Defying Distance Education: Building a New Recreation Resource Management Program

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RRM in Moab

- Need for a new program
  - Public land management, Economic outlook
  - Community assessment (Moab) – Why RRM?

- Distance Delivery
  - Campuses, Methods, Technology
  - Evaluation, Needed improvements

- Plans for growth & future initiatives
  - Facilitating a program which meets new education needs
  - Utah State University Moab -- New Campus
Background

- **Scoping a need** ([http://www.discovermoab.com/moab_videos.htm](http://www.discovermoab.com/moab_videos.htm))
- Finding support and faculty
- Building the plane while flying
Utah Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

- Tourism #1 industry worldwide
- Time of economic change in USA – period of industry growth followed by recession

2010 Utah Economic Report –
- National and state park visitation increased
- Ski industry 3rd best season in history
  - Infrastructure improvements, 3.9 million visitors
- More weekend trips to local and regional areas
- Increase in tourists driving rather than flying
- Future tourism growth in Utah
  - Adventure and nature–based tourism
  - Family, cultural / historical tourism
Utah Governor Gary Herbert endorses two primary tourism benefits:

1. Tourism tax revenues can offset costs for education and other important areas

2. Tourism can create a positive worldwide reputation to attract business development and jobs
Why is the RRM field great?

- beautiful outdoor areas (desert, mountains)
- many jobs at many agencies & organizations – BLM, USFS, NPS, USGS, TNC
- always changing / new issues
- controversial issues & people are passionate
- interact with many people
- opportunities for innovative, exciting research
- affected by other resource issues & decisions
What are Some Jobs?

- Naturalist / interpreter / ranger
- Park, wilderness, preserve, campground manager
- Director / advisor for federal, state, local agencies
- Environmental / recreation consultant
- Recreation planner / policy analyst
- Law enforcement officer
- Outdoor school director
- Resort / ski area employee
- Volunteer coordinator
- Museum specialist
- Historian
- Instructor / guide, company owner (raft, fishing)
- Outdoor writer / editor
- Instructor of outdoor activities
- Environmental educator
- Wildlife specialist / ecologist or biologist
- Rangeland technician
- Resource economics analyst
- Graduate student, teaching & research assistant
- University / college professor & researcher
Some Management Agencies...

Local stakeholders

http://www.discovermoab.com/moab_videos.htm
In 2009, Utah State Parks hosted 4,822,847 visitors.

Approx. 180,000 visitors to Dead Horse Point State Park in 2009.
Federal Lands & Waters

NPS in Utah
- National Parks
- Monuments
- Historic Trails

USFS in Utah
- National Forests
- National Rec Areas
- Wilderness areas

Utah BLM
- 22.9 million acres
- 42% of Utah
Distance Education

- Increases accessibility of higher education
  - Utah communities (e.g., all UT counties)
  - In the future... national? worldwide?

- Accommodates busy schedules & diverse lifestyles
  - working professionals, students with family commitments
  - interactive broadcasts and face-to-face courses

- Add courses relevant to current needs and issues
  - Quantitative Assessment Field Course
  - Resource and training ground for current professionals
Distance RRM Program

- **Education** – Growth Opportunities
  [http://distance.usu.edu/degree_programs/?searchType=location](http://distance.usu.edu/degree_programs/?searchType=location)

- **Research** – Canyonlands Research Center
  [http://canyonlandsresearchcenter.org/](http://canyonlandsresearchcenter.org/)

- **Service** – Outreach, Collaboration

- **Extension** – Institute for Outdoor Rec & Tourism
  [http://extension.usu.edu/iort/](http://extension.usu.edu/iort/)
RRM Course Delivery Methods

- Classroom-based experience
  - Face-to-face, interactive

- Experiential / Field courses
  - Outdoor education & interpretation
  - On-site, hands-on & industry involvement

- Distance education
  - Remote broadcasting (IVC)
  - Online learning and resources
  - Hybrid delivery – combination of any above
Distance Coursework

Examples...

ENVS 3300 Intro to RRM
ENVS 4000 Natural Resources Policy
ENVS 4130 Recreation Policy & Planning
ENVS 4500 Wildland Recreation Behavior
ENVS 4600 Natural Resources Interpretation
ENVS 4920 Special Projects in RRM
ENVS 4550 Recreation Monitoring & Assessment

Also, Wildlife Management, Intro to GIS, etc.!!
Diversify Education – meet changing needs

Methods & Technology –
- Engage students through various resources
- Increase communication
- New hybrid pedagogies!
Future Initiatives to Meet Needs

- Been doing – Currently doing – Keep doing
- Marketing efforts, enrollment & funding
  - Recruiting events – Natural Resources Sustainability Week
  - Local communities & stakeholder involvement/promotion
  - Creative funding opportunities – grant writing, research

- Engaging students in the community and industry
  - Internships, co-ops, student worker programs & projects
  - Mutually beneficial training, networking, knowledge

- NEW CAMPUS!!
Future Initiatives…

**Transparent Technology** – meet learning needs (e.g., podcasts, online, field experience), evaluation

**Marketing Program** – increase program enrollment
Interdisciplinary and collaborative goals, projects, meetings, other interactions – training, research projects, funding, conferences