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Hunter Bruce Wins Graduate Fellowship Award

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University of Wyoming student Hunter Bruce of Dexter, Mo., won the 2015-16 John L. Kemmerer Jr. Graduate Fellowship, an endowed award to recognize and support outstanding students studying natural resources recreation and tourism through the [Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources](#).

The Kemmerer family of Kemmerer, Wyo., and the state of Wyoming endowed the fellowship in 2014 to support interdisciplinary environmental and natural resource graduate studies.

Bruce is pursuing a double masters degree in agricultural and applied economics from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and environment and natural resources from the Haub School. His research examines guided rock climbing and hunting carrying capacity on public National Forest lands in southeast Wyoming.

The Medicine Bow National Forest in southeast Wyoming reached out to the University of Wyoming for research to determine the number of professional rock climbing and hunting guide permits the forest should offer to optimize user experiences.

Bruce, an avid kayaker, has long been interested in outdoor recreation management. This academic year, he is working with faculty advisors to design

the study. Next summer, Bruce will survey hunting outfitters, rock climbing guides and non-guided rock climbers about their perceptions of crowding.

“This research project fits really well with my interest in outdoor recreation management,” says Bruce. “I want to thank the Kemmerer Family Foundation for supporting graduate students conducting research in recreation and tourism in Wyoming,”

The climbing portion of the study will focus on the Pole Mountain Unit, including Vedauwoo and surrounding areas of the forest, while the hunting portion of the study will include the Laramie Peak area, the Medicine Bow Mountains in Wyoming, and the Sierra Madre.

Bruce will use economic modeling to quantify how many guided groups the forest has room for without impeding user experiences. At the end of the project he and his advisers will make a recommendation to the Forest Service regarding outfitting permit numbers for the area.

“Studies like this are necessary in high-use areas where social experiences are a factor in use and enjoyment,” says Steve Smutko, Professor in the Haub School and the Agricultural and Applied Economics Departments, and one of Bruce’s thesis committee members for the project. “This is a truly interdisciplinary project and the results will have relevant real-world application.”

While the Forest Service provided funding to start the research, the Kemmerer Fellowship both covers the cost of Bruce’s graduate studies and enables him to pursue the most rigorous and thorough data collection and analysis.

For more information, contact Emilene Ostlind, Haub School communications coordinator, at emilene@uwyo.edu or (307) 766-2604.

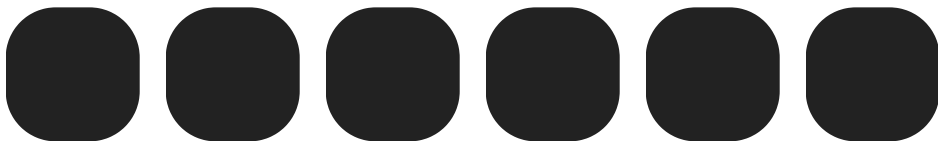
Shown in the photo above is Hunter Bruce (left) with friend Zach Hedrick (right) on a hike 12,000 feet high.

Photo below is Hunter Bruce with fellow students in his department at the University of Wyoming.

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