

Natural Resource Conservation and Policy

-OR-

How can humans survive without trashing the planet?

**The Stone Age came to an end,
but not because we ran out of stones.*

— Sheikh Yamani, former OPEC oil minister

**Conservation, viewed in its entirety, is the slow and
laborious unfolding of a new relationship between people
and land.*
—Aldo Leopold,
Wisconsin Wildlife Chronology (1940)

If we draw on the resources in our **minds,
we won't have to rely on resources that we **mine**.*
—Stan Oshinsky, Inventor

**Tell me the landscape from which you come,
and I will tell you who you are.*
— Jose Ortega y Gasset

**The king who cannot take good care of the mountain, forest,
lake and meadow, will not be able to rule the nation.*
—Guan Zhong (645 BC)

**A nation deprived of its liberty may win it, a nation divided
may unite, but a nation whose natural resources are
destroyed must inevitably pay the penalty of poverty,
degradation, and decay.*
—Gifford Pinchot, founder, U.S. Forest Service

**Despite our artistic pretensions,
sophistication and accomplishments—
we still owe our existence
to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains.*
—Chinese Proverb

Instructor: Dr. Susan Todd

Associate Professor of Conservation Planning
Email: susan.todd@alaska.edu (email is best way to reach me)
Office Location: 349 O'Neill Bldg
Office Hours: Fridays 1-3 and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Willie Wilkins

Graduate Student in Natural Resource Management
specializing in soils and waste management
Email: ghostoeap@yahoo.com

Course Description:

The course examines the conservation of natural resources, including its history and ecological, economic and social foundations. First we discuss the basic principles of resource management including sustained yield, ecology, conflict resolution, and the effects of world population growth. With this foundation, we take a more detailed look at the management of specific resources, including soils, agriculture, rangelands, forestry, wildlife, and fisheries, then fossil fuels and renewable energy.

The course attempts to take the LONG view. Many of our resource problems have been caused because people put short-term interests over their own best interests over the long run. In addition to that, the history of natural resource management is a key part of the last 10,000 years of human history. As poet Gary Snyder put it, resource management began when we “stopped chasing our food and started growing it.” All of civilization is based on natural resource management. NRM has greatly increased the carrying capacity of the Earth for humans, but often at the expense of other species. Throughout its history, NRM has put people first and short-term over long-term goals. We need to change that. We need to take a long view toward the future and think of many generations down the road. What will we leave for them?

In addition to taking the long view, the course takes a GLOBAL view. Since the days of the spice trade, natural resource management has had global implications. Now there are so many humans on the planet that we are having global impacts. Again, human ingenuity will hopefully come to the rescue to reduce these.

The Goal of Resource Conservation:

“To learn to live on a piece of land without spoiling it.”

—Aldo Leopold

Resource conservation is about survival—survival of both our planet and ourselves. Over the long-term, human welfare and environmental quality are inseparable. Resource conservation is about working *with* nature to provide what we need while trying to minimize our impact on the environment. We cannot “lock up” *all* of Earth’s natural resources. People are consumers—when we stop using the Earth’s bounty, we die.

We must try to limit our population and stop consuming far more than we need. But even if we succeed in doing so, the remaining humans will still need food, water and shelter. We will still need to obtain everything we require from the Earth. And as Leopold said, we must learn to do so without spoiling the very source of our livelihood.

Themes

- Natural resource conservation is about supplying what humans need while trying to minimize the impacts of this on the environment.
- Natural resource conservation has greatly increased the carrying capacity of the Earth for humans.
- Much of natural resource management has involved domesticating the plants, trees, mammals, birds and fish that humans favor. There is a spectrum of domestication, from plants and animals that cannot live without human assistance to plants and animals that survive with little or no assistance from us.
- We have faced serious environmental impacts in the past and in most cases (though not all) human ingenuity saved the day. Life has gotten better and better in terms of human life expectancy, child survival and education. And in many places, the environment is in better shape than it was 50 years ago.
- We now face environmental challenges on a global scale
- Most resources are *limited* in supply and/or growth rates, but the ability of humans to learn and adapt seems virtually *unlimited*. This is good, because we are always facing new problems and challenges and the best minds are needed to overcome them.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the student should:

