1. Assessment information collected

i. The Outcomes Assessment Committee reviewed all senior theses (required of all NRM B.S. students) from the past two years and evaluated them for overall content and quality. Also, the format for senior theses presentations changed in the 2013-14 academic year, changing from oral presentations of the theses to poster presentations. The Outcomes Assessment Committee was able to evaluate all senior thesis posters.

ii. Interim Dean Sparrow did exit interviews with graduating seniors to garner their opinions of strengths and weaknesses of the program.

iii. The SLOA plan calls for surveys to alumni and employers every five years. Since there were done within the past five years, they were not done for this assessment period.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

i. The committee judged overall of posters and theses to be well-communicated and at a level of rigor appropriate for senior theses. They noted there appears to have been some improvement in quality over past years. However, there is still a great deal of variability in quality, and this seems to somewhat reflect individual student’s overall academic abilities, although time and effort expended by the student’s thesis advisor and committee is likely also a factor.

ii. While the number of exit interviews was low, a few common themes emerged. Several students thought advising could have been stronger and expressed frustration over negotiating class schedules, especially in the forestry concentration where course requirements are fairly inflexible. Students expressed overall satisfaction with their NRM classes and noted they appreciated the opportunities to learn to think independently and critically.
3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above

i. We have changed the way new students are advised, with new students being advised either by the recruitment/enrollment coordinator who knows the curriculum and course schedules intimately or one faculty member who has had advising training. After two semesters, students will select or be assigned advisors among the faculty.

ii. The faculty made major revisions to the curriculum, which was completed and approved by the faculty senate in 2013-2014 and will be implemented in fall semester 2014. Some important changes are: i) the minimum number of credits was reduced from 130 to 120 with more flexibility of electives and including the option of a minor. ii) The three former concentrations were dropped, so there are no longer concentrations within the degree. Students are required to select areas of interest and select courses for a support field. Concentrations were dropped to simplify the curriculum and reduce confusion among students as noted above. This was especially important in the forestry concentration which was very inflexible and it often required student delays in completion of the degree primarily because of problems with course scheduling. A downside is that we will no longer have a program accredited by the Society of American Foresters. Also, a pre-veterinary track was added to help facilitate students interested in entering the new UAF Veterinary Medicine Program. It can be used in-lieu of the support field by students who so choose. The revised degree was designed to be more flexible and adaptable to changing employer needs for NRM graduates, and several new courses were developed or existing courses revised to reflect those needs. We assigned two of the new required courses to spring semester, which traditionally had fewer NRM classes scheduled. In addition we will continue to examine the semester and day of week scheduling of classes.

4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting

All NRM faculty were involved in curricular revisions.