

North Carolina Vegetation Management
2024 Annual Meeting Agenda



Wednesday, December 4th

8:00 a.m. Registration Opens, Exhibitors Open

8:45 a.m. Welcome and President's Remarks

Paul Mitchell, Wright Tree, NCVMA President

9:00 a.m. Why Sustainability in VM Matters

Travis Rodgers, Business Development Manager, The Orion Companies

Interest in sustainability within society is at an all-time high. Many organizations in the business world including those within the vegetation management (VM) industry are keenly focused on adopting and improving sustainability practices within their operations. This presentation will define what sustainability means, discuss how sustainability applies to our personal lives and why sustainability is important, and opportunities for improving sustainability within VM operations.

9:45 a.m. Pond and Lake Management...Back to Basics

Cary Martin, Nutrien Solutions

Cary will review the aging process of lakes, ponds, and canals. He will explore both reactive and proactive lake management techniques while reviewing commonly found aquatic plants and prescription suggestions to address control.

10:30 a.m. Break / Vendor & Sponsor Visits

11:00 a.m. Vegetation Managers Guide to Tree Growth Regulators

Phil Stewart, Clearway Industries

In this presentation, you'll gain a comprehensive understanding of how to effectively incorporate TGRs into your utility vegetation management (UVM) programs. Designed for UVM managers, this session will cover the science behind TGRs, their practical applications, and how they can be leveraged to enhance the health and reliability of utility rights-of-way. Attendees will learn about the benefits of TGRs in controlling tree growth, reducing maintenance cycles, and improving safety and cost-efficiency in vegetation management.

11:45 a.m. Keeping Safer from Ticks and Tick Diseases and Conditions

Marcia Herman-Giddens, NC Tick Org

Marcia is a consultant on ticks and tick-borne infections (TBI) and an adjunct professor at the Gillings School of Global Public Health, Department of Maternal and Child Health at UNC. During her presentation, Marcia will discuss ticks and infections and ways to ensure safety in the field.

12:30 p.m. Lunch, Atrium

1:30 p.m Custom Blending

Sammy Keziah, VMOptiX Oakboro Site Manager, The Orion Companies

Utilizing both industry standard containers and returnable-refillable containers, custom blending offers customized prescriptions for customers that can be blended on site for real time inventory access. The addition of custom blending provides countless improvements in the ability of applicators to provide efficient services.

2:00 p.m. A Historical Perspective of Integrated Vegetation Management for Today's Environmental Compliance

Stephen Hilbert, Asplundh

From the first time humans discovered the concept of deliberate agriculture to today, the control of pests is paramount to a successful harvest. This deliberate control of the environment also led to the discovery of pest control tools and techniques. The concept of Integrated Vegetation management is rooted to these control concepts and should be applied anywhere vegetation grows near powerlines. From the deployment of the first herbicides on railroads to today's complex regulatory environment, Integrated Vegetation Management plays a vital role in today's modern world.

2:45 p.m. A Word From Our Exhibitors & Sponsors

3:00 p.m. Break with Exhibitors

3:30 p.m. Ecosystem Restoration to Counter Global Warming and Improve Public Services

Rick Johnstone, IVM Partners

The Climate Change Agenda (COP28) has focused on reducing fossil fuels and increasing "clean energy" generation and electric vehicles, while ignoring readily available vegetation management solutions that can counter global warming. This discussion will cover vegetation management techniques that reduce carbon emissions while restoring and connecting natural and urban forest ecosystems to capture carbon and reduce heat islands, while controlling nonnative invasive plants and improving habitat for pollinators and threatened species. These best practices can meet the safety, access, and reliability needs of energy and transportation rights-of-way (ROW) corridors while lowering costs.

4:00 p.m. Jimmy V Foundation

4:30 p.m. End of Day 1, Exhibitors open until 5:00 p.m.

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Thursday, December 5th

8:00 a.m. NCVMA Board Business Meeting

Paul Mitchell, Wright Tree, NCVMA President

Jesse Peery, Account Manager, Envu, NCVMA Vice President

During the 2024 business meeting, the current president and vice president will review activities of the board during the year, welcome new members of the association, and discuss the 2025 outlook.

8:15 a.m. Scholarship Committee Update

Dylan Hurley, Forest Management Technology Chair, Montgomery Community College

NCVMA Sponsorship Committee Member

The NCVMA has always engaged our responsibility to educate our industry to the best of our ability by continuously supporting scholarship initiatives and opportunities. During this time, Dylan will update the association on how those initiatives are going to date and how the support of the association have impacted the industry.

8:30 a.m. Forestry Herbicide OverVIEW & Keys to Effective Application

Chris White, Red River

In this presentation, Chris will provide discussion on predominant products that are used in forestry herbicide applications. He will specifically detail the when, where, and why these products are utilized while providing best management practices to achieve an effective application. Chris will also provide manufacturer updates around the forestry products utilized in the market.

9:15 a.m. Know Your Chemistry and What It's Capable Of

Koby Cutchall, Arborchem Products

In this presentation Koby will discuss the difference in pre and post emergent herbicides. Koby will also discuss common issues such as runoff, drift, and volatilization and how these items can be avoided. Koby will also discuss different invasive plant species and how they can be controlled with various types of chemistry.

10:00 a.m. Break with Exhibitors, Last Bids for Silent Auction

Condition Based Vegetation Management - Upgrade of our Technologies, Upgrade of Our Thinking

10:30 a.m.

Dr. Vanderhoof, ECI

Technological advances such as LiDAR, high-altitude imagery, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are poised to fundamentally transform our approach to Utility Vegetation Management (UVM). To turn massive data sets into practical business solutions, a deeper understanding of data management's role in UVM is essential. The ability to work with data—to understand, process, extract value from, and communicate it effectively—will remain a critical skill in the coming decades.

11:00 a.m The Stages of a Utility Herbicide Application

Jesse Peery, Account Manager, Envu

In this presentation, Jesse will review the chronological steps in providing utility herbicide applications in a manner that promote the safety of the utility's customer, applicator, and environment the Right-Of-Way encompasses. He will discuss the early steps of application involving chemical selection and site assessments while progressing through other subjects such as calibration, equipment maintenance, customer interactions, and eventually concluding with steps to take after an application including laundering of clothes and post application monitoring.

11:45 a.m. Closing Session

Paul Mitchell, Wright Tree

President