Development of a graduate specialization in protected areas management

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The International Union for the Conservation of Nature defines a protected area as “an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.” IUCN has six protected area categories based on variations in management objectives. We see a growing demand for students who currently are managers of such areas, work for NGO’s or the government in some capacity and who want to intervene in order to cause some change in the way a given protected area is managed. Participation by local communities is a key component of such intervention. The demand comes primarily from protected areas managers in Southeast Asia, Latin/South America, and Africa, but the issues and lessons learned have wider geographic implications. Ecotourism is often advocated as an intervention strategy, but most managers do not understand how to apply the concept in practice or its potential impacts. The proposed graduate specialization is interdisciplinary, combining natural and social sciences (policy, law, park and wildlife management, GIS, conservation biology, community forestry and social/environmental/economic impacts). The poster presents the structure of the specialization as conceived by faculty from Forestry, Sociology, Fisheries and Wildlife, and Park Management.