The environmental challenges we face today arise as much from humanities including policy, environmental history, community action, and evaluation. Students can pursue interests over the full range of their work and the skills necessary to conduct original research. The objective is to produce graduates who are prepared to function comfortably in the complex professional and social communities within which solutions to environmental problems must be found.

The program mandates interdisciplinarity through curriculum requirements, the structure of the student’s faculty advisory committee, and the research endeavor. Students are required to take some courses in diverse disciplinary topics and other courses that are intended to strengthen problem-solving skills. A thesis (M.S.) or a dissertation (Ph.D.) is required of all students. Each student’s faculty advisory committee must consist of persons who collectively ensure interdisciplinary support and evaluation. Students can pursue interests over the full range of environmental studies from more of a physical or biological science research project to those emphasizing more of the social sciences or humanities including policy, environmental history, community action,
or social justice. Students who feel a need to follow a more structured course of study may also pursue certificates in culture, history, and environment; energy analysis and policy; or transportation management and policy. Any bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution may be acceptable.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

This interdisciplinary professional master’s program in environmental conservation aims to empower graduates with the knowledge, experience, and practical training necessary to take on professional leadership positions that promote effective and equitable strategies to global challenges in conservation and sustainability. Students complete courses that integrate the study of conservation biology and ecology with social sciences and professional development tools courses.

The program leads to an M.S. degree in environmental conservation. The curriculum requires a total of 32 credits over 15 months, with the first seven months on campus and the remaining eight months through distance learning. The curriculum consists of 6 or 9 credits of a biology or ecology unit, 3 or 6 credits in social systems and sustainability courses, 4 credits in conservation planning, 3 credits in environmental policy, 9 credits in professional development and conservation tools, and 4 credits of independent practice.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

The certificate in transportation management and policy (TMP) was created to satisfy the demand for transportation professionals who understand multiple dimensions of transportation management and planning, enabling them to make choices leading to more environmentally and socially sustainable transportation systems now and in the future. Students focus not only on making transportation sustainable itself, but also on the role transportation plays in supporting and impacting society, the economy, and the environment. TMP certificate participants gain a holistic understanding of the complexities and synergies that influence transportation including climate, energy, communities, land use, resource management, economic development, and social justice.

The certificate addresses multi-modal transportation forms including highways, mass transit, air, water, and rail. By integrating study of the environment, engineering, economics, spatial analysis, and decision-making with the study of political, legal, environmental, and social factors that shape transportation management, the certificate prepares students for professional work with public sector transportation agencies, consulting firms, and other organizations concerned with transportation management and policy.

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The water resources management (WRM) program is an interdisciplinary graduate program leading to a master of science (M.S.) degree in water resources management. The program addresses the complex, interdisciplinary aspects of managing water resources by helping students integrate the biological and physical sciences (which identify and assess problems) with engineering (which defines technological alternatives) as well as law and the social sciences (which assess needs and potential for institutional response). Through the WRM program, a student gains breadth in relevant planning and management areas while developing depth in an area specialty.

The water resources management degree is designed to prepare students for employment as water resources management professionals. Rather than conduct individual research projects, WRM students participate in a summer group practicum workshop with a water resources management focus. Students who wish to add individual research credentials to their records frequently arrange to complete a second, simultaneous master’s program in one of the university’s traditional departments. Those interested primarily in individual research may wish to consider the Nelson Institute’s environment and resources program as an alternative. The WRM program does not offer a doctoral degree.

DEGREES/MAJORS, DOCTORAL MINORS, GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES

- Air Resources Management, Doctoral Minor (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/air-resources-management-doctoral-minor)
- Culture, History and Environment, Doctoral Minor (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/culture-history-environment-doctoral-minor)
- Culture, History and Environment, Graduate/Professional Certificate (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/culture-history-environment-graduate-professional-certificate)
- Energy Analysis and Policy, Graduate/Professional Certificate (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/energy-analysis-policy-graduate-professional-certificate)
- Environment and Resources, Doctoral Minor (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/environment-resources-doctoral-minor)
- Environment and Resources, M.S. (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/environment-resources-ms)
- Environment and Resources, Ph.D. (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/environment-resources-phd)
- Environmental Conservation, M.S. (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/environmental-conservation-ms)
- Transportation Management and Policy, Graduate/Professional Certificate (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/transportation-management-policy-graduate-professional-certificate)
- Water Resources Management, Doctoral Minor (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/water-resources-management-doctoral-minor)
- Water Resources Management, M.S. (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/environmental-studies/water-resources-management-ms)