

DIGITAL EDITION

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# VEGETATION MANAGER *magazine* 2026

*In This Issue:*

**HERBICIDE PERFORMANCE**

**THE EMERALD ASH BORER**

**SAFETY ON THE MOVE - PROTECTING VM CREWS**

**2026 PVMA BURSARY RECIPIENT**

**INDUSTRY PROFILE: DONALD WALTERS**

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



## - BOB GORDON, PRESIDENT PVMA



PVMA President, Bob Gordon

I want to thank the members, staff, and volunteers who play such an important role in PVMA's success. Having served on several committees before becoming President, I now see firsthand how much work the team puts into organizing conferences, managing the UTT/UTW program, keeping up with new technologies, navigating herbicide-use regulations, and continually finding ways to strengthen the association.

The PVMA continues to be the association that leads the way as

representatives of industry and stake holders, and our overall membership. I am proud to be a part of this association and proud of the work that goes into our success by so many.

Finally, I would like to thank our outgoing President, Lisa Rybchuk, for her hard work as she completed her third term this spring. I look forward to continuing to work with re-elected directors Kelly Malmberg, Jamie Wiltzen, and Chris Johnson, and to welcoming Peter Jecklin to the group.



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PVMA PRESIDENT BOB GORDON PRESENTED RICHARD LAW WITH A PLAQUE, RECOGNIZING RICHARD'S MANY YEARS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE UTW-UTT BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

# INDUSTRY PROFILE: DONALD WALTERS

DONALD GREW UP IN SMALL TOWN ALBERTA AND BEING THE THIRD GENERATION IN THE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY, HE WAS EXPOSED TO VEGETATION WORK AT A YOUNG AGE.

Starting his career in the 80's on a Nodwell herbicide crew spraying regrowth on transmission lines in northern Alberta. He went on to saw crews having been taught falling and climbing from people like Bob Gordon and later transitioning onto equipment being mentored by his father Barry who has been in the industry since 1959 and has been very fortunate to have worked on and off with his father over the decades. In the early 90's Donald completed his Olds course and started running crews on both distribution and transmission lines. In 2018 he went contracting as a patrol/consenter. He is currently mulching on the Fortis system.

With 17 seasons of herbicide and decades of mow/mulch, mechanical trimming, patrol/consenting. Having worked in four provinces and one territory, on seven utility systems as well as numerous pipeline systems, fighting wildfires and working fire mitigation for various utilities as well as various special projects, Donald has enjoyed a wide assortment of experiences.

He stepped into a director roll and head of the safety committee with the PVMA in October 2025 and subsequently moved to head the UTT-UTW Board of Governors in February 2026. Don is looking forward to new challenges.

You can also find him helping at a machine shop he partnered in back in 2014 or involved with the Wizard Lake Watershed & Lake Stewardship association. Donald is proud of his nearly 40 years in the industry having worked for great people, working with great people, and having had great people work for him.





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# SAFETY ON THE MOVE

## PROTECTING MANAGEMENT CREWS

- SUBMITTED BY DONALD WALTERS



Vegetation management crews face a unique combination of operational risks every day. Whether trimming trees from aerial trim trucks in busy urban corridors or spraying weeds and brush along remote rural roads, workers operate in dynamic environments where traffic, equipment, weather, and public interaction all demand constant attention. A strong safety culture is not only essential for regulatory compliance — it is critical for protecting workers, motorists, and the public.

Mechanical brushing crews working from trim trucks often perform tasks within a few metres of active traffic lanes. This creates an environment where operators, ground personnel, and passing motorists must safely share limited space. One of the most effective methods for reducing risk is the use of clearly visible construction signage and properly placed traffic cones. Advance warning signs provide drivers with enough time to slow down, change lanes, and identify workers ahead. Cones and delineators help establish a controlled work zone and create a visible barrier between workers and moving traffic.

Roadside vegetation management crews frequently move from one location to another throughout the day. Because these are often short-duration worksites, there can be a temptation to rush setup procedures. However, every stop requires a complete hazard assessment and proper

traffic accommodation setup. Supervisors should ensure that signage meets provincial and municipal standards, especially in areas with higher traffic speeds or limited visibility.

Communication remains another key element of safety. Ground crews and aerial operations must maintain clear communication at all times along roadways. Spotters play an important role in monitoring vehicle movement and helping crew members maintain awareness of pedestrians, cyclists, and overhead hazards.

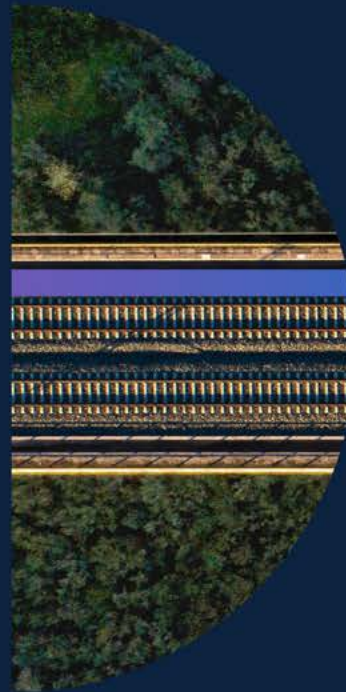
High-visibility apparel, hard hats, hearing protection, and eye protection remain mandatory personal protective equipment for all roadside operations.

Safe driving practices, defensive driving training, and vehicle inspections are essential for reducing incidents involving fleet vehicles.

Ultimately, successful vegetation management operations depend on planning, training, and consistency. From the placement of traffic cones to situation awareness, every procedure contributes to a safer work environment. When crews remain committed to hazard awareness and Industry best practices, they help maintain safety and efficiency for everyone.

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# PVMA 2026 SPRING CONFERENCE

- SUBMITTED BY JOANNE IRELAND

PVMA'S 2026 SPRING WORKSHOP AND GENERAL MEETING TOOK PLACE ON FEBRUARY 24, 2026, AT THE I-HOTEL IN RED DEER.

The morning began with a short video welcome from Lisa Rybchuk, who was unable to attend in person.

Our first speaker, Blair Brassard, Director of Health, Safety and Environment at Asplundh Canada ULC, spoke about using high-energy icons and controls to help prevent serious injuries and fatalities. Asplundh has adapted the Energy Wheel and High Energy Icons for their industry to help workers identify hazards, apply controls, and strengthen incident management. Key themes included visual communication, standardization, training and awareness, and incident reduction supported by ongoing updates and feedback to embed these practices in daily utility vegetation management operations.

After a brief networking break, past president Brandon Tupper presented Val Eichelt, our office manager, with a plaque recognizing her 10 years of service to PVMA. Her dedication and expertise have been a tremendous asset to the association.

Next, Gayah Siuesahai, a Pest Regulator Officer with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, reviewed the Alberta Weed Control Act and Regulation, provided updates to the Weed Control Regulation, and outlined key obligations under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. The general meeting followed lunch and included approval of the fall 2025 meeting minutes, officer reports, and committee updates. Chris Johnson, Kelly Malmberg, Jamie Wiltzen, and Peter Jecklin were elected through electronic

voting as Directors. We also recognized our scholarship recipients, with Thane Beagle presenting Amy Ebl, who was able to attend, with a certificate.

The day concluded with a panel discussion on attraction, recruitment, and retention in vegetation management.

Moderated by Kim Lainge (ArborMetrics), the panel featured Robert Collinge (Atco), Steve Kerr (Fortis), Jesse Imbeault (Davey), Kevin Tritten (Arbor Tech), Mike Evoy (Ace Vegetation), and Brandon Tupper (Knight Spraying).

Key takeaways included:

- o How company brand influences the talent pipeline.
- o Reaching schools earlier and other ways to promote the industry.
- o The value of industry collaboration and networking.
- o Using technology to attract a new generation of workers while balancing it with essential field skills.
- o Examples of career pathways and what success can look like in the industry (shared by each panelist).
- o How compensation, benefits, and support for credentials relate to high-quality work.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS  
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YOU ENJOYED THE DAY AND LOOK  
FORWARD TO SEEING EVERYONE  
IN OCTOBER IN RED DEER.

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# THE EMERALD ASH BORER:

## BIOLOGY, DAMAGE, DETECTION, AND PREPAREDNESS

- SUBMITTED BY KEN FRY, PH.D.

### DESCRIPTION

Adult Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) beetles are emerald green with a pointed posterior abdomen and an overall slender shape (Fig. 1). The antennae are short, and the eyes are quite large. The Bronze Birch Borer, *Agrilus anxius*, is very similar to the EAB in size and shape but is bronze in colour. Other species in the genus *Agrilus* are also very similar. The best feature to distinguish EAB from all other *Agrilus* is that EAB has a bright metallic red dorsal surface of the abdomen. You must open the elytra to see this character. The larvae are whitish with a distinct flattened head, wide prothorax, and bell-shaped abdominal segments. The larvae do not have any legs.

### DISTRIBUTION

The Emerald Ash Borer, *Agrilus planipennis*, is a wood-boring beetle in the Order Coleoptera (Beetles) and Family Buprestidae (Flat-headed Borers). This beetle is native to Eastern Asia, specifically Eastern Russia, North-eastern China, both Korea and Japan and Taiwan (Herms & McCullough 2014). It was introduced into North America in Detroit in the early 1990s and into Windsor, Ontario, in 2002 (Haack et al. 2002, Poland & McCullough 2006). The beetle has spread to more than 30 U.S. states, mostly in the northeast but also in Colorado and Oregon in the west. In Canada, the beetle has spread from Ontario to southern Quebec, parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and has been detected most recently in Winnipeg and Vancouver. It is predicted that the beetle will be able to survive across most of North America, including many major centres on the Prairies (Cuddington et al. 2018, Sambaraju et al. 2025).

### LIFE CYCLE

Adults emerge from under the bark from late May to early June. They feed on ash leaf margins for 2 weeks, then mate, and the females lay their eggs in crevices in the bark. Females can lay up to 50-90 eggs in their lifetime. They prefer to lay eggs in or near the tree they emerged from but will seek out nearby trees if the population density is high (Muirhead et al. 2006). The hatching larvae bore down into the inner phloem and cambium to feed throughout the summer. If there are only a few larvae infesting a tree, the tree can mount a defence and isolate the

larva by creating a callus around the feeding area, resulting in serpentine galleries within the callus (Fig. 2). If the infestation is high (>25 larvae in a single tree), the tree's defences are overwhelmed, and the larvae form random galleries, often girdling the tree (Fig. 3). The larvae complete four instars and, in the fall, form a pupal chamber under the sapwood. The pre-pupa adopts a recognizable J-shape. In spring, pupation is completed, and the adults chew a characteristic D-shaped hole in the bark to emerge (Figs. 4 & 5).

### FEEDING

The beetle feeds principally on trees in the genus *Fraxinus*, including Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), White Ash (*F. americana*), Black Ash (*F. nigra*), and Pumpkin Ash (*F. profunda*). Blue Ash (*F. quadrangulata*), has been shown to be relatively resistant to EAB (Mathieu & McCullough 2025). There is some laboratory evidence of it feeding on White Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) (Cipollini 2015) and cultivated Olive Trees (*Olea europaea*) (Callahan et al. 2025). Adult beetles prefer to lay eggs in smaller branches in the upper crown. In large infestations, the main bole of the tree and larger branches may also be attacked. Saplings in tree nurseries are also vulnerable to attack.

### DAMAGE

Adult feeding does not do much harm to the trees. Larval feeding can result in mild to significant decline and even death of a tree, depending on the severity of the infestation. Death in urban stands can occur as early as 6 years after initial infestation (Knight et al. 2013). Symptoms of larval feeding include crown chlorosis or dieback, development of epicormic shoots, bark cracking and the production of a large seed crop in response to feeding stress. Damage to bark by woodpeckers (called blanding) and squirrels may also be evident. Highly stressed trees are more susceptible to oystershell scale infestations.

### MONITORING

The most effective means of detecting EAB is to girdle live trees (Burr et al. 2018, McCullough et al. 2011). It is a destructive method, but it has proven to be the most effective in detecting

EAB in low population densities. Branch sampling is labour-intensive; however, it is considered to be the best method for detecting EAB for urban pest management programs. This method entails taking 50-70cm lengths of live branches 3-10cm in diameter from the southern aspect of the upper canopy. Two branches per tree are recommended for the detection of EAB. The branch should be secured in a vise, and the bark is then peeled back carefully using a draw knife to expose any EAB galleries.

A less effective but less costly method of monitoring for EAB is to use baited green pyramid traps suspended in the upper canopy on the south-facing aspect. The traps are to be baited with a female sex pheromone (3Z-lactone) and a host plant volatile (cis-3-hexanol). The traps should be erected in early May, examined in July and removed by the end of August.

## PEST MANAGEMENT

If any distressed or suspect trees are observed, they should be reported to the municipality or county for closer examination. Early detection is imperative for successful management. When chipping pruned or felled material, be observant for galleries, bark cracking or emergence holes.

The larvae can be managed using insecticides (Table 1). Spring application is much more effective than fall application. Tree symptoms are typically not evident until year 4 or 5 of an infestation (Cappaert et al. 2005); however, the optimal time for treatment is by year 3. Therefore, insecticides are best used as a preventative action rather than a corrective action (Sadof et al. 2023).

TABLE 1. INSECTICIDES REGISTERED FOR USE AGAINST EAB IN CANADA

COMMERCIAL NAME	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	NOTES
Acecap 97	Acephate	Apply after bloom, suppresses but does not eliminate
Confidor 200 SL	Imidacloprid	Apply after bloom, suppression only, must be applied annually, slow uptake into the tree, takes 40+ days to kill larvae
IMA-Jet 10	Imidacloprid	Suppression only, must be applied annually, slow uptake into the tree
Treeazin	Azadirachtin	Apply after bloom, does not kill adults but does reduce fecundity, kills larvae in 15 days, effective over 2 years in low-density infestations

There have been releases of several parasitoid wasps for the biological control of EAB in the U.S. In Canada, *Tetrastichus planipennis*, *Spathius galinae* and *Oobius agrilli* have been released in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick (Butler et al. 2022). *Tetrastichus planipennis* was the most successful at being recovered from EAB. Continuing research is underway to determine whether this wasp will be effective on the Prairies.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Urban stands of ash on the Prairies are at risk from EAB. In the eastern U.S., the losses to this beetle are estimated to be \$12.5 billion (Aukema et al. 2011, Kovacs et al. 2011) and potential losses in Canada over a 30-year time horizon to be up to \$2 billion (McKenney, et al. 2012). This is a serious pest that needs to be taken seriously. In Alberta, EAB has been added to the Agricultural Pest Act enabling counties and municipalities to pass legislation to allow for action to be taken on private lands. The United States Department of Agriculture, whose mandate includes forests, rescinded all quarantine regulations in 2022, treating the entirety of the U.S. as EAB infested. The consequences of this action is that free movement of ash material across the entire U.S. puts the southern border of Canada at risk for invasion of EAB.

The most common long distance distribution method for EAB is through the movement of firewood. The prevention of firewood movement should be a priority. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for biosecurity of plants across Canada. The CFIA has imposed regulatory areas in Winnipeg, southern Ontario and Quebec, and parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. No ash material (e.g. firewood, wood products, logs, or live material) is to be exported from these regulated areas. Municipalities and counties in Alberta are advised to prevent movement of firewood across provincial borders and within the province.

## CONCLUSION

The emerald ash borer is a substantial threat to the urban forest in Prairie municipalities and shelterbelt trees in rural areas. Everyone should be vigilant for decline in ash trees. If suspect trees are observed, the local authorities should be informed so that a determination of cause can be made. Early detection is imperative if large scale infestations are to be prevented.

## RESOURCES

- Branch Sampling Protocol

<https://ostrnrcan-dostrnrcan.canada.ca/entities/publication/e892ea6d-7613-41c3-b5e9-bbcfe845bff9>

- EAB Information Network  
– <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>

- EAB Biological Control Guidelines (U.S.)

– [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health/plant\\_pest\\_info/emerald\\_ash\\_b/downloads/EAB-FieldRelease-Guidelines.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/emerald_ash_b/downloads/EAB-FieldRelease-Guidelines.pdf)

- CFIA Factsheet

– <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/fire-insects-disturbances/top-insects/13395>

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FIGURE 1. ADULT EMERALD ASH BORER BEETLE. NOTE THE METALLIC GREEN COLOUR.



FIGURE 2. EMERALD ASH BORER LARVAL FEEDING GALLERIES ENCLOSED IN CALLUS.



FIGURE 3. WANDERING LARVAL FEEDING GALLERIES OF EMERALD ASH BORER.



FIGURE 4. D-SHAPED ADULT EXIT HOLE OF EMERALD ASH BORER



FIGURE 5. D-SHAPED ADULT EXIT HOLE OF EMERALD ASH BORER, VIEW FROM UNDER THE BARK.

# HERBICIDE PERFORMANCE STARTS LONG BEFORE THE SPRAY HITS THE TARGET

## PRACTICAL FIELD LESSONS ON FORMULATION, TANK MIXING, WATER QUALITY, AND ADJUVANTS

- SUBMITTED BY BY MARK JOHNS | CO-PRESENTED BY THANE BEAGLE

In professional vegetation management, application success is often judged by what happens after the spray job is complete: weed control, site response, follow-up requirements, and overall efficiency. But as emphasized in the 2025 Spring PVMA presentation “**Herbicide Formulations, Tank Mixing and Handling,**” performance is shaped well before the sprayer leaves the yard.

For managers and applicators working in rights-of-way, forestry, oilfield bare ground, county municipal, and other non-crop settings, herbicide performance depends on more than selecting the right active ingredient. Formulation, tank mixing order, water quality, and adjuvant selection all influence whether a treatment works as expected. In practical terms, understanding those variables can help avoid poor control, reduce equipment issues, and support better stewardship in the field.

### UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE HERBICIDE NEEDS TO DO

Herbicides are chemicals used to manipulate or control undesirable vegetation, but they do not all behave the same way. They can be classified by **mode of action, site of action,** whether they are **pre-emergent or post-emergent, selective or non-selective, and contact or translocated.** Those distinctions are not just academic. They shape application decisions and influence what field crews should expect after treatment.

A **translocated or systemic herbicide** must be retained on the leaf surface, penetrate the waxy cuticle, move into plant cells, and then travel to the target site within the plant. Because these products move with plant sugars from “source to sink,” they are especially dependent on plant activity and uptake conditions. Symptoms may not show immediately, and complete plant death may take more than

a week.

A **contact herbicide**, by comparison, acts only on the tissue it touches. Injury can appear quickly, often as water-soaked tissue followed by desiccation, but untreated portions of the plant remain unaffected. That is why **spray coverage is essential** when using contact products. If the target is missed, the herbicide cannot compensate later by moving through the plant.

The presentation also reviewed common herbicide groups, including **Group 2, Group 4, Group 9, Group 14, Group 15, and Group 29**, each with distinct modes of action and their expected results for a specified target. Industry wide, that knowledge helps predict symptomology, improve product selection, and support resistance management strategies over time to achieve the expected results.

### FORMULATION IS MORE THAN A PACKAGING DETAIL

One of the presentation’s strongest practical messages was that a herbicide product is not simply the active ingredient. Every formulation contains additional components that affect handling, mixing, application, and field performance. These may include modifiers such as solvents, emulsifiers, dispersants, anti-drift agents, wetting agents, pH buffers, oils, defoamers, and stabilizers.

Those co-formulants are often what make a product easy to handle and effective in the field, but they can also contribute to physical compatibility problems in the spray tank. In other words, even if the active ingredients are sound, the full product chemistry still matters.

Several common formulation types were highlighted:

- **Water dispersible granules** (WDG) offer good shelf stability, lower foliage burn potential, and lower skin adsorption, but they require proper agitation and can leave tank residue.

- **Suspension concentrates (SC)** are generally easy to mix and also have low burn potential, though they may settle if agitation is inadequate.
- **Emulsifiable concentrates (EC)** often provide strong built-in adjuvancy and are less prone to separating, but they can be more readily absorbed through the skin and may be hard on rubber components.
- **Soluble liquids (SL)** typically require minimal agitation, leave little residue, and are easy on spray equipment, but they can be more costly to formulate and may be temperature sensitive.

**2,4-D** was discussed to show how different formulations of the same active ingredient can perform differently in practice. **Amine, ester, and choline** forms each bring advantages and trade-offs. Ester formulations tend to provide faster uptake and improved rain fastness, while amine and choline formulations generally offer greater stability and lower volatility. In sensitive environments or where odor and vapor movement are concerns, those differences can directly influence product choice.

#### TANK MIXING: EFFICIENCY WITH RESPONSIBILITY

Tank mixing order remains one of the most valuable tools available to applicators; It can improve efficiency by allowing more work to be completed in a single pass, broaden the spectrum of control, and support resistance management by combining different modes of action. In operational settings where timing, access, and labor all matter, those advantages are significant in operating a successful program over time.

At the same time, tank mixing introduces risk when it is done without planning. Several common problems associated with poor mixes, include **foaming, clumping, oil films, separation, suspended solids, and failure to dissolve properly**. These issues can create downtime, reduce performance, and complicate application logistics when trying to understand the shortcomings that aren't always easily apparent.

Even more important, a mix that appears physically acceptable may still be **chemically incompatible**. That can reduce biological activity or increase the potential for injury

to desirable vegetation. A clean-looking tank is not proof that the mixture will perform correctly.

The practical recommendation was clear: **do not guess**. Applicators should always confirm that tank mixing is allowed on the product label and review any registered tank mix guidance provided by the manufacturer. When working with an unfamiliar combination, a jar test should be standard practice before a full tank is mixed.

It was reinforced to discuss the updated Canadian guidance on tank mix labelling and understand the importance of following a recognized mixing order system, such as **W.A.L.E.S**. When labels provide only general direction, whatever memory aid an applicator uses, the principle remains the same: begin with adequate water in the tank, start agitation, add products in the proper sequence, prevent concentrated products from contacting each other, and allow enough time for each product to disperse or suspend before the next one is added.

#### WATER QUALITY IS A PERFORMANCE INPUT

Among the most field-relevant sections of the presentation was the discussion on **water quality**, because water is the largest by volume ingredient in most spray mixtures and one of the most overlooked. Four major indicators were emphasized: **hardness, bicarbonates, pH, and cleanliness or turbidity**, with temperature also playing a role.

In many areas, especially across Western Canada, hard water is a routine challenge. Minerals such as calcium, magnesium, and iron can bind with negatively charged herbicides and reduce the amount of active herbicide available for plant uptake. In some cases, the herbicide may even precipitate out of solution. Products such as **glyphosate and 2,4-D amine** are among the best-known examples, though other weak acid herbicides may also be affected.

The takeaway is simple: **know your water source**. If hardness levels are high, especially above practical thresholds, a water conditioner such as **ammonium sulfate (AMS)** may be needed. While pH often receives

considerable attention, its effect is sometimes overstated compared to hardness. In many cases, hardness is the more immediate performance issue and having a proper water test conducted with provide clear direction. Group 2 Sulfonylureas (SU) herbicides have a higher risk of falling out of suspension when tank pH is below 5 when left unsprayed or regularly agitated. It is recommended to agitate a tank that is fully mixed every 24 hours if it is unable to be applied.

**Bicarbonates** can also interfere with certain herbicides, particularly some **Group 1 grass products and 2,4-D amine**. In those situations, adjustments such as using AMS, selecting a different formulation, or choosing an alternative active ingredient may be warranted depending on the use pattern and label options.

**Turbidity** is another concern that is easy to underestimate. Water containing sand, silt, clay, or organic matter can tie up herbicide molecules and reduce efficacy. It can also plug screens and nozzles, creating application uniformity issues that compound the problem. Clean water is not simply a convenience; it is part of the efficacy equation.

#### ADJUVANTS: HELPFUL WHEN THEY ARE THE RIGHT FIT

**Adjuvants**, which are used to improve pesticide performance or handling characteristics. Adjuvants do not control vegetation by themselves, but they can improve spreading, wetting, penetration, compatibility, foam control, or drift management.

Importantly, adjuvants in Canada are regulated products, and they must be supported by performance data. That reinforces a critical point for field applicators: **not every adjuvant is interchangeable**, and label guidance matters.

The presentation grouped adjuvants into three broad categories:

- **Activator adjuvants**, such as surfactants, wetting agents, penetrants, and oils
- **Spray modifiers**, such as stickers, spreaders, and thickening agents
- **Utility modifiers**, such as compatibility agents, buffering agents, anti-foamers, and emulsifiers

The best adjuvant program is one that is properly matched to the product, target, and conditions. Too little adjuvant can reduce performance. Too much can create crop or non-target injury, increase runoff, generate more driftable fines, and thin out applications budgets. There is a practical balance between not enough, just right, and too much.

Sequence matters here as well. In general, **anti-foamers are added early, while drift reduction agents are often added near the end of the mix**, unless label instructions specify otherwise. Compatibility agents may help in difficult mixes, but they should be used thoughtfully and preferably in consultation with the manufacturer.

#### A FIELD-FIRST REMINDER FOR MANAGERS & APPLICATORS

Herbicide applications can succeed or fail based on a series of decision making and not just from a a single one. The right active ingredient is most important, but so are the formulation, the tank mix plan, the water source, and the adjuvant program. Overlooking any one of those factors can reduce control, waste time, and create avoidable risk.

The practical lesson for everyone can be simple and straightforward:

- Treat the spray system as a whole
- Read the labels carefully
- Test your water
- Jar test unfamiliar mixes
- Follow mixing order
- Use adjuvants with purpose not by habit
- And most importantly: Regularly Calibrate Equipment

In a field environment where reliability matters, those steps are not extra work. They are part of doing the job right the first time and meeting expectations across our industry.

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# 2026 PVMA BURSARY RECIPIENT

- SUBMITTED BY BY VAL EICHELT

One of the many benefits of being a PVMA member is the opportunity for member's 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 can be registered in any program to be eligible, and they can be awarded a Bursary more than once. *The application period for a bursary is between January 1st & January 30th of each year.*

The PVMA awarded 1 Bursary to Post-Secondary Students in February of this year.

## Our 2026 recipient was:

*Salix Hammer*

Salix is completing her 1st year of study at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, in an Instrumentation Engineering Technologies program. In her spare time Salix volunteers with the Silver Rays Swim Club.

Salix's mom is long time PVMA member Laura Hammer.



**Members, don't forget to tell your dependants in Post-Secondary about our Bursary program. We can award up to 4 Bursaries each year. Applications for a PVMA Bursary will open again January 1st.**

**Applications for a \$2,000 PVMA Scholarship or a \$4,000 Keith Sanftleben Memorial Scholarship will be accepted starting September 1st with a deadline of November 30th.**

**SAVE THE DATES!**

## **Fall Workshop & GM**

**Red Deer Resort & Casino - October 27th**

(with optional field training session on electrical awareness being offered at the Fortis Training Center the afternoon of October 26th)

## **2027 Bi-Annual 3-day Spring Conference & Tradeshow**

**River Cree Resort & Casino**

**February 23-25th**

**Banquet Entertainer will be Chris Funk the Wonderist. From Masters of Illusion, Fool Us, Wizard Wars, Americas Got Talent and Penn & Teller, Chris combines Magic and music with Hilarious Comedy that is sure to keep us all entertained.**



# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## - AWARDS/ELECTION COMMITTEE

The PVMA awarded one Student Bursary in February to Salix Hammer, in the amount of \$500. See the article regarding that award in this issue. The application period for a PVMA Student Scholarship and the Keith Sanftleben Memorial Scholarship will open September 1st.

On behalf of the PVMA, Bob Gordon presented Richard Law with a plaque and small gift in March of this year. Richard has stepped down as a member and chairman of the UTW-UTT Board of Governors. Richard invested numerous years contributing to the UTW-UTT program and the PVMA. The awards committee will be presenting our Past-President's Award to Lisa Rybchuk, recognizing her 5 years of service as the PVMA President from 2021-2026, at the next membership meeting.

*-Thane Beagle, Director in Charge*

## - MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

PVMA had a busy spring, participating in several key events. We again attended the Alberta Invasive Species Council's Spring Conference in Red Deer and Olds College's Green Growth Career Fair in Olds—great opportunities to connect with potential recruits for member companies and to network with prospective new members. In April, we also took part in the inaugural Ag Drone Summit hosted by the Canadian Agricultural Drone Association at the Camrose Regional Exhibition. Through our continued support of Canadian Reclamation magazine, PVMA will be featured in the 2026 Spring/Summer edition; be sure to read about our history and plans ahead. Follow PVMA on LinkedIn for updates on upcoming events. We also recently updated the look and function of our PVMA.ca Website. Check it out.

*- Joanne Ireland, Committee Chair*

## - SAFETY COMMITTEE

I'm new to the Board and haven't held a committee meeting yet, so I don't really have much to report. I would however like to thank you all for welcoming me on board.

It was nice to see a new batch of graduated students return to the field, where they're now eagerly trying to fulfill final requirements for UTT certification.

As for safety, we are of course in hi fire season right now and ticks have also come out in full force. Training is vital to keeping the workforce safe. Let's hope these hazards decrease as we venture through summer.

*- Peter Jecklin, Director in Charge*

## - GOVERNMENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Government of Alberta has updated its Environmental Code of Practice for Pesticides related to the management of aquatic invasive species.

Previously, the Code permitted treatment only of purple loosestrife growing on dry land, and only with the active ingredients glyphosate or triclopyr. Under the updated Code, treatment is now allowed for any invasive aquatic weed growing on dry land that is listed under either the Weed Control Act or the Fisheries (Alberta) Act. Treatment may be carried out using any pesticide, provided that both the target species and the use location are explicitly included on the federal Pest Control Products Act (PCPA) label.

Health Canada Introduces Federal Tank Mix Initiative

Health Canada has formally introduced the new Federal Tank Mix Initiative, effective December 20, 2025. This initiative provides greater clarity regarding permitted, prohibited, and restricted tank mixes that applicators are required to follow.

Additional details can be found within this magazine or through Health Canada's guidance documentation available on the Government of Canada website.

*- Jamie Wiltzen, Director in Charge*

## - EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

We're proud to unveil the latest edition of Vegetation Manager, released in conjunction with our 2026 Spring Conference. This issue features insightful follow-ups from past conference speakers and highlights the continued support of our dedicated advertisers. As always, our goal is to deliver relevant, high-quality content that reflects the evolving interests and innovations within our industry.

We're also excited to introduce a new Membership / Company Highlight Program within the magazine. If you or your company would like to be featured in an upcoming issue of Vegetation Manager, we invite you to submit a written industry profile that tells your story—who you are, what you do, and what sets you apart. If you're interested in contributing, please reach out to Val or Jamie. We hope you enjoy this Spring edition and find it both thought-provoking and valuable.

*- Jamie Wiltzen, Director in Charge*

## - CASINO COMMITTEE

We just received the proceeds from our January Casino at the end of May, in the amount of \$82,343.98. Those proceeds are a needed boost to the PVMA finances, allowing us to continue to fund our post-secondary Scholarship Program, to subsidize events, to promote the Industry at schools and trade shows, to help cover our day-to-day operational expenses, and to fund large projects.

*- Thane Beagle, Director in Charge*

## - MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee remains committed to enhancing the overall value and experience of PVMA membership. Our focus continues to be on identifying opportunities to provide meaningful benefits, resources, and engagement for both long-standing members and first-time conference guests. We are actively exploring new ways to strengthen member outreach, recognition, and involvement at PVMA events.

New additions have been made to the PVMA merchandise table—please take a moment to stop by and check out the latest items, including hats, hoodies, coffee mugs, travel mugs, and toques.

If you have any suggestions or ideas, we would love to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

*- Jamie Wiltzen, Director in Charge*

## - SEMINAR COMMITTEE

Our February 24, 2026 conference and general meeting at the i-Hotel in Red Deer was another success—see this issue of Vegetation Managers for details. Before summer begins, we'll release the final information for our fall conference.

Based on recent feedback, we're changing the venue to Red Deer Resort and Casino and adding an optional afternoon field session on October 26 hosted by Fortis at its Red Deer training facility. Save the date for October 26–27—you won't want to miss it. We're also excited to return to River Cree for our three-day biennial conference, February 23–25, 2027.

*- Joanne Ireland, Committee Chair*

## - UTT-UTW BOARD OF GOVERNORS

With a recent change in PVMA Directors and roles, I am now the new Director in Charge of the UTT-UTW Board of Governors and am learning the role. Richard Law recently resigned from the UTT-UTW Board of Governors and the PVMA Board have approved the recommendation and appointment of Scott Dokkebakken to the Board of Governors, and Steve Kerr moved into the Chairman role.

The Board of Governors has also contracted a company to begin the development of a UTT-UTW App. This app will eventually replace the paper tracking of hours and proficiencies for certification, as well as streamline the school approval and certifications processes.

The UTT/UTW spring courses have finished, the largest numbers to date. We would like to thank the coordinators, instructors and the volunteers for all the hard work. We especially would like to congratulate all the participants.

*- Don Walters, Director in Charge*

## - NATIONAL/INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE

2026 Check-In: What Canada's Regional IVM Associations Are Focused on Right Now

### Introduction

For those already embedded in Canada's industrial vegetation management (IVM) sector, 2026 is less about redefining associations and more about how effectively they are delivering on established priorities: training, advocacy, and regulatory alignment. Across British Columbia, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada, the core mandates remain intact—but the intensity and focus of delivery continue to evolve.

### British Columbia: Doubling Down on Technical Depth and Credentialing

IVMA of BC continues to refine its already strong model. In 2026, there is a noticeable emphasis on structured professional development, with webinars and technical sessions tied to continuing education credits and certification requirements. The 2025 Biennial Forum reinforced the association's role as a leading technical event, while ongoing bursary programs demonstrate continued attention to workforce development. Regulatory engagement also remains a steady priority, with the association involved in shaping policy and pest management standards.

### Ontario: Consistency, Communication, and Stakeholder Balance

OVMA continues to prioritize consistency and clarity. Regular communications ensure members remain aligned with regulatory expectations, while the 2026 Conference & Field Day provides applied learning opportunities. The association's key strength remains its ability to act as a liaison between industry, government, and the public—particularly in areas where vegetation management intersects with environmental concerns and public perception.

### Atlantic Canada: Re-Centering Around In-Person Engagement

AVMA's activities in 2026 highlight a continued reliance on in-person collaboration. The anticipated fall AGM and conference in Halifax will serve as a primary touchpoint for members, continuing the association's tradition of rotating events across the region while returning periodically to Nova Scotia. The event will provide opportunities for technical sessions, regulatory updates, and networking. AVMA continues to focus on regional knowledge sharing and collaboration across sectors.

### What's Changing in 2026?

Across all regions, training is becoming more structured and closely tied to certification. Events are increasingly focused on practical takeaways rather than general content, and advocacy remains active—though often less visible. Regional identity continues to shape priorities, reflecting local environmental, regulatory, and operational realities.

### Conclusion

Overall, 2026 reflects continued refinement rather than reinvention. IVMA of BC is sharpening its technical and policy leadership, OVMA remains steady in communication and stakeholder engagement, and AVMA continues to deliver value through regional collaboration and its fall Halifax event. The industry continues its move toward greater professionalism, consistency, and relevance.

*-Chris Johnson, Director in Charge*

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