

DIGITAL EDITION

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# **THE** **VEGETATION MANAGER** *magazine* **2024**

**2024 PVMA BURSARY WINNERS**

**PVMA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM HIGHLIGHTS**

**CHANGING INVASIVE SPECIES PARADIGMS**

**THE ROLE OF INVASIVE SPECIES  
MANAGEMENT IN ECOLOGICAL  
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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



## - LISA RYBCHUK, PRESIDENT PVMA



It is an honour to have been re-elected as the President for my third term on the PVMA Board of Directors!

As you may be aware, each Board member may serve only 6 consecutive years, so this will be my last 2-year term (at least for now ;). This limitation in duration ensures that the Board remains fresh, with new ideas and perspectives, and an ever-increasing circle of committed supporters.

As such, we are happy to welcome new Board members Kelly Malmberg, Jamie Wiltzen, and Chris Johnson!

Of course, on the flipside of term-limits, is that we risk losing insight and expertise that has benefited the board over time. And so it is with immense gratitude that we offer thanks to the outgoing 3-term board members Geoff Thompson and Aaron Foster, and to Jay Manganaro (who moved away) and we look forward to their lasting impact as staunch supporters and advocates for the PVMA.

When contemplating whether to let my name stand for a third term, I reflected on my past four years on the Board. The first term was spent getting to know my role within the Board of Directors and focusing on the immediate needs of the membership by organizing educational events. The second term was spent committing myself to longer-term projects such as hiring an Executive Director, liaising with Alberta Environment, and exploring the options for Utility Arborist Certification. In my remaining term, my goal is to build on the knowledge and experience that I have gained, provide support to the Board and membership, and encourage others to consider running for a position on the Board at the next AGM!

*Lisa Rybchuk, PVMA President*

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# 2024 PVMA BURSARY RECIPIENTS

One of the many benefits of being a PVMA member is the opportunity for dependants to apply for a \$500 cash bursary towards post-Secondary studies. Applicants are eligible to receive a bursary if they are a dependant of an active PVMA member, are enrolled in post-secondary studies at a Canadian institution, have completed at least one semester,

and are in good standing with that institution. They do not have to be in a vegetation related program to be eligible. The deadline for applications is January 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

The PVMA awarded 2 Bursaries to Post-Secondary Students in March of this year.

## OUR 2024 RECIPIENTS WERE:



SIDNEY ANDERSON

### SIDNEY ANDERSON

Sidney just completed his fifth year of study at the University of Lethbridge in a Bachelor of Science Archaeology/Geography program. He is involved in the Archaeology Club and the Golden Key International Hours Society.



EMMA THOMPSON

### EMMA THOMPSON

Emma just completed her third year of a Biology Degree at Concordia University. During school she is a Concordia University of Edmonton Women's Volleyball team member.

An aerial photograph showing a two-lane road with a car and a railroad track running parallel through a dense green forest. A white diagonal line separates the road from the tracks.

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# PVMA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE AND AGM HIGHLIGHTS

- SUBMITTED BY JOANNE IRELAND, PVMA



We hosted our 1-day spring conference and annual general meeting on February 28, 2024, at the Radisson Hotel in Red Deer. Our members were looking forward to the opportunity to meet in-person as our attendance numbers were up to 127, which was 20 more than our previous 1 day in person conference in 2022. We also had several companies reach out and offer to sponsor or provide an exhibit table. Thank you to Ace Vegetation Service, Advantage VM, Arbor-Tech Utility Services Ltd., Asplundh Canada ULC, Atco Energy Systems, BASF, Corteva Agriscience, Davey, Envu, Knights Spraying Inc., Sureshot Environmental Ltd., Vesperis, West Country Energy Services for your continued support!

Our morning started off with Shane Hedderson from CleanFarms speaking via Teams on the pesticide container recycling programs across Canada. With recent changes to container disposal in Alberta, this topic was of great interest to many of our members and we saw a lot of interaction and questions from our audience. And for those curious of what polling app Shane used, it was Slido, which was an excellent tool to get audience feedback and engagement in real time.