- Recognize that the history of resource management is one of turning an increasing amount of the world's biomass into humans and the things humans want and need. This is having major impacts on other species.
- It is also a history of increasing domestication. We started with grass seeds and small livestock, then other plants, trees, and finally fish. Will there be anything wild left?
- Recognize our total dependence on natural resources and our own *personal* impacts on them. All of us “live off the land,” though for most of us, this link is so remote that we are no longer aware of it. *All* of us are consumptive users of the environment and reducing impacts must begin on a personal level.
- Recognize the complexity of our resource problems; that there are often no simple answers and there is no free lunch—*all* decisions have consequences.
- Recognize the importance of our philosophy in determining both the types of environmental problems we are likely to confront and the types of solutions we are willing to consider.
- Recognize that *everything is connected*. Resources are not separate entities, but communities of living, interacting organisms and their abiotic environments.
- Recognize that both optimistic and pessimistic perceptions play important roles in our survival. Pessimists sound the alarm about problems and optimists go to work to solve them. We need both.
- Be able to explain what sustained yield is and why it is important in resource management.
- Consider both human needs and the needs of ecosystems.
- Know where much of our food, shelter and clothing come from and understand the ancient history of these products.
- Be able to tolerate, and even appreciate, diverse viewpoints.
- Recognize that few disciplines are more controversial than resource management—and few are more important.
- Recognize that in today's world, most issues and impacts are global.
- Know the Three Principles of Sustainable Resource Mgmt:
 1. Reduce dependence on non-renewable, non-recyclable materials, as these will run out.
 2. Harvest renewable resources no faster than they can be renewed, or they will also run out.
 3. Produce wastes no faster than nature can absorb or break them down, or we will poison our environment—and ultimately, ourselves.

Required Texts and an iClicker required:

For those of you on a tight budget, copies of both texts will be on reserve in the Bioscience Library and an eBook is available online for the first text.

1) Natural Resource Conservation: Management for a Sustainable Future, 9th or 10th Edition by Daniel D. Chiras & John P.

Reganold,. This book provides vital background and supplementary information that we don't have time to cover in lecture: You can order a new or used hardcopy at <http://www.UAFText2U.com>

Here is a link to a cheaper textbook on Amazon, and a link for students to sign up for a free six months of Amazon Prime (free 3-5 business day shipping). It should be noted that if your subscription to Prime has not been cancelled by the end of the six month period, you will be charged the yearly rate of \$39 - which is half that of the non-edu membership.

Book: <http://amzn.com/0132251388> - \$35.59.

Amazon Prime: http://www.amazon.com/gp/student/signup/info?ie=UTF8&refcust=5XKG22R4TR7TTEDSD5OOGSTS2Y&ref_type=generic

2) A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold. I will provide a pdf of the correct edition on Blackboard. We will read and discuss this book in detail in discussion groups. If you get a hard copy, please get the Oxford Edition ordered for this class. Other editions have different essays! Copies of this book can be obtained online and some will be available at the campus bookstore.

Additional required and optional readings will be available as PDFs on Blackboard, the online resource for this class at <http://classes.uaf.edu/>. See the course schedule on the last page of the syllabus for due dates.

3) iClickers. We will be using iClickers in this class and the use of these will count for up to 200 pts of the participation grade. We will pass them out each day and pick them up at the end of class. Each student will have their name on one of the clickers. **If you forget to return the unit at the end of class & lose it, your grade will be withheld until the unit is returned in good condition or you pay \$25. Do not use someone else's unit to make it appear that they attended class when they did not. If I catch anyone doing this, both students will lose all the participation points, a substantial part of your total grade.**

Learning Disabilities:

If you have a learning disability that may interfere with your ability to perform the work in this course, I am happy to make any necessary accommodations. However, it is the student's responsibility to obtain an Accommodation Letter from the Disabilities Office of the Health Center (ext.6158). This letter **MUST** be presented to Dr. Todd **within the first two weeks** of class. No accommodations will be made until this letter is given to the professor. Accommodations will NOT be made retroactively (i.e. if you have a spelling disability, you must present the letter **before** any points are deducted for spelling).

