A NEW OPTION: Forest Recreation

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A NEW OPTION: Forest Recreation

Wendell Beardsley

Although I.S.U. is known for having the oldest continuously-functioning undergraduate forestry program in the United States, we're also known for constantly seeking ways to improve and update our courses and curriculum. In that spirit, the Outdoor Recreation Resources curriculum was assigned to the Department of Forestry in 1969. Under the initial leadership of DeWitt Nelson and because of new interest of college students in the amenity side of forest land management, the curriculum flourished and was substantially improved in content and focus. Continued improvement has taken place as new courses in outdoor recreation have been added both in Forestry and other departments, and as many previously existing courses have been altered to put new emphasis on recreation aspects of forest resource management. In addition, there now exists considerably more coordination between departments and continuity between courses than in the beginning years. As a result we now have a rigorous but broad core of required courses encompassing the field of forest recreation management plus the latitude for individual students to specialize in their area of interest through appropriate selection of minor and elective courses.

Support and enthusiasm for the new curriculum, Outdoor Recreation Resources, was based on the original assumption of developing a job market for graduates with specific recognition of this as a new professional field having its own standards for education, employment, and professional affiliation. Unfortunately, these expectations have not materialized to the level anticipated despite strong and continuing efforts by forestry professionals at I.S.U. and across the country.

It therefore became the consensus of the staff that we could better prepare recreation students and offer them a means of entry into established, recognized career paths by a slight modification of curriculum content and title. We proposed changing the curriculum in Outdoor Recreation Resources to a major in Forest Recreation, a title we feel more appropriately describes the actual focus of the curriculum.

In terms of course requirements, the only major change will be to add Summer Camp (where additional emphasis will be given to forest recreation resources) and three sophomore-level forestry courses in management, products and measurements. These will expose students to a broader range of forestry concerns and will qualify all students in the Department for the U.S. Civil Service classification, Forester. We will retain the breadth that has proved so beneficial in the past when students have found employment with the National Park Service, Forest Service, state agencies, county agencies, municipalities and private firms. We feel sure they will continue to find jobs across this spectrum, but at the same time believe we've better defined what we really do, and have given all students entry to a recognized professional career path.

Woodsey Owl says, "..."