Environmental Biology & Ecology and Wildlife Biology programs at Western teach fundamentals of life sciences in a “living laboratory” of the Rockies.

What Is the Western Difference?

You’ll explore public and private lands, from sagebrush and streams to deep forests and rocky alpine crags.

You’ll learn from passionate ecologists dedicated to hands-on approaches. With Western’s connections to natural resource agencies, professionals frequently interact with our students in class, on field trips, and in training through internships and paid, local jobs.

Our Thornton Biology Undergraduate Research Program engages undergraduate students in high-quality, original research in biology and related fields. Students work with faculty mentors and often present their research at conferences or in public forums.

Western students have been involved in research on mammals, amphibians, songbirds, Gunnison sage-grouse, trout, macroinvertebrates, water quality analysis, stream ecology, vegetation and climate change, endangered species monitoring, watershed protection, and animal-plant interactions.

Western’s individualized education allows you to combine your Biology studies with different minors, such as Mathematics, Politics & Government and Environment & Sustainability.

In four of the past six years, Western wildlife students were named Outstanding Undergraduates by the Colorado Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

Western’s Natural & Environmental Science department’s seminar series regularly brings world-class speakers to campus.

Western’s Biology students participate in two primary clubs: Tri Beta Biology Club and the Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

Students work with agency professionals in workshops on applying for federal jobs, writing résumés, developing technical skills, obtaining hunter safety cards and more.

The average student-instructor ratio in Western Biology classes is a low 17-to-1.

More Information: 800.876.5309 | admissions@western.edu
What Skills Will I Learn?

You’ll learn in a field-based ecology lab that focuses on scientific methods. You will gain technical background and skills to communicate with scientists and resource managers.

You’ll learn field techniques, such as vegetation monitoring, stream assessment, radio telemetry, GIS, mapping and compass work, animal and plant identification by sight and sound, and even more diverse approaches to measuring populations, communities and ecosystems.

What Can I Do With My Degree?

Our students have been hired at the local, state and national levels by such agencies as Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service.

Students graduating from our program also have also been successful working with non-governmental institutions, such as nonprofit environmental groups, Native American tribes and for-profit consulting companies.

Students attend graduate programs all over the United States. Many students are highly qualified for a variety of seasonal positions, working for researchers and natural resources management agencies.

Meet Karelia Ver Eecke

Karelia Ver Eecke had three good reasons to choose Western – her mother and her two sisters had attended. Instead, she headed to college elsewhere and then took more than two years off.

When she was ready to return to school, Western’s location, outdoor opportunities and unique college community won her over. But her professors impressed her the most.

“The small classes and challenging material create a perfect environment for fostering student-to-student, as well as student-to-professor, relationships,” the Cortez, Colo., native says.

What also sets apart Western, Ver Eecke explains, are its opportunities, from research to volunteering to working with professional agencies. She also cites Western’s hands-on approach.

The 2013 graduate plans to attend graduate school in Oregon, with a goal of fostering better communication between the public, natural resource agencies and nonprofits.