TO: University Curriculum Committee
FROM: College of Natural Resources
RE: Change of name for an existing academic department [Summer 2012]
DATE: September 2, 2011

The College of Natural Resources is requesting that the Department of Forest Ecology and Biogeosciences be changed to the Department of Forest, Rangeland, and Fire Sciences.
To: Provost Doug Baker  
From: Kurt Pregitzer, Dean  
       College of Natural Resources  
       Jo Ellen Force, Head  
       Department of Forest Ecology & Biogeosciences  
Date: August 31, 2011  
Subject: New name for Department of Forest Ecology & Biogeosciences

We are requesting that the Department of Forest Ecology & Biogeosciences be re-named to the Department of Forest, Rangeland, and Fire Sciences. The Department’s 26 faculty approved this name at the end of spring semester 2011 by a vote of 20 in favor, 2 not in favor, and 4 abstentions. The new name is more consistent with the undergraduate degree programs being offered in the Department. There are no changes in the names of the degree programs. The name change has been discussed and supported in the CNR Leadership Council and in other CNR department meetings. The CNR By-Laws do not require additional actions within the College.

Many of our students and stakeholders reacted negatively to the Forest Ecology & Biogeosciences name when the College of Natural Resources was re-organized and two departments eliminated in 2009. The absence of “Rangeland” in the Department’s name was of great concern as the BS in Rangeland Ecology and Management is one of the few in the US. The addition of “Fire” to the name also provides recognition to our BS Fire Ecology and Management degree, which is the only one in the US. Thus, the new Department name recognizes the over a century of forestry education at the University of Idaho as well as the Rangeland program and our unique Fire program. All programs are a strength to the University of Idaho and critical components of the University’s mission for natural resource education.

We also acknowledge that several programs and departments across campus include Ecology in their programs. “Biogeosciences” is a 21st century name for the research of many of our faculty. However, it is not a well-defined term for degree programs at this time and was also an unknown term to many of our stakeholders.

With this new name, we will be providing strong identity for the degree programs within the department. This will increase our visibility for recruiting students and obtaining stakeholder support across all our activities.

We hope that you will approve this name change as quickly as possible. It is important that this name be in the 2012 catalog and that we can use this new name in the recruiting materials we are developing this fall. Please let us know if you need more information to proceed with approval. We would like to announce our new name as soon as possible.

Thank you for considering this request.

Kurt S. Pregitzer  
Jo Ellen Force

approved pending internal review processes.

DB 9-2-11