Next, we heard from Pat Perry with Davey Tree presenting a much-anticipated update on the progress of developing a UTT/UTW trade designation recognized by the Government of Alberta. Pat gave an overview of what has been completed to date, along with what needs to be accomplished to convert the UTT Program to a certified trade with the Government of Alberta

Apprenticeship and Industry Training Program. This was also a great opportunity for PVMA members to voice their opinions and offer support for these exciting changes.

After lunch our AGM was held where updates were shared by the PVMA Board of Directors, and an election was held. With Geoff Thompson and Aaron Foster reaching their maximum number of consecutive terms, we would like to thank them for their dedication and time serving the PVMA. Jay Manganaro had also finished his term, and we would like to thank him for serving on the board. We had several members step up and offer to be a part of the PVMA Board of Directors. Lisa Rybchuk was re-elected and will continue to serve as president of our association. We had 3 new board members elected in. Kelly Malberg is our new treasurer; Chris Johnson is our new National/ Industrial Director and Seminar Director and Jamie Wiltzen is our new Government Liaison and Editorial Director. Thank you for joining the board and we look forward to the expertise and experience you will offer the PVMA!

Nicole Kimmel with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas spoke next with an update on emerging aquatic vegetation threats in Alberta. Nicole gave a great review of the Weed Control Act and Fisheries Act, aquatic threats to be on the look out for in Alberta, as well as options to control the aquatic invasive species present in Alberta.



Laura Stewart, a FireSmart Specialist with Alberta Forestry and Parks, was our final speaker who presented on applying the FireSmart system to strengthen community wildfire resilience. With increased fire risks over the previous fire seasons, the importance of proper preparation and focus on proactive measures is more important than ever. Laura was an engaging speaker that did an amazing job presenting this topic to our group.

With our 4 presentations we were able to offer CECs in Alberta, BC & Saskatchewan as well as ISA credits.

As a final note, we thank our door prize sponsors for all the donated items and look forward to seeing everyone next spring!

---

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# THE ROLE OF INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT IN ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

- PRESENTATION SUMMARY FROM THE PVMA 2023 FALL WORKSHOP/ JON BERLIE, CERP, ISA ARBORIST

“ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION IS THE PROCESS OF ASSISTING THE RECOVERY OF AN ECOSYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN DEGRADED, DAMAGED, OR DESTROYED.”

Invasive species pose major challenges to ecological restoration efforts. Fast-spreading, non-native species can cause significant ecological and economic harm to native ecosystems. Ongoing effective management of invasive species is crucial to restore native ecosystems and the innumerable ecosystem services that they provide. However, many laypeople may question, “Do native ecosystems matter? Aren’t introduced species simply hard-working immigrants?”

Healthy ecosystems are made up of biodiverse communities of locally evolved native species, essential for the functioning of our planet. These communities provide humans with a vast range of natural resources such as timber, fuel, medicinal plants, fish, and wildlife all while maintaining healthy soils and pollinators such as bees and butterflies, which are essential to produce crops and maintain food systems. Furthermore, native ecosystems play a crucial role in mitigating climate change, by sequestering carbon in soils and vegetation, and by regulating the climate through the water cycle.

In contrast, non-native, invasive species can severely disrupt ecosystem functions and in turn compromise these critical ecosystem services. By outcompeting native species for resources such as water, light, and nutrients, these introduced organisms alter the structure and function of ecosystems, reducing biodiversity, and increasing the risk of wildfires. Invasive species can also have direct impacts on human health and the economy, by causing crop failures, reducing water availability, and increasing the costs of weed management.

While these ‘hard-working immigrant’ invasive species may appear more efficient at filling available niches and ecological roles, managing them effectively is crucial. The use of Integrated Pest Management strategies helps to reduce the impact of

invasive species on native ecosystems while minimizing the impact on the environment. The most efficient and cost-effective strategy for managing invasive species is Prevention. It involves measures such as regulating the import and trade of invasive species, educating the public about the associated risks, and researching to understand the impacts on native ecosystems. On active restoration sites, sanitation and diligent monitoring are critical anytime materials, equipment, tools, or even clothing come from off-site. Once introduced, invasive propagules can quickly establish and spread, outcompeting native species, and disrupting ecosystem processes.

The management of invasive species is a crucial step in the restoration of native ecosystems. The role of dedicated pest managers becomes one of freedom fighters, liberating threatened native plants and animals from these resource-dominating outside invaders. By intelligently and adaptively managing invasive species, we can protect the integrity of the native ecosystems, maintain local biodiversity, and support the ecosystem services that they provide.



