

# GROW YOUR CAREER WITH AN EXECUTIVE MASTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES



A professional graduate program focused on  
leadership for global sustainability



**CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP  
IN GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY**  
VIRGINIA TECH.

EXECUTIVE MASTER OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

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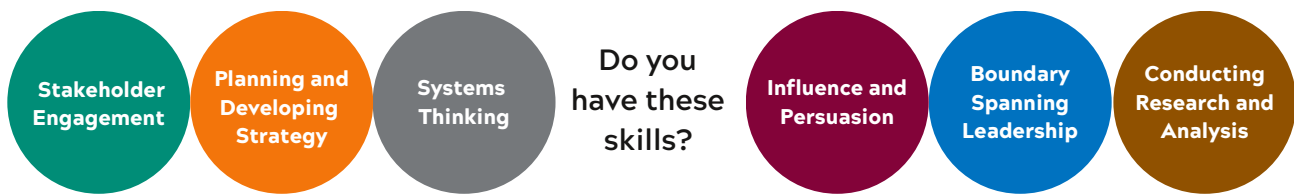
## The Opportunity:

The employment market for global sustainability professionals is booming and a wide variety of jobs exist at all levels and in all sectors, including business, government, and civil society organizations. Areas of focus range from climate and energy, to food and agriculture, to water and health. These jobs are in large and small organizations located in cities and rural areas worldwide.

As a global community, we already have sufficient science and technology to address most environmental challenges; what we lack is effective leadership to create new opportunities for sustainable development.

## Top Competencies:

As the sustainability field matures and as employees advance in their careers to management roles, employers look for skills beyond technical expertise. The issues and challenges are complex, global, and interconnected. People working on solving these challenges need to have the ability and the training to think strategically and systemically, and work collaboratively across many disciplines.



## Salaries and the Value of a Master's Degree:

According to [recent industry reports](#), the average annual salary of employees in the Environmental, Health, Safety, and Sustainability field is approximately \$100,000, with 45% making more than that amount, and there has been an upward trend in recent years. Employees with master's degrees earn approximately 10% more than those without. The value of a master's degree accrues over time, becoming increasingly valuable with age, easily exceeding \$250,000 over the course of a career.

Learn more about these career opportunities on our blog:

- [Climate Professional: a Career Path for Sustainability Leaders](#)
- [Are Green Jobs Looking Even Greener?](#)
- [Bright Career Prospects for Global Sustainability Professionals](#)
- [Considering a career in sustainability? Start here.](#)
- [Calculated Risks - XMNR Alumna Patricia Loria on Changing Careers](#)
- [Career Coaching Series: What certification should I get if I want to work in sustainability?](#)

# MORE THAN A MASTER'S DEGREE

## A CAREER BOOST

Whether you are a career starter, career advancer, or career changer, Virginia Tech's Executive Master of Natural Resources (XMNR) Program will give you the sustainability competencies and leadership credentials to advance your career. The program's unique focus on leadership and communications, robust alumni network, and individualized attention on career development provides the tools needed to achieve success.

XMNR students earn valuable credentials (a masters degree in natural resources and certificates in global sustainability and climate leadership), practical competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities), strategic connections (professional networks for career change and/or advancement), and the grounded confidence needed to make a difference and lead change.



### Leadership and Communications Focus

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As a part of their coursework in which they learn advanced leadership skills, such as building partnerships and cross-sector collaborations, XMNR students learn about specific real-world cases and have opportunities to meet and engage with the experts, analyze the data, and make recommendations about ongoing large-scale green infrastructure and sustainable development projects.

Check out these related blog posts on our website:

- [Leadership at Work: XMNR Alumni Jobs](#)
- [XMNR Students Develop Key Competencies for Global Change](#)
- [Confidence to Lead Sustainably](#)
- [Leadership and Career Change](#)
- [Building Trust](#)
- [Boundary Spanning Leadership - Environmental Advocacy in the Chesapeake](#)
- [Applying XMNR Lessons in the Field](#)



### Individualized Attention and Directed Study

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Courses that comprise the XMNR curriculum are seamlessly interwoven into a unified learning experience. Within each course, students have a great deal of flexibility to pursue their own individual academic and professional interests. Faculty advisors work with each student to help them tailor and customize the curriculum to their own needs.

