

The Science and Mathematics Teaching Center is pleased to invite you to:

**Exploring the Wild: Unveiling Motivations, Barriers, and the Impact of the University of Wyoming Outdoor Program on Student Belonging and Inclusion**

Plan B Defense  
for a

Masters of Science in Natural Science Education  
Concurrent Major: Environment and Natural Resources

By Natalie Johansen

Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 2:00 PM in Hill Hall room 256 and via Zoom  
(if interested, please contact Natalie [njohans1@uwyo.edu](mailto:njohans1@uwyo.edu) for the Zoom link)

Abstract: The University of Wyoming's Outdoor Program offers the opportunity to explore the role of outdoor recreation while creating a sense of belonging among college students. This case study investigates the motivations, barriers, and impacts of student participation in the Outdoor Program through collected survey data from 210 respondents. Primary motivations included exploring new places, experiencing nature, and learning new skills, while key barriers were lack of time and lack of information. Findings revealed higher engagement among seniors, graduate students, and those frequently participating in independent outdoor activities. Most participants felt included during outings and reported a strengthened connection to the university community. These results highlight campus outdoor programs' potential to create a sense of belonging and overall student well-being. As institutions address enrollment and retention challenges, leveraging outdoor programming can be a valuable tool for engagement and success.

Committee Chair: Dr. Dan McCoy

Committee Member: Dr. Curt Davidson

Outside Member: Dr. Ana Houseal