ATTENDANCE

Research has shown that students who attend classes do much better and are **FAR** more likely to graduate. The US has dropped from 1st to 12th in the number of students who start college and actually manage to finish, so professors are urged to take attendance, as this has been shown to increase graduation rates. Also, you may be a brilliant student, but if you are not reliable, employers want to know that. They feel this should be reflected in grades. Therefore, I will give credit for attendance through the iClickers.

TAKE NOTES

Research also makes it clear that students who take notes do better in classes and again, are more likely to graduate. Note taking helps keep your mind from wandering; it helps you concentrate on the class.

Conduct in Class

COMPUTERS ARE NOT ALLOWED. Computers distract other students and are not allowed.

Try to remember to turn your cell phone off—and remind me to do the same! Cell phones should not be out during class.

Guest Speakers are Volunteers—please be considerate! Most speakers are nervous about speaking to a group of strangers. They spend considerable time putting together a talk they hope you will like. Please show them—and your fellow students—the respect they deserve.

- Do NOT put books away or zip backpacks until class is over (i.e. NOT ONE MINUTE BEFORE 11:30).

- If you arrive LATE, please sit in the back.

-If you MUST leave early, please sit in the back and depart quietly.

-Feet belong on the floor, not up in a speaker's face.

-If other students are disturbing or distracting you, please let me know.

Email: include a subject & your name

If you send an email to me or to the TA, please put **"NRM 101"** and your name at the start of the subject line. Most faculty get 100 messages/day. If you want us to read your email, **ALWAYS include a subject and your name**. Otherwise, it could be considered spam and deleted.

Only those with active UAF accounts are allowed to use our “online classroom” called Blackboard. Your UAF email account will be created automatically. If you have any questions about email or Blackboard, contact the Computing Help Desk at helpdesk@alaska.edu.

Blackboard

We use the online course center called “Blackboard” (I abbreviate it BB) for many things in this class. It allows us to post copyrighted material (since only those with a password can access it), most of the gradebook is kept online, and you can access lecture notes, announcements, handouts, etc. It will also be the place to take quizzes and submit some assignments.

Go to <http://classes.uaf.edu/> and log in using your UA username (eg. sktodd). Don’t know it? Go to: https://uaonline.alaska.edu/banprod/owa/bwgtk2gid.P_DisplayID_Request.

First time users of BB should use their student ID number (without any dashes) as their password. Once logged in, you can change your password by going to “TOOLS” and then to “PERSONAL INFORMATION” where you can click on “CHANGE PASSWORD.”

Grading Policy

Zeros are very bad for your final grade! Try hard not to get a single ZERO! Each year, 15% of the students in this course receive an F, and inevitably they have several zeros on the grade sheet. This is NOT a difficult course—unless you fail to do the work. **It is always better to turn in something rather than taking a zero.** Grades will be based on the percentage of points earned in the course.

Graded Assignments	# Points
Introduce yourself on the blog	25
Responses to Discussion Board Questions	30
Online Quizzes on the readings and lectures	847
Weekly reflections worth 10-15 points each	140
Attend 3 Leopold Discussions at 50 pts each	150
Attend 2 Commons Game Sessions at 50 pts each	100
Write 3 papers on Leopold’s <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> at 100 pts each	300
Summary of "Predator Fish" + "Should we eat 100-year-old fish?" + the conclusion from the book <i>Four Fish</i>	100
Two tests at 300 each	600
Final Exam	450
Participation: a) 20 points for responding to other students’ posts on discussion board; b) 100 points for attendance	120
Correct iClicker responses (to avoid wild guessing, you’ll get points for getting the right answers)	100
Total Points	2,962

WHAT DO THE LETTER GRADES MEAN?

