CAL POLY HUMBOLDT
University Senate
Resolution to Recommend Approval of the Master of Forestry in Forestry (PROGRAM: 2026–27 New Degree Proposal Form [Chancellor's Office)
23-25/26-ICC – April 14, 2026 – Curriculum Reading

RESOLVED: That the University Senate of Cal Poly Humboldt recommends to the Provost that the Master of Forestry in Forestry - New Degree (42 units), detailed in proposal 25-3135 be approved.

RATIONALE: The Master of Forestry in Forestry (M.F.) provides an applied, accelerated pathway for individuals with non-forestry bachelor's degrees to enter the forestry profession. The program addresses a clear and persistent workforce need in both public and private sectors, particularly in Northern California, where demand for trained foresters continues to outpace supply.

Currently, prospective students seeking entry into forestry must either pursue a second bachelor's degree, enroll in a research-focused MS program not designed for professional preparation, or attend out-of-state Master of Forestry programs. There is no comparable degree within the CSU system. The Master of Forestry program fills this gap by offering a professionally oriented graduate degree that integrates technical training, field-based learning, and interdisciplinary knowledge required for modern forestry practice.

The program builds on demonstrated student demand and recent institutional investment, including a $700,000 CAL FIRE Workforce Development Grant supporting a similar training model. Early enrollment and continued inquiries from prospective students confirm strong interest in this pathway.

The Master of Forestry program also leverages Cal Poly Humboldt's unique assets, including university forestlands that serve as living laboratories for applied learning and project development. Students complete a culminating forest management plan that integrates ecological, economic, and social considerations, contributing directly to campus sustainability goals and professional workforce preparation.

Aligned with Cal Poly Humboldt's commitments to sustainability, environmental stewardship, and regional workforce development, the M.F. program prepares graduates to lead in forest management, climate resilience, and resource conservation across California and beyond.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Program Type: Master of Forestry (M.F.)
Total Units: 42

Prerequisites: Three semesters plus one summer internship
Department: Forestry, Fire, & Rangeland Management
Target Students:Individuals with bachelor's degrees in non-forestry fields

Program Description: The Master of Forestry in Forestry (M.F.) is an applied, cohort-based graduate program designed to prepare students from non-forestry backgrounds to enter the forestry profession. Located within the coast redwood region and adjacent mixed conifer forests, Cal Poly Humboldt provides a unique field-based learning environment that serves as an outdoor classroom for developing professional forestry skills.

The program integrates biological, physical, social, and managerial sciences to support a comprehensive understanding of forest ecosystems and their management. Students receive advanced training in silviculture, disturbance ecology, forest management and harvest planning, hydrology, and geospatial analysis, supported by hands-on, project-based learning and engagement with natural resource professionals.

Culminating Experience: Students complete a Master of Forestry Project, consisting of a comprehensive forest management plan tailored to specific site conditions and landowner objectives. The project is developed through a structured sequence that includes a summer academic internship, followed by coursework in professional writing and project development. Projects are publicly presented and defended orally.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Graduates of the Master of Forestry (M.F.) program will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the physical, chemical, ecological, and biological characteristics of forest ecosystems as a foundation for effective and sustainable forest management.
2. Explain the socioeconomic structures influencing forest ecosystems across spatial and temporal scales.
3. Apply quantitative analyses to forest resources and associated ecological and management processes.
4. Communicate effectively about forest ecosystems and management practices in both oral and written formats.
5. Apply critical thinking and multidisciplinary knowledge to manage forest resources for diverse and competing objectives.
6. Articulate and evaluate ethical policies and practices in response to societal needs related to forest and rangeland resources.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE (42 Units):

Semester 1 (15 units):

- FOR 540 – Accelerated Introduction to Forestry (4)
- FOR 365 – Forest Economics and Finance (3)
- GSP 510 – Research Methods in Geospatial Science (4)
- WSHD 310 – Hydrology and Watershed Management (4)

Semester 2 (13 units):

- FOR 311 – Forest Mensuration and Growth (4)
- FOR 476 – Advanced Forest Management (3)
- FOR 518 – Management Plan Practicum (3)
- FOR 575 – Advanced Forest Policy and Administration (3)

Summer:

- Academic internship (minimum 100 hours field experience)

Semester 3 (14 units):

- FOR 353 – Forest Road Location and Design (3)
- FOR 530 – Advanced Forest Ecosystems (3)
- FOR 532 – Advanced Silviculture (4)
- FOR 582 – Internship and Professional Writing (3)
- FOR 692 – Master of Forestry Project (1)

Admission Requirements: Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree with a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the last 60 units and complete prerequisite coursework in botany, chemistry, soils, statistics, and ecology. Relevant field or professional experience is recommended. Conditional admission is available for students needing prerequisite completion.

