

Using Experiential Learning in an Upper-level Forestry Class to Teach Reclamation Techniques¹

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Abstract: Students majoring in Forestry at the University of Tennessee choose one of four concentrations, one of which is Restoration and Conservation Science. The curriculum includes core forestry courses, hydrology, and three courses central to the concentration: Conservation, Ecological Restoration, and FWF 324: Applied Ecosystem Restoration. Third- and fourth-year forestry students make up around 70% of the class in FWF 324, with the remainder from related majors including Wildlife and Fisheries Science, and Environmental and Soil Sciences, and generally have a good set of basic skills and knowledge. Hands-on learning gives them an opportunity to practice and improve their skills, aids knowledge retention, and connects the classroom with real-world application. Over the course of 15 weeks, students learn some common techniques used in reclamation through monitoring an on-campus site where restoration was initiated by past classes, and through the development of a restoration plan for a small adjacent area. Because the impact of past classes on the site is substantial and easy to discern, and the site is on campus and in a location that has high public visibility, most students feel a sense of ownership and put substantial effort into this class work. Over the past 6 years, a number of monitoring techniques have been tested and evaluated for the time and equipment required, and accuracy of resulting data. Several monitoring techniques with which a class can produce reasonably reliable data with minimal supervision will be presented.

Additional Key Words: pedagogy, revegetation, monitoring, field laboratory.

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 3. Work reported here was conducted near 35°56'58.10" N; 83°56'27.82" W.