A = Exceptional – The work is of “*professional*” quality, demonstrating originality, independence, and a thorough mastery of the subject matter. This not only means fulfilling the requirements, but doing it in a way that *goes beyond* the basic expectations of the assignment.

B = Very Good – Work does not have all the *refinements* that could give it real polish, but also didn’t have any significant problems. Work is accomplished on time and presented neatly and thoroughly but does not have the depth and originality for an “A.”

C = Acceptable – The work fulfills the *minimum* requirements with only a few notable errors. The student grasps the essential information; but work is not consistently thorough and does not demonstrate mastery. BTW, if this course is required for your major, you must get a C or better (even a C- is not adequate).

D = Unacceptable – The work demonstrates a lack of understanding of the fundamental nature of the assignment or material.

F = Complete lack of understanding of the fundamentals of the course.

Anyone who has less than 51% of the points possible after the first test will be withdrawn from the course. You will be sent an email if this is the case.

Academic Honesty:

The UAF [Student Code of Conduct](#) requires that collaboration among students will not be allowed on essays, tests, exams and online quizzes. Copying or paraphrasing another student's writing is a violation of the Student Code. Evidence of academic dishonesty (either copying anyone else's work or allowing someone to copy yours) will be presented to the Director of Judicial Services and may result in an F for the course and possible expulsion from the University.

Editing and Spelling MATTERS...

One point will be deducted for each spelling error on each written assignment except tests. If you have trouble spelling, ask the Writing Center or a friend to proofread your papers. The Writing Center on 8th Floor Gruening has trained staff who will proofread your paper for FREE. Save points by taking your paper there before turning it in. If your first paper loses many points for grammar and spelling, your section instructor will require that you take your next two papers to the Writing Center.

Jobs in natural resources, wildlife and fisheries are highly competitive. The first contact most applicants make with potential employers is through their cover letters and resumes. **Would an employer spend 30 minutes reading a poorly written letter, when she could read a well-written one in just 3 minutes?** An ability to write so that others can easily understand is essential to finding a job in this field.

NOTE: ALWAYS keep a copy of graded & ungraded written assignments (in all classes) in case one gets lost or your grade was recorded incorrectly.

LATE PAPERS:

The Sand County Almanac Papers and the fisheries summary will be turned in **AT THE END OF CLASS on the DATE DUE**. It is far easier to keep track of papers if they are all collected in class at the same time. To encourage everyone to turn them in on time and to reward those who do, the following points will be deducted from late papers.

Points Deducted for Late Papers:

Papers submitted outside my office (349 O'Neill) after 1 p.m. but before 5 pm on the day it is due.	—20 %
Papers submitted under my door after 5 pm, but before the next class	—30 %
Papers after this without a note from a doctor or other responsible party.	—ALL points

Quizzes

There is at least one quiz due by 11:59 pm every Monday!!

QUIZZES count for almost 30% of the points in this course. There is a quiz on every lecture topic, such as agriculture, forestry, wildlife, fisheries, etc. Quizzes on one week's topics are due by 11:59 the following Monday. You do not need to wait till the last minute; the quizzes are available any time. Some weeks there can be 3 quizzes due Monday night, so I would encourage you to work on the quizzes as soon as possible after the lecture on the topic. Quiz questions come from both the readings and the lectures. You have two chances to get a perfect score on each quiz. There are also practice quizzes that do not count toward the grade; they are just there for review and practice.

I am required to give an ENTRY QUIZ. Questions on the quiz are taken from final exams and the quiz is worth BONUS POINTS! Do not expect to ace it; but every point you get will boost your overall score. The quiz is due early in September.

