HOW DO I DECLARE THE MAJOR?

To declare the Environmental Sciences major, please make an appointment with either Kathryn Jones (CALS) or Eric Schueffner (L&S) through Starfish.

WHICH COLLEGE SHOULD I APPLY TO WHEN I DECLARE THE MAJOR?

We encourage you to meet with one of the Environmental Sciences advisors to discuss which college would be a better fit for you based on your interests, past coursework, and the kinds of experiences you're looking for.

The major requirements are the same regardless of which college you are in but there are some differences in the college requirements. You can view these differences by looking at the Environmental Sciences pages in the Guide (www.guide.wisc.edu)
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES?

Although many majors across campus focus on specific disciplines related to the environment, there are two relatively new majors that are centered more holistically on the subject.

However, despite their similar names, Environmental STUDIES and Environmental SCIENCES, they are fundamentally different majors reflected in their curriculum, focus, and the pathway you choose to tap your strengths and interests toward the environmental challenges of the future.

Environmental Sciences is a stand-alone major that draws on fundamental scientific knowledge in mathematics, chemistry, physics, and biology coupled with specialization in a particular area of science to provide advanced scientific and quantitative understanding of contemporary environmental challenges.

Environmental Studies is a major (that must be part of a double major) that provides a broadly integrated understanding to the social, political, and historical facets of our environmental challenges with focus on policy, law, and sociality aspect of these challenges.

For example, imagine an oil spill in a lake that was caused by an equipment malfunction.

In this case, an Environmental Sciences major might examine this situation by asking questions such as:

- How much oil was spilled?
- Where will this oil go, and how will it quantitatively affect chemical, physical, and biological environmental systems?
- What is the environmental risk of this oil spill to humans, animals, and habitats and how can we assess it?
- What will be the long-term outcome of this spill on environmental systems, and how can we prevent this from happening in the future from a scientific standpoint?

Conversely, an Environmental Studies major might examine this situation by asking questions such as:

- What are the economic and social impacts of this oil spill?
- What policies, laws, and regulations are in place that were/were not followed in this situation?
- If there aren’t any policies, regulations, or laws in place, how can I work with my local government to improve this situation?
- How can I educate my community about this oil spill and its effects on the environment?
- How can my community prevent this from happening again? And if not, how can they prepare?

WHAT CAN I DO WITH AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES MAJOR?

Environmental Sciences is a diverse field that offers those who study it multiple paths to challenging and rewarding careers in the future. Majoring in Environmental Sciences at UW-Madison can help prepare you for exciting careers of great diversity. You can check out what some of our alums are up to as well as look at different career paths on our website - https://envirosci.wisc.edu/careers-internships/