Professional Preparation: Graduates will be prepared for careers in forest management, restoration, and natural resource stewardship across public agencies, private industry, Tribes, and nonprofit organizations. The program meets educational standards for federal forestry employment and contributes toward eligibility for the Registered Professional Forester (RPF) licensure in California.

PROGRAM IMPACT AND BENEFIT: The Master of Forestry in Forestry expands access to the forestry profession and addresses workforce shortages in forest management, restoration, wildfire resilience, and climate adaptation.

Graduates will be prepared for careers in:

- Federal and state agencies (e.g., U.S. Forest Service, CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management)
- Tribal natural resource departments
- Private forestry companies and consulting firms
- Nonprofit environmental organizations

The program also contributes directly to campus and regional sustainability efforts through applied work on university forests and collaboration with professional partners. It supports the state's need for trained forestry professionals while strengthening Humboldt's reputation as a leader in applied natural resource education.

The degree also provides a pathway toward professional licensure, including qualification for

the Registered Professional Forester (RPF) exam in California.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT: The program was developed in close consultation with industry and public-sector stakeholders, including the Department Advisory Committee, the California Forestry Association, and CAL FIRE leadership. These partners confirmed strong workforce demand and provided ongoing guidance in program design.

Faculty report consistent interest from prospective students seeking entry into forestry careers, with approximately 10–15 inquiries annually from individuals with non-forestry degrees. Enrollment projections estimate 15–20 students per cohort, supporting sustainable program growth.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: The program leverages existing faculty expertise, courses, and facilities within the Department of Forestry. New graduate courses will be taught by existing faculty and a planned new hire aligned with program growth.

University forest lands provide essential field sites, and recent investments, including grant funding and infrastructure, support program implementation. No additional facilities are required at launch.

PROGRAM CONTEXT: The Master of Forestry in Forestry complements the existing Forestry B.S., which is accredited by the Society of American Foresters, and extends Humboldt's leadership in forestry education by providing a graduate pathway for students from diverse academic backgrounds.

The program also positions the university to pursue future accreditation at the graduate level and strengthens its graduate portfolio in applied environmental and natural resource disciplines.

Related Proposals:

- FOR - 311 - 25-3144 - Course Change - Forest Mensuration and Growth
- FOR - 353 - 25-3151 - Course Change - Forest Road Location and Design
- FOR - 365 - 25-3145 - Course Change - Forest Economics and Finance
- FOR - 476 - 25-3146 - Course Change - Advanced Forest Management
- FOR - 518 - 25-3137 - New Course - Management Plan Practicum
- FOR - 530 - 25-3147 - Course Change - Advanced Forest Ecosystems
- FOR - 532 - 25-3149 - Course Change - Advanced Principles in Silviculture
- FOR - 540 - 25-3136 - New Course - Accelerated Introduction to Forestry
- FOR - 575 - 25-3138 - New Course - Advanced Forest Policy and Administration
- FOR - 582 - 25-3139 - New Course - Internship and Professional Writing
- FOR - 692 - 25-3150 - New Course - Master of Forestry in Forestry Project

- WSHD - 310 - 25-3162 - Course Change - Hydrology and Watershed Management

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Note on Document Preparation: *Portions of this resolution were developed with the support of artificial intelligence tools to enhance consistency, formatting, and clarity. All content originates from the official proposal documents and aligns with Chancellor's Office documentation standards. Each resolution is reviewed and finalized collaboratively by the Integrated Curriculum Committee Chair, committee members, and the proposal authors, with opportunities for revision prior to submission for Senate consideration.*