplinary core (18 credits), and capstone project (9 credits). A total of 45 credits is required to complete the MNR degree. Information about course content and availability will be available through the web and the Online Degree Coordinator. Students can also receive advice from the MNR Program Director for program development.
3. Help MNR student establishing her/his Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) to determine a program of study. The student's GAC will consists of a major advisor from the student's chosen area of emphasis, and two other faculty members,

reflecting either breadth (core area), or depth (area of emphasis) of the student curriculum. The faculty member directing the student's area of emphasis will serve as the student's primary advisor/mentor. The GAC can consist of OSU faculty, courtesy, affiliate or adjunct faculty.

4. Advise student in identifying and formulating capstone project study questions. The MNR 560 Master's Case study project (9 credits) provides a practical problem-solving experience. It will be conducted by all MNR students as capstone of their academic program at OSU. Case study projects provide students with experience that approximates future work environment while also providing client organizations with solutions to complex natural resource issues and useful products. Project ideas may be generated by faculty, students, or the student's organization or agency (see MNR 560 course syllabus). The MNR 560 course weekly assignments will be graded by the course instructors.
5. Mentor student in collecting, analyzing and synthesizing data and information to answer capstone project questions. Capstone projects can be based on original data or a synthesis of existing data, or both.
6. Guide and mentor MNR student in preparing the final capstone project report. Students complete a detailed project report that demonstrates their basic understanding and integrative knowledge of sustainable natural resource management for the site or situation that he/she has selected. Students are expected to devote 120-200 hours to the capstone project (6-9 credit hours) and prepare a 30-50 page final product report (double spaced, not including figures and maps and references).

The case study project report is due during the last term of the MNR program of study. Elements essential to the written case study report include:

- a clear description of the study objectives and problem statement of a case study.
- a description of the study site that the project area covers, including major forest/plant types, habitats, and associated animal and bird assemblages
- a brief description of important landscape and ecological processes
- ongoing social, cultural, historical, and ethical context for the study area
- economic drivers in the area for wood, non-wood, water, recreation, and other resources
- existing social, policy, and political considerations
- specific and detailed recommendations on how to implement the case study project, including sources of funding, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of project success.

Advisors should provide feedback on 2-3 drafts of the final project report prior to the student's final oral examination.

7. The student major advisor and the Graduate Advisory Committee will attend student's final oral Examination with the help of audio or video presentation. The student will make oral presentation about his capstone project and will be asked questions that arise from the capstone project work and the student theoretical knowledge about sustainable natural resources management by the committee. The student major advisor reports result of the exam to the Graduate School and MNR program. The new Faculty Senate policy allows remote participation by any or all of the committee members, and the student, with the minimum acceptable equipment being a two-way audio and video. Skype, Webex or video polycom are potential options to link students with their GAC.

8. While the time commitment expected for MNR advisors is expected to be less than that for a typical thesis student, advisors can expect an average of 5 hours per quarter necessary to provide advice and feedback to the student, with more time required as the student finalizes his or her project and prepares for the oral examination. Because many MNR students are working professionals, the length of time required to complete the 45 credit program will vary; our intent is to get most students to finish within 3 years.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Meghan Foster, Online Degree Coordinator if you have further questions. I look forward to working with you all.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Badege Bishaw".

Badege Bishaw, Ph.D., Program Director
Master of Natural Resources