

Classroom instruction proved relevant on the job

Forester Erin Kreutz was in the forest marking trees her first day on the job.

Erin Kreutz (B.S. 2001) admits she didn't always pay close attention in her silviculture class. But her first day on the job as a forester with Washington State DNR found her out marking trees for a thinning. Thankfully, she says, "I vividly remembered the silviculture lab on thinning and crop tree release. Now every time I'm out marking a sale I remember that lab exercise and it helps me make the right decisions on the ground."

Erin says that you never know exactly which elements of your college training will be important to you on a particular job, so it makes sense to obtain a broad background. . . and to *pay attention in class!* "Foresters have to juggle many issues—roads, wildlife, soils, diseases, loggers," says Erin. "I've found that employers want foresters with a strong background in all of these areas." In addition, Erin suggests students take as many GIS courses as they can. "In my opinion, having a background in GIS is just as important as having a forestry degree."

In her current position, Erin helps manage state



In the above photo, Erin talks to a worker at a Washington State lumber mill.

lands by laying out timber sales, verifying contract compliance, and conducting silvicultural activities. She particularly enjoys the diversity her job offers. "I'm doing something different each week . . . it's always changing. I also work with a great group of people who love their jobs, so it's rewarding to go to work each day," she says. The only negative she could think of involves spending a lot of time in her truck. "My truck is my office, and I spend a lot of time driving."

Erin recommends students take the time to find good internships that give them a variety of professional experiences. "The more well-rounded you are, the easier it will be to find a position when you are out of school." She also advises students not to get discouraged when applying for jobs. "Expect your job search to take at least six months," she says. She suggests that if you are interested in a government job, you need a firefighting "red card"—a sort of wildland firefighter's "driver's license" that indicates you have completed required coursework and training.