Papers on A Sand County Almanac

There will be 3 papers on the classic book, *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold. You are required to answer 5 questions about the essays in each of the three parts of the book. Look for more detailed instructions on this on Blackboard and the due dates are listed on the Class Schedule.

Tests & Final Exam

There will be two tests and one comprehensive final exam. Each of these will include about 30 true/false questions, several multiple choice and a few short answer questions. Dates for tests and the exam are given on the attached course schedule.

Questions on Test Scores

An opportunity for students to discuss questions regarding a test score will be provided, subject to the following guidelines. Please do **not** discuss the score after class. I can be surrounded by a dozen students pleading for points and this isn't fair to any of us. Instead, do the following:

Write the number of the question on the back of the test and explain why you feel you deserve more points for it, then turn it in.

I will look these over and correct any problems. When you get your corrected test back, if you still have concerns, please make an appointment to discuss it with me. However, **an appointment to discuss a particular test must be made within one week after I have returned it**. Do NOT wait until the end of the semester to bring such problems to my attention.

No Early Final Exams

Early final exams are not allowed (an airline ticket is not an excuse for missing the final exam). However, if you have more than 2 exams in one day, provide proof and if possible, we will allow you to take the final exam at a different time.

Don't Miss a Test!

Missed Test Policy

If you are delayed for any reason, remember that arriving late to a test is preferable to missing it altogether!!

This policy is an effort to be fair to those who did take the test on time and who have complained in the past that they, too, would have liked extra time to study (or sleep, etc...).

Sports Teams. If you are on a team that requires you to miss a test, you must have an excuse signed by your coach and make arrangements with me to take the test as soon as you return.

Illness. Anyone absent due to *severe* illness must write me an email as soon as possible (preferably before the quiz) and make it up as soon as possible.

Approaches to Management: A Prologue by Kenneth Boulding

A Conservationist's Lament

The world is finite, resources are scarce,
Things are bad and will be worse,
Coal is burned and gas exploded,
Forests cut and soils eroded.
Wells are dry and air's polluted,
Dust is blowing, trees uprooted.
Oil is going, ores depleted,
Drains receive what is excreted.
Land is sinking, seas are rising,
Man is far too enterprising.
Fire will rage with Man to fan it,
Soon we'll have a plundered planet.
People breed like fertile rabbits,
People have disgusting habits!

Moral: The evolutionary plan
went astray by evolving Man.

The Technologist's Reply

Man's potential is quite terrific,
You *can't* go back to the Neolithic!
The cream is there for us to skim it,
Knowledge is power, and the sky's the limit!
Every mouth has hands to feed it,
Food is found where people need it.
All we need is found in granite,
Once we have the men to plan it.
Yeast and algae give us meat,
Soil is almost obsolete.
Men can grow the pastures greener,
Till all the Earth is Pasadena.

Moral: Man's a nuisance, Man's a crackpot
But only Man can hit the jackpot.

1. Thoreau tried growing a bean patch, but he felt guilty destroying weeds and fighting woodchucks. He concluded that farming should be condemned as discrimination against innocents. Thereafter, he obtained his beans from his mother's garden.
2. A timber harvesting protest is held in lovely *log* home; dozens of flyers printed on *paper*, protesters hold *paper* placards on *wooden* stakes. Are they aware of the paradox?
3. New Alaskan: "You know, when I came to Alaska from Baltimore, I was totally opposed to cutting trees. But since I got here, I've realized something. I—well, I *like wood!*"
4. A man who condemns any manipulation of nature by resource management agencies sees porcupines in his own garden and yells: "I'm going to *firebomb* those devils!"
5. Leslie: "My mother always bought chicken drumsticks in packages of four. As a result, my sister was 12 years old before she discovered that chickens don't have four legs."
6. A Native woman describes how she was sad when she caught a mother lynx with two kittens on her 50-mile trapline. The kits would surely die. Asked how she dealt with that, she said, "Well I know that someday it will be my turn. It's like they say, 'First the salmon feed me, then I feed the salmon.'"