A key part of the XMNR experience is one-on-one advising and the Individual Development Process (IDP), an independent project based on each student's professional goals or interests and closely curated by an XMNR faculty member. Topics and projects can be related to student's employment, career advancement and change goals, or general intellectual interests. The guidance students receive during their IDPs often leads to career- and life-altering insights, realizations, and relationships built along the way.

# THE XMNR COMMUNITY MORE THAN A NETWORK

During the course of one year, students build a strong professional community including their 30-35 classmates and more than 50 program faculty, guest speakers, panelists, and project partners—all experts from a wide range of sustainability functions and backgrounds. Each cohort is diverse and enables students to work within organizations in civil society, business, and government. Everyone's varied experiences and expertise contribute to the engaging and rewarding peer-to-peer and cooperative learning environment. Many of our students' career pivots began by meeting the right people or learning about the right opportunity in our classroom.

The XMNR program was started in 2010 and by the end of 2023, we will have more than 350 alumni of the program--a small army of dedicated sustainability professionals and a powerful professional network. Consequently from this growing XMNR network, continued educational and professional development opportunities, and ongoing career support, the return on investment extends far beyond the XMNR year.

Check out these related blog posts on our website:

- [The XMNR guest faculty network: field practitioners, internship and project sponsors, and career advisors](#)
- [Classroom connections to real world experience: XMNR projects lead to career advancement and change](#)

## CAREER COACHING FOR PERSONAL GROWTH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All XMNR students receive personal career coaching during the program year and for two years after graduation. Even if you have a solid grasp of your values and skills, career coaching can help you:

- Think strategically about your key accomplishments
- See how you can apply your previous experience and expertise in a new field
- Focus your energy on the best next steps
- Develop a career path that leads to the work you really want to do
- Evaluate and expand your professional network

# SAMPLE CAREERS OF XMNR ALUMS

XMNR alums work as environmental and sustainability professionals in a wide range of business, government, and civil society organization throughout North America and beyond. Below is a sample list of their job titles and roles organized by sector.

## BUSINESS

Global Sustainability and Social Impact Lead, Mars · Corporate Sustainability Manager, Swire Coca-Cola · Director of Innovation, Dominion Energy · Manager, ESH Common Systems, Lockheed Martin · Sustainability Specialist, Sierra Nevada Brewing Company · Senior Director of Environmental Program, Exelon Nuclear · Resiliency Analyst and Planner, Ecology and Environment, Inc · Sustainability & Green Buildings, National Association of Home Builders · Wetlands Scientist, Coneco Engineers and Scientists · Project Manager, RES/Angler Environmental · Environmental Compliance Manager, Apex Clean Energy · Project Manager, Empowered Energy Systems · Partner, Director of Engineering & Design, HG Design Studio · Partner and Vice President, COEFFICIENT · Director of Sustainability, Sydney Hale Company · Program Coordinator, Earth Resources Technology · Senior Geospatial Analyst, BAE Systems · Ecosystems Specialist, Wetland Studies and Solutions · Director of Sustainability, Holiday Inn Express in Edgewood, MD · GIS Specialist, Black & Veatch · Manager, Corbion · Owner, Wander Seek Exploration · Manager, Accenture Strategy · Executive Officer, Asheville Home Builders Association

## GOVERNMENT

Energy and Sustainability Liaison, District of Columbia Public Schools · Director of Environment, City of Atlanta, Department of Public Works · Urban Planner, Arlington County, VA · Senior Forester, City of New York, Department of Parks and Recreation · Scientific Diver, EPA · Director of Public Works, Blacksburg · Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Greenville · Environmental Resource Specialist, New York State Parks · Conservation Planner, Maryland Department of Agriculture · Sustainability and Environmental Specialist, US Geological Survey · International Trade Policy Leader, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service · Natural Resources Specialist, Naval Facilities Engineering Command · Operations Center Unit Lead, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance USAID · Program Specialist, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture · Environmental Protection Specialist, United States Coast Guard · National Program Manager, US Food & Drug Administration · Deputy Forest Supervisor, US Forest Service · Program Manager, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory · Water Resources Planner, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army