Jon Berlie, CERP, ISA ARBORIST





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## INDUSTRY PROFILE:

### MEET CHRIS STABY, VEGETATION MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST, ALTALINK



Chris Staby has worked in the vegetation management industry from an early age and has been in the industry for 30+ years. His dad and uncle are in the industry and that's how he got his start. His dad was still cutting trees when he turned 72, and like his dad, Chris will probably be working with trees forever. Working in the industry is a family tradition and Chris is proud that his son will carry that on.

After he got his start, Chris began his career as a Groundman in 1994 with Ace Vegetation, doing herbicide, removing hazard trees, and on a trim crew. After working at Ace, Chris went to Midland where he worked in herbicide and in 1998, he went to Olds College. He carried on from there to Asplundh in 2000 where he worked on a slash crew, a mow crew and trim crew. He was a Foreman at Asplundh and worked on the ENMAX system until 2006. Chris has enjoyed working on a variety of systems throughout his career and gaining a lot of utility management experience. Chris loves working with his family, so he moved to Davey Tree in 2006 where he worked with his brother until 2017. At Davey he worked as a Foreman, Trainer, Safety Expert, Supervisor, and at the very end, he was a Consenter for AltaLink.

He made the logical next step in 2017 and joined AltaLink. At AltaLink he has worked as a Consenter, and now he's the Vegetation Management Specialist.

Chris loves this industry and working outdoors. When he's not at work, he enjoys ocean fishing on the West Coast. His ideal office is surrounded by nature and great people - and steering clear of offices and spreadsheets. Chris has enjoyed the 30 years of friendships that come from working in this industry. He loves attending PVMA events so we can network and connect with the friends he's met along the way. Chris enjoys his role as a trainer and mentor as he sees the challenges that the industry faces with employee training and retention. Being able to share and pass along knowledge to a new generation workforce is special to him. In addition to having taught at Olds College, he is also trained as a UTT, and is an ISA certified arborist with his TRAQ qualification. Chris is genuinely proud of this industry and has a lot of respect for the UVM trade. He has made major contributions to the ROW stewardship accreditation at AltaLink and continues to advocate for positive management of ecosystems. When asked if Chris had any advice for new people joining the industry, he said, invest in learning; learn about other parts of utility operations such as engineering and how new technology can solve some of our current challenges.

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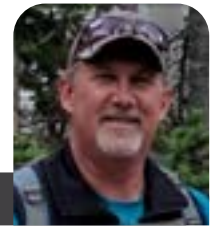
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# CHANGING INVASIVE SPECIES

- KELLY COOLEY, COOLPRO SOLUTIONS



2023 was quite a ride for everyone, and for the most part, not an enjoyable one. After what we all went through during the pandemic, and now the post-pandemic period, the world in 2023 has realized that we have not, in fact, advanced enough as a species to figure out how to prevent and fix things that have dogged us forever – poverty and disease, polarized politics and war.

This article won't solve those issues, though I would suggest the we all study human history on these issues from as many perspectives as possible. As has been noted before – those who fail to understand history are doomed to repeat it. Perhaps then we can better understand ourselves, and each other.

My objective in this piece is to ask my fellow invasive species professionals to consider the industry, and the issue we share – perhaps in the context of this mad, mad world we live in – and see if we can begin to look for ways to understand and change paradigms on that we have more direct influence on.

## POLARIZED GROUP POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES – OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AS INDIVIDUALS & PROFESSIONALS

Our proximity to the Excited States of America no doubt has influenced our politics here in Canada, and polarization in the 21st century in our Great White North is only slightly behind what we observe from our American cousins. It seemingly does not matter what issue we are discussing these days; the toxic with-us-or-against-us hardwired nature of partisan political parties has folks on all sides of the spectrum aligning themselves ever more rigidly along hardline positions. If the 'other side' says it, it must be wrong and with evil intent; if 'our side' says it, it must be correct and of virtuous intent.

