Teaching a Large Field Course in the 21st Century

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NR 220 - Natural Resource Ecology and Measurements

- 4 weeks
  - 2 sessions each summer
  - 112 students per session
- 5 credits
- Prerequisites: Biology and Algebra
5 Instructors & 4 TAs Each Session
Where in the World is Pingree Park?
A Quick Tour …
The Lodge (Dining Hall and Office) and the “Store”
Luxury Student Accommodations
The “Old” Schoolhouse

The “Old Classroom”

1924

The “New” Classroom
The “Best” Classroom
Week 1 - Survey of Biota and Environment / Basic Field Skills

- Trees and Shrubs
- Grasses and Forbs
- Wildlife species
- Watershed
- Map and Compass
Week 2 - Natural Resource Measurements

Range

Forestry

Wildlife

Watershed

Recreation
Weeks 3 & 4: Biotic Community Studies

- Lodgepole Pine
- Ponderosa Pine
- Mountain Shrub
- Spruce-Fir
- Alpine Spruce-Fir
Structure

- 4 weeks; 19 days of contact (M – F only)
- Some days entire class together all day
- Some days class split into 3 groups & rotate to different discipline each day of that week
- Typical day is 1-2 hours in classroom, then outside until 4-5 pm
Challenges

- Maintain quality with increasing enrollment
- Meeting needs of disabled students
- Affordability for students
- Housing capacity
- Changing technology
Solutions

- Increase number of faculty? TAs?
- Restructure teaching rotations?
- Add another section? (meet 6 days/week)
- Charge higher course fee?
- Build more student cabins and classrooms?
- Increase wi-fi capacity? iPads? iPods?
Questions?