Changing the world requires new public policies and visionary plans, along with innovative decision-making processes and well-managed organizations. SNRE’s Environmental Policy and Planning field of study focuses on building the professional skills to design and implement effective policies and plans while considering the human and institutional behaviors that underlie environmental problems.

As an SNRE Environmental Policy and Planning student, you will be grounded both in the science of underlying environmental issues and in the political, economic, and institutional factors that can be used to promote change. Here, you will develop the ability to create decision-making processes that are scientifically credible, consider a diverse set of interests, and lead to the development of organizations that can move society toward true sustainability.

“After five years working in the environmental realm, I realized the significant impact that laws and regulations have on the behaviors of public agencies and private enterprises. I wanted to learn how to influence these ‘guiding hands of policy’ to suit the interests of environmental conservation, and I found the Environmental Policy and Planning field of study at SNRE a perfect fit to do so.”

— Gianna Petito, Environmental Policy and Planning student track leader
CURRICULUM

Working with an adviser, you will tailor your Environmental Policy and Planning coursework to your specific career goals. A typical curriculum includes classes in institutions, politics, law, policy analysis, and planning. You will also learn negotiation and dispute resolution, and develop expertise in a specific issue you choose, such as water, climate change and energy, public lands, biodiversity and ecosystem management, environmental justice, sustainable land use, forests, or wildlife.

The Environmental Policy and Planning curriculum provides a solid foundation for dual-degree programs in public policy, urban planning, law, or business.

Course sampling:
- Principles for Transition: Food, Fuel and Finance in a Biophysically Constrained, Ethically Challenged World
- Natural Resources Conflict Management
- Energy Markets and Energy Politics
- Economics of Environmental Regulation
- Landscape Planning and Analysis

CAREERS

Environmental Policy and Planning graduates work as policy analysts, advocates, planners, program managers, and leaders in nonprofit environmental organizations, land trusts, all levels of government, consulting firms, and corporations. The collaboration and dispute resolution training integral to this field of study opens job opportunities at environmental mediation firms and regional partnerships. Some graduates decide to pursue research careers at academic institutions and with nonprofit organizations.

Other career options span the range of geographic scales, including community-based conservation, state-level environmental management, federal policy-making, and work at international institutions, such as the United Nations Development Programme and World Wildlife Fund.

TOP 10 EMPLOYERS
- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- Clean Energy Coalition
- DTE Energy
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Environmental Resources Management
- ICF International
- Michigan Tech Research Institute
- The Nature Conservancy
- PwC
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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