**This is a choice.**

**As individuals, as professionals, we can choose to unhitch ourselves from this polarized madness, and return to a more reasoned, centrist perspective, on an issue by issue basis.**

How do we achieve a more reasoned, centrist perspective? A dear personal friend and professional mentor of mine used to remind me often – **don't judge a person until you've walked a mile in their moccasins**. He learned that from a first nations community he lived in during the 1970s in Alberta's remote north. **It's a reminder to consider where a person different than us in race, culture, gender, socio-economic status, and/or political perspective is coming from on a subject or action BEFORE choosing our own personal reaction to that subject or action.** I've tried to apply that to my personal and professional

relationships ever since – not always successfully, but I keep trying.

Let's look at a few examples.

## SPECIES RENAMING ON THE BASIS OF PERCEIVED ETHNOCENTRIC-COLONIAL BIAS OF EXISTING NAMES

Gypsy Moth is now Spongey Moth. Asian Murder Hornet is now Northern Giant Hornet. Oldsquaw Duck is now Long-Tailed Duck. Hottentot Teal is now Blue-Billed Teal. There are many other examples of species that have been renamed (not without some controversy), to names thought to be less 'problematic' and (more importantly) **better describing the physical or behavioral characteristics of the species**. As I noted, these name changes have been controversial for many, mostly based on objections like:

- "Nothing wrong with the old name, and no one was really offended by those names anyway"
- "It will confuse people because all the old books and online references refer to the old names"
- "Politically correct renaming distracts us from other more important work with these species"

All of these objections may have merit, but by digging into these positions, we only add to the polarization that I've noted earlier. **Walk a mile in the moccasins of those who have issues with these species' names, and even if you don't agree with their reasons, at least understand what they are.**

Regardless of how one feels about the ethno-colonial aspects of current names of many species, I would suggest **a point of agreement is that many species names are currently NOT very descriptive of their behavioral or physical characteristics**. Many species are named after a person, or a region, which is quite unhelpful in identifying them by their more obvious physical or behavioral features. **This presents an opportunity for working professionals to view the renaming controversy as an opportunity for renewal and growth, rather than yet another opportunity for conflict.**

- Japanese Brome could be renamed Greater Downy Brome (based on larger physical features than Downy Brome(which could become Lesser Downy Brome). In the US, Downy Brome is called 'Cheatgrass' because of its winterannual advantage of 'cheating' and getting a later winter & early spring growth 'head-start' on other desirable perennial grass species. One could adapt in the US and call the two species Greater and Lesser Cheatgrass.
- Canada Thistle, of course, is a Eurasian species, not a Canadian one. Renaming it to Eurasian Thistle,



however, would not correct the issue sufficiently. Creeping Thistle is a much more appropriate name due to the creeping nature of the species' root system.

- Russian Knapweed. Japanese Knotweed. Eurasian Watermilfoil. There are other examples.

**Species professionals can offer a more constructive discussion on the often controversial subject of species renaming by moving the discussion toward an overarching goal of making all species names more descriptive of their behavioral or physical characteristics.**

### INVASIVE SPECIES DENIALISM, NIHILISM, AND CYNICISM (STRATTON NG, 2022)

- Denialism – current 'invasive' science is wrong; no such thing as 'invasive'.
- Nihilism – invasive species are not worth discussing; invasive species are a waste of time/money.
- Cynicism – invasive species management is not beneficial and may even be harmful.

**What these three perspectives share is their opposition to invasive species management.**

All of the above can be pretty discouraging to invasive species professionals who view their work as important from a resource protection or legal enforcement perspective. So - what to do?

**Walk a mile in the moccasins of each of those who ascribe**

**to one or more of the above viewpoints, seeking to understand what motivates these views.** Is it a concern with pesticide use? Cost / tax burden concerns? Preoccupation with other issues, perhaps other production/environmental protection issues? **If invasive species professionals better understand what the motivations are for these objections, they can begin to craft their engagement appeals to these individuals and communities on how invasive species impact them personally or the things they DO care deeply about.** There are so many organizations that can assist us in this – PVMA, the various provincial and national invasive species councils, and the North American Invasive Species Management Association are just a few examples.

### THE 'WAR ON WEEDS' – MILITARISTIC VS STEWARDSHIP APPROACHES

As noted in the beginning of this article, we have more than enough actual wars going on in the world today, and a sense of frustration, helplessness, and anger in humanity goes along with that sad reality.

