

WHO WE ARE: School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences and the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station

The School of Agriculture and Land Resources Management was formed in 1975 to address applied natural resource education including agriculture and forestry at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station in Alaska is one of 53 agricultural experiment stations in the United States and its territories. The 100th anniversary of Alaska's experiment station was celebrated in 1998.

The School and the Experiment Station are a part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. It is one of three campuses, two others in Anchorage and Juneau, that form the University of Alaska, the land grant institution of the state. There are land grant institutions in all 50 states. It is their mission to provide education and research in applied agriculture and the mechanical arts. The meaning of the term agriculture is interpreted very broadly in the United States. In fact, many schools and colleges of agriculture now include natural resources in their name.

We changed the name of our School in 2002 to reflect the broad nature of our mission statement and the changing world of agriculture in the United States. We are now the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences. Our mission is to:

Generate and provide knowledge that is important for the successful long-term management of natural resources in Alaska and the circumpolar world, and to discover, describe, and interpret the spatial characteristics of the northern regions of the earth.

We carry out our mission within four departments: Plant, Animal, and Soil Sciences; Forest Sciences; Resources Management; and Geography. The latter two departments are the social science component to our science based B.S. and M.S. degrees in Natural Resources Management and our B.S. in Geography. We also deliver a B.A. degree in Geography that is not science based. Our research arm is the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. Most faculty hold joint appointments in the School and Station. The Experiment Station activities assure our clients of continued research and outreach programs that include traditional agricultural production and forest management.

Note that I said traditional - the agriculture many of you remember from your youth - crops and animals for food and fiber. But agriculture today is much more. It is revegetation, forest products both market and non-market, aquaculture, range management, public land use --- I could go on --AND - it includes social and cultural interactions with people mirrored in their behavior, the economy and the policies they support and adopt. Our School and the Experiment Station reflect this new, modern agriculture.

Our research, instruction, and outreach programs include the social sciences along with the biological and physical sciences - an innovative combination that allows us to explore the many facets of an emerging agriculture from both ecological and human perspectives. Our faculty reflect this focus with their expertise in the agricultural, forest, and soil sciences, horticulture, range management, revegetation, recreation management, cultural and physical geography, and community development related to planning, policy, and economics.

We play an important role in the state of Alaska and the circumpolar north. We provide research, outreach, and education not only to support traditional agriculture and forestry in Alaska, but also to support and provide leadership in an emerging, diverse agriculture and forest industry, an important part of the economy in our state, and an important part of the economy in most northern nations.

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