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U.S. Office of Personnel Management

RE: Botany or plant science credits for NR 220 taught at Colorado State University

To whom it may concern:

I would like to clarify the course content of NR 220-Natural Resource Ecology and Measurements, in particular, to discuss the role of NR 220 in meeting the Botany Requirement for students wishing to qualify as a Wildlife Biologist. I am the Academic Director of NR 220, a course which is also referred to as the Pingree Park Summer Field Course.

NR 220 is a 4 week, 5 credit, interdisciplinary field course taught at Colorado State University's Pingree Park Mountain Campus. Five natural resource programs have instructors who teach the NR 220 curriculum. These programs include: fish, wildlife, and conservation biology; forestry; human dimensions; rangeland ecology; and watershed management. The course is heavily weighted towards field identification of fish and wildlife, trees and shrubs, grasses and forbs. Approximately 120 plant and animal species are covered in the course, along with their relevant habitats. Of the specimens included in NR 220, approximately 80 are plants. A major theme throughout NR 220 is the plant community as it relates to the various natural resource disciplines. As mentioned above, NR 220 is a field course and all classes are taught in the five ecological communities near the Pingree campus. Students in NR 220 learn how to inventory and measure forest stands. They become familiar with the equipment used in forest inventory, as well as current techniques used to estimate tree height and volume, site index and productivity, rate of forest succession, etc. In the rangeland ecology portion of the course, students become proficient in the use of various sample sampling schemes. Students in this section of the course estimate forage production, rangeland condition and trend, current levels of utilization, etc. There is also an exercise on assessing riparian function and health that emphasizes the role of plants in maintaining ecosystem health. Students are required to inventory and describe five different communities that range in elevation from the mountain shrub through three forested communities to the alpine. Plant identification and measurement forms the basis for this activity.

Probably the best indication of what is stressed in this course would come from the breakdown of points. Approximately 25% of the total points in the course come from identification of plants, while an additional 20% is associated with plant community sampling. Thus, approximately 45% of the total points and course content should count towards the area of Botany; this would translate to 2.25 semester credits.

Sincerely,



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