**Do we continue as an industry to rely on the militaristic approach to invasive species management?**

**Battle-Kill-Eradicate-Destroy-Eliminate the invasive species?**  
OR

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production and/or energy/infrastructure protection, which sustain us all?

**Words matter, and as invasive species and vegetation management professionals, using language appealing to a sense of what we would like to build and retain rather than what we are fighting against is a more likely path to successful engagement, and hopefully support of and participation in, the important work we do.**

### CULTURAL AWARENESS & SENSITIVITY – WHY SHOULD FOLKS CARE ABOUT OUR ISSUES IF WE FAIL TO CONSIDER THEIRS?

My final appeal in this article is for all of us to seek to understand and respect the bewildering diversity of perspectives we have in this country, and to seek to understand issues they are seeking to solve.

- First Nations (a significant number of us, and very diverse)
- Urban lifestyle (by far most Canadians) compared with rural lifestyle (just a few of us)
- Resource industry compared with service industry
- Government sector compared with private industry
- Generational (age-influenced) differences in perspective
- Socio-economic status and background
- Linguistic & cultural perspectives

**Walk a mile in the moccasins of each of these subsets of Canadians, seeking to understand what motivates and challenges them – what are their issues, and how can they relate to our own?**

- Can we provide employment and/or learning opportunities for these communities?
- Can we engage these communities to help us with our work while helping them with theirs?
- Can these communities teach us something about how to prevent & manage invasives – is it possible that their life experiences can add something to our own understanding?
- Can we seek to better learn about and understand perspectives other than our own, and gain personally AND professionally in the process?

All of the above are not easy to undertake and implement, and I am certainly not suggesting they are. Nothing worthwhile is ever easy – in fact, that is exactly why we should try – because if these things were easy, we would already be doing them. Professionalism is learning to always improve. Let's all strive to be better personally and professionally in 2024 and beyond. If we do, we will make our crazy world better. Happy 2024 to you all, and may it be a safe and productive one for you, your work, and your families.

Citation On Section Of This Article Discussing Invasive Species Denialism, Nihilism, and Cynicism: Stratton NG, M. N. (2022, September). From anti-science to environmental nihilism: the Fata Morgana of invasive species denialism. *NeoBiota*, 75: 39-56. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3897/neobiota.75.90631>

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# SAFETY & COMPETENCY OF WORKERS

- BY IAN STANWOOD

Today's operational and safety environment necessitates the assessment and verification of workers' skills. Employers and employees must utilize various tools to observe, document, and prove that competency checks have been conducted. It is crucial to note that employers are legally bound (OHS ACT Section 3(3)) to ensure that employees under their supervision are competent to perform work that poses any danger. While the language in the legislation may be somewhat ambiguous, it is essential to adhere to the best practices established by Alberta certifying partners in relation to the Certificate Of Recognition program (COR).

These best practices are intended to help employers develop and document a system of methods to prove workers are competent to carry out their tasks in a manner that does not endanger themselves, other workers, or the public. Competency verifications should be tailored to the specific functions required. It is essential to verify and document the following:

## - EDUCATION AND TRADE CERTIFICATIONS:

Employers should verify that workers' certifications are valid from the accredited body to ensure they are in good standing. Customers should also conduct verifications on their vendors' certifications, such as UTT/UTW certifications, Industrial Spray Applicators Licenses, ISA or TRAQ certifications. Many credentials can be suspended or held in poor standing due to ethical or compliance concerns. Consider calling previous employers for reference checks and asking questions related to the employees' specific qualifications and competency.

## - TRAINING AND RELATED EXPERIENCE:


Employers need to prove that workers have received internal or external training as defined in their HSE Policy. This includes onboarding training, orientations, annual recertification, site-specific training, new task training, Supervisory and Leadership training, and first aid, among others.

## - OPERATION OF TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT:


Employers must demonstrate that workers are competent in the practical use of specific tools and equipment. For instance, if an employee is provided with an ATV, employers should verify their competence in the necessary skills. This includes understanding the machine's limits, loading, and unloading, trailering, basic maintenance, and the manufacturer's safe operating procedures. In some cases, relying solely on external certifications to prove that workers have been trained is insufficient; employers also need to conduct their own evaluations.