## CIVIL SOCIETY (NON-PROFIT)

Global Events Director, UN Foundation · Climate Advisor, Buildings & Energy, Natural Resources Defense Council · Senior Client Engagement Lead, Global Carbon Capture and Sequestration Institute · Land and Climate Program Manager, Land Trust Alliance · Senior Program Officer, Chesapeake Bay Trust · Country Director for Bangladesh, Institute for Sustainable Communities · Executive Director, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay · Legislative Analyst, Environmental Defense Fund · Program Manager, African Wildlife, The Wyss Foundation · Senior Product Manager, National Geographic · Director of Agriculture and Sustainability, Ridge to Reefs · Director of Program Operations, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation · Conservation Strategy Specialist, The Nature Conservancy · Ocean Policy Manager, American Littoral Society · Global Strategy & Operations for Fish Forever Program, Rare · Center Director, Southwest Virginia 4-H Educational Center · Manager of Conservation Partnerships, Sustainable Forestry Initiative · Conservation Project Manager, Colorado Open Lands · Parks Stewardship Coordinator, Scenic Hudson · Watershed Coordinator, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays · Executive Director, FRESHFARM

# CAREER TESTIMONIES OF XMNR ALUMS



"Since graduating at the end of 2020, I gained the confidence to pursue a Consulting Arborist position in Chicago with one of the biggest tree care companies in the country. Recently I was offered a promotion to become the Assistant Manager of my company's Consulting Group, of which I joined a little over a year ago. Without the XMNR program I am not sure I would have had the confidence, interdisciplinary perspective, or leadership toolbox that has pushed me to influence my colleagues, advocate for myself and allowed me to stand out above my peers. In less than 2 years I've achieved a management role and increased my salary over 50%. I credit the XMNR program as the primary reason for my recent success."

**JP McDonnell, SavATree**

"I was looking to move my career from a mid-level government employee to an executive position. After graduating, a year and a half later I became the executive director of a non-profit."

**Kate Fritz, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay**



"Since March 2020, I have had the pleasure of managing the field operations of a nonprofit that focuses their work in fuel-efficient wood burning cookstoves for families that use open fires in Latin America. The reason for taking this job was due to its direct connection to my XMNR study and change of career path. Now I supervise a carbon-reducing project and build stoves to be put under a carbon credit project that will build future sustainability for the organization. In addition, other competencies that came from my studies are: carbon offsets, wicked problems that are too complex to solve with a single answer based on culture, desires and locations; and focus on environmental justice and sustainability for generations of people and forests."

**Alex Eaton, StoveTeam International**

"I loved the program. It has been my best lesson learned, personally, academically and professionally. I enjoyed every single class and the people (classmates, professors, faculty, guests) that I met during this time. The opportunities and challenges that we face, in terms of climate change, make this program an amazing tool towards solving complex problems. Now one month after graduation, I am so happy to share that I have received two job offers."

**Andrea Perez Jaramillo, University of Miami**



"This degree has helped me to build an international work portfolio and is also helpful as I assist in urban renewal programs in my hometown of Detroit. Challenges of sustainability are truly relevant wherever we find ourselves."

**Maggie Striz Calnin, Michigan Clean Cities**

# YOU CAN'T WAIT TO CHANGE THE WORLD STARTING WITH YOURSELF

Visit our website to learn more about the XMNR program and how you can join our small and mighty army of sustainability professionals!

[cligs.vt.edu](https://cligs.vt.edu)

Questions? Contact Program Coordinator & Admissions Advisor Amy Hubbard: [ahubb09@vt.edu](mailto:ahubb09@vt.edu)



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