



## EMPLOYS at Western Colorado University: M.S. in Ecology + Master in Environmental Management

The challenges facing America's public lands are truly dramatic, encompassing global environmental change and rapid political and economic shifts. Land managers need both deep ecological knowledge and understanding of the social forces that shape landscapes. EMPLOYS trains diverse future scientists to respond to these challenges using trailblazing tools of data science. Trainees also attain communication and leadership skills needed to apply scientific knowledge to planning, policy, and management of public lands.

EMPLOYS students conduct research that informs actions. Over three years, they earn a Master of Science in Ecology plus a Master in Environmental Management degree. Students conduct research for their master's thesis and use their findings to respond to a management challenge facing an agency or organization, resulting in on-the-ground outcomes.

**Applied research in a public land haven:** Western Colorado University provides an optimal location to study public lands. Our Rocky Mountain campus is located in Gunnison County, where 82% of lands are managed by federal agencies and local government. Students work with practitioners and agency scientists as research advisors and mentors, providing networking and professional development opportunities. Our goal is to prepare diverse students for careers in land management and transform how ecologists respond to pressing environmental concerns.

Email [msecology@western.edu](mailto:msecology@western.edu) to learn more about the EMPLOYS, MSE, and MEM programs!



**Earn two degrees, and  
put your science  
to work!!**



# EMPLOYS Program at Western Colorado University

## Master of Science in Ecology and Master in Environmental Management

Western Colorado University seeks outstanding and diverse candidates to apply for the National Research Traineeship in Ecological Management and Public Lands Opportunities for Young Scientists (EMPLOYS) program. Students accepted into EMPLOYS will engage in research theses and community projects, rigorous coursework, and training to prepare them for science and management careers in an era of unprecedented social and ecological change, **each earning two graduate degrees in three years: a Master of Science in Ecology and Master in Environmental Management with an emphasis in Integrative and Public Land Management.** EMPLOYS students will learn cutting-edge research and professional skills, perform data management and analysis using advanced technology, and implement management actions to respond to complex environmental challenges.

A limited number of competitive assistantships are available to US citizens or permanent residents, funded by the National Science Foundation. Assistantships are generally awarded for a one-year term and include a tuition waiver and stipend. Please contact [msecology@western.edu](mailto:msecology@western.edu) for more information.



Utilizing the unique landscape of Gunnison's 1.7 million acres (about twice the area of Yosemite National Park!) of public lands as a platform for learning, students will engage with community stakeholders and agencies including but not limited to the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, National Park Service, National Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. The small course sizes and collaborative atmosphere of Western's Clark School of Environment and Sustainability foster strong relationships between students and faculty mentors, connections to the local community, and opportunities for students to find and fulfill their individual academic and career goals.

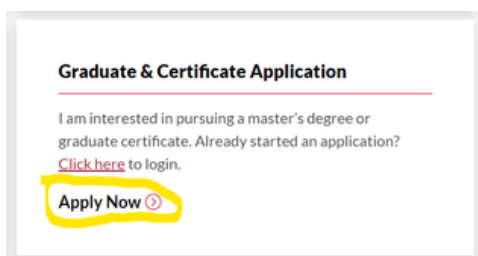
Example research focus areas include using field data and cutting-edge remote-sensing methods to answer questions in fire and forest ecology, examining wildlife habitat selection, and modeling population of imperiled species under varying disturbance and management scenarios. All projects provide opportunities for students to utilize big data to study ecological questions while simultaneously applying research findings to allow natural resource managers to take action. The EMPLOYS webpage highlights current student work and potential projects, however we invite prospective students to propose and pursue their personal interests within the fields of ecology and environmental management.

# EMPLOYS Program at Western Colorado University

## Master of Science in Ecology and Master in Environmental Management

Applications for Fall 2025 entry are open! We invite applicants to apply by January 15, 2025, following the steps outlined below, to be considered for funding.

- Contact Project Coordinator at msecology@western.edu to express your interest in the program and for more information, including a list of faculty who may be able to advise prospective students. **We request/expect that you reach to a prospective advisor whose expertise aligns with your research interests prior to applying!**
- **Submit an application to the M.S. Ecology program, using the included link or by visiting: <http://www.western.edu/apply>.** Check the box to indicate your interest in EMPLOYS.
- **Additionally, use the same link to submit a formal application to the Master in Environmental Management Program.** Pressing "Start a New Application" will not work!
  - Contact msecology@western.edu for assistance in transferring materials between applications. If you are a current Western graduate student, you may skip this step and apply directly through the Project Coordinator.
- **To this application, attach a separate letter of interest in the EMPLOYS program, responding to the following prompts:**
  - Describe your background experiences relevant to advanced training at the interface of ecology and natural resource management. Consider describing formative experiences, challenges you've overcome, and attributes or unique perspectives you might bring to the program rather than repeating aspects of your resume.
  - Explain your motivation for a 3-year program at the nexus of ecological science and land management including skillsets you seek to acquire as well as your personal and professional ambitions upon completion of the program.
  - Discuss how you will bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the EMPLOYS cohort, public land management agencies, and the larger MSE and MEM graduate community, as well as your commitment to inclusion and equity among your cohort and graduate program.
  - Identify a current ecological concern or question of interest in the context of global environmental change, outline a research need, and describe how new scientific information could lead to management applications to inform conservation and maintain ecosystem functions.



Thank you for your interest in applying to Western!

Once you have submitted your application, please submit your [Application Requirements](#). You can monitor your application status by logging back into this portal. If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).

Your Applications			
Type	Status	Started	Submitted
You have started 1 application, listed below, using this account.			
Graduate Application 2024	202402-MA in Special Education	Submitted	12/11/2023 12/11/2023

~~Start New Application~~