These evaluations should be carried out and documented by experienced supervisors who are qualified, experienced, and credited in the industry or company they work for. This approach instills confidence in the worker, demonstrates diligence, and fosters a culture of connection within the company. When workers are aware that their employer values their work, it sets an expectation for safety and consistency, which in turn cultivates habits that can prevent incidents. It can prompt an employee to pause, reflect, and plan.

AS AN EMPLOYER, THESE PROCESSES MUST BE DOCUMENTED AND CONDUCTED AS OUTLINED IN THE COMPANY'S HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY. MANY TOOLS AND METHODS CAN BE UTILIZED TO VERIFY WORKERS' COMPETENCY, AND THEY NEED TO BE REFLECTIVE OF THE SPECIFIC TASK BEING COMPLETED. SHOWING DUE DILIGENCE AS AN EMPLOYER IS A REQUIREMENT, BUT UNDERSTANDING YOUR EMPLOYEES' LIMITS IS GOOD PRACTICE AND CAN LEAD TO REDUCED INCIDENTS AND INCIDENT SEVERITY.



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# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## - AWARDS COMMITTEE

The PVMA is pleased to announce the 2024 Bursary recipients; Emma Thompson and Sidney Anderson! This award recognizes the scholastic achievement of dependents of PVMA members, encouraging them to pursue secondary education. The Bursary application deadline is January 31st of each year.

The PVMA also awarded seven \$1500 scholarships to Alberta students who are enrolled in an Alberta Post Secondary Institute in a vegetation management-related program or related work experience. The most recent winners were announced in the February 2024 edition of the Vegetation Manager Magazine and include Brenna Meeres, Lexis Elliott, Sidney Anderson, Daron Cyr, Eleanor Kyme, Emma Thompson, and Calder Thompson. We were pleased to have Brenna Meeres and Eleanor Kyme present at the Spring 2024 Conference to celebrate their awards.

It was also with great pleasure that the PVMA announced the first recipient of the Keith Sanftleben Memorial Scholarship which was awarded to Kole Eichelt. This award, which has been increased to \$4,000 for 2024, is provided to students that have an interest in making a positive impact on the community and others. An article about Kole can be found in the February 2024 VM Magazine. Applications for the scholarships are accepted from September 1st to November 30th of each year.

For more information about the Scholarships and Bursaries, please visit the PVMA website.

*Lisa Rybchuk, Director in Charge*

## - EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The Editorial committee is always busy working on the next issues of the Vegetation Manager magazine, if there are any interested parties who may have ideas to bring forward on writeups or exclusive information they would like to pass onto the membership, please reach out to Val in the PVMA office, or another committee member. We are also looking for suggestions for industry profile candidates.

*Jamie Wiltzen, Director in Charge*

## - MARKETING COMMITTEE

As an effort to bring more awareness and education to the public about our association and industry, we have focused on attending career fairs this spring. We were able to attend the Black Gold Trades and Career Fair April 9 at Leduc Composite High School, where Nicole and I had a great time visiting with students and discussing what careers and education opportunities exist within the PVMA.

We also attended the Edmonton Job Fair and Training Expo on May 9, 2024, at the Edmonton Convention Center. As an added benefit to our members, we have created a distribution list of job opportunities to hand out to potential new workers. I have reached out to several school divisions and colleges with the hopes to continue exploring career fair options. If you would like to be added to our list or have any other suggestion, please email [execdiretor@pvma.ca](mailto:execdiretor@pvma.ca) or call me at 780-787-0110.

*Joanne Ireland, Committee Chairman*

## - SEMINAR COMMITTEE

We successfully hosted our 2024 spring conference and AGM in Red Deer on February 28 at the Radisson. By utilizing casino funds, the PVMA was able to offer tickets at a reduced rate. Final turnout was 127 people, which was up from 109 at our previous spring conference. Our four speakers did an amazing job of engaging our group.

Feedback from the audience reflected that a majority of attending members would like to see the continuation of hosting our smaller spring and fall conferences in person opposed to online. Most of the audience would also like to continue seeing our larger spring conference held at the River Cree in Enoch.

As an effort to ensure adequate speakers, our conference committee has decided to cancel our 2024 fall conference and focus on planning for our 3-day spring conference at River Cree February 25-27, 2025. If you would like to join our conference committee or have any input or suggestions, please contact the PVMA office.

*Joanne Ireland, Committee Chairman*



## - GOV'T LIAISON COMMITTEE

I contacted Lakeland College regarding off site/private Core & Industrial exam opportunities and I have detailed my questions and Lakeland's answers below:

1. What is the lowest class size you are willing to proctor for?

- We usually say 10 exams minimum. Our program is entirely cost recovery, we need to have enough registrations to make the trip cost effective. However, with less than 10 students we may be able to provide separate accommodations.

2. Are you willing to travel throughout Alberta? If so, does this impact the class size?

- Yes, we are. This feeds off the answer to the first question – if we are traveling very far, our expenses may be higher, we just need enough registrations to make it cost effective.

3. You had mentioned about 3-4 days to mark exams and the turnaround time for licensing to be created / sent out. Can you explain more about how long those timelines may be? Also, at what point an applicator could call to find out their license number, prior to receiving the document in the mail?

- Our office operates on a 10-business day turnaround. Home studies ordered online are shipped within 10-business days, and certificates earned are sent out within 10 business days of the exam. It can take us a couple of days to process the paper exams, we will not release the grades as they are available, only when the entire group is done. We are still making every effort to have their certificates out within 10 business days of the exam. A certificate number is usually available 7-8 business days after writing. My staff (Cara and Shanna) can provide those. They can be reached at 1-866-853-8646 or at pesticides@lakelandcollege.ca.

4. Any other information we should be aware of?

- The more notice we receive for a group exam, the easier it is to put together!! It is also helpful if they can be around the same dates. Example: if we have a group in Calgary one day, Red Deer the next, and Edmonton on the third, that makes it easier on my staff. We understand that this isn't always feasible, though.

5. Final thoughts.

- Basically, we are willing/eager to work with industry to certify your staff in a timely manner, keeping in mind that everyone in the province wants these done in the spring. We are not a large department! Also, this is not specific to Industrial applicators, we will do this for any applicators/dispensers.

**Anyone interested in a large group exam can reach out to me at 780 853 8565 or at [Andrea.Kastendieck@lakelandcollege.ca](mailto:Andrea.Kastendieck@lakelandcollege.ca)**

***Jamie Wiltzen, Director in Charge***

## - PROTOCOL COMMITTEE

With only a few paper copies left of our manuals, please contact PVMA if you would like a copy. Prices are on the website. As always, digital copies are also available for purchase.

***Joanne Ireland, Committee Chairman***

## - CASINO COMMITTEE

We have received the proceeds from the fall Casino in the amount of \$80,843.73. Thank you to the companies who provided workers: Knights Spraying, Ace Vegetation, Sure Shot Environmental, Arbormetrics Solutions, Lakeland Vegetation, Advantage VM, Renu-L-Tec Environmental, Woodchuk Enterprises, Kenco Environmental and Atco. We continue to find new opportunities to utilize casino funds.

***Laura Hammer, Director in Charge***

## - MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Just a reminder that if you have not renewed your membership for 2024, please do so at your earliest opportunity. You must be a paid-up member to retain your no-cost accidental life insurance benefit. Also, don't forget as a member you can advertise on the PVMA job board for free.

***Orville McLean, Director in Charge***

## - NATIONAL/INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE

OVMA 2024 Tour and seminar will be held in Chatham, Ont. Golf on September 24th and Tour on September 25th with September 26th being the seminar and AGM. Information can be found at <https://www.ovma.ca/>

AVMA conference and AGM 2024 is slated for October in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Information on the AVMA can be found at <http://myavma.ca/blog/>

***Chris Johnson, Director in Charge***

## - UTW-UTT BOG COMMITTEE

The UTW-UTT Board of Governors continues to be busy with a lot of things on the go within our industry.

- We just recently completed two course intakes for the UTT/UTW Program.
- Approximately 40 individuals attended the two programs and by the time it was completed it was overall a great success.
- Along with this, two Electrical recert courses were conducted one of these online and one in class delivery.

This year was a challenge as a number of late registrations came in, changing our numbers from 18 to approximately 40 in a short time frame. I cannot say enough to thank all involved, from the administration staff at the PVMA office as well as the staff at Old's College. Along with these folks, I have to also thank the instructors who changed plans on short notice to help ensure that we were able to accommodate two field deliveries in a professional and educational manner.

Lastly, I need to thank the many members of Industry who helped by supporting us with equipment and instructors, and their willingness to move employees around to accommodate the two intakes.

I have been involved with this program for twenty plus years and this year's intakes reminded me just how important the support of industry and all the administration people behind the scenes that make this program a success.

### **Trade Recognition Talks**

- Pat Perry has been consulting with the Government representatives on this topic on behalf of the PVMA and UVMA.
- Pat has done presentations for the PVMA and UVMA keeping us up to speed on how things are going.
- We will be developing a fact sheet along with a survey to send out to industry to get feedback from our stakeholders and contractors.
- Once this information is gathered this will help to determine our next steps and move forward with this process.

It is a unique time as our industry continues to grow and the challenge for everyone to find quality employees to build our crews around present challenges that we are all working through. Trade recognition may not solve all of this, but it will bring focus to our industry and hopefully change the perception that being in the Vegetation Management Industry is not just a filler job for the short term but instead there is potential for a career with opportunities for advancement. This hopefully will start to keep people actively engaged in this profession and help us all to grow and succeed.

I also want to share an email we received from one of our instructors this year:

I WANTED TO SEND A NOTE TO YOU REGARDING THE GROUP OF 20 STUDENTS THAT JUST CAME THROUGH THE UTW COURSE THIS PAST WEEK. I COULD GO ON AT GREAT LENGTH REGARDING THIS GROUP, AS THEY WERE AWESOME, AND I THINK YOU SAW THE SAME.

I MOST IMPORTANTLY WANTED TO NOTE, EVERY STUDENT CAME DRESSED TO IMPRESS. I DID NOT SEE ANY TORN PANTS, NO CUT BOOTS, NO DAMAGED SAWS, NO SLOPPY CLOTHING TO GET CAUGHT IN A SAW. EVERYONE SHOWED UP EAGER TO LEARN, AND THEY ALL DEMONSTRATED A VERY STRONG AND SAFE ATTITUDE .

WE HAVE HAD SOME GREAT PEOPLE AND CLASSES COME THROUGH OVER THE PAST TWENTY PLUS YEARS, THIS ONE IS IN THE TOP 3 FOR SURE, CONGRATS AND THANK YOU TO ALL !!

*Bob Gordon, Director in Charge*

## - SAFETY COMMITTEE

We are looking for new committee members to join the Safety Committee and/or suggested items for review by the Safety Committee.

*Darcy Soderstrom, Director in Charge*





## SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE REMINDER

### SCHOLARSHIPS:

The PVMA will be awarding up to four \$1500 scholarships each year to Alberta students who are enrolled in an Alberta Post Secondary Institute in a vegetation management-related program OR in any program but have vegetation management work experience. In addition to the scholarship, the winners will be invited expenses paid to our Spring Seminar.

Refer to the Student Scholarship Application form for more information and application instructions.

Applications are accepted from September 1st to November 30th of each year.

[https://www.pvma.ca/awards\\_scholarships\\_and\\_bursaries](https://www.pvma.ca/awards_scholarships_and_bursaries)

### KEITH SANFTLEBEN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP: (NEW)

Keith Sanftleben was an active member of the PVMA for many years and had a passion for helping other people and communities. This scholarship has been set up to honour his memory and to highlight students that have an interest in making a positive impact on the community and others. The PVMA will be awarding a Scholarship totalling \$4,000.00 (\$3,000 from PVMA and \$1,000 from AdvantageVM) each year to a student enrolled in post secondary study at an Alberta government approved provincial, national, or international institution or program.

Refer to the Keith Sanftleben Memorial Scholarship Application form for more information and application instructions.

Applications are accepted from September 1st to November 30th of each year.

## Spring Conference & Tradeshow @ River Cree Resort

Save the  
**DATE**

**FEBRUARY**

**25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>**

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# THE VEGETATION MANAGER *magazine*

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## - PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

### Deadline for submission

January 18, 2024

May 2, 2024

Sept 19, 2024

### Distribution Date

February 28, 2024 (Print)

June 4, 2024 (Digital)

October 24, 2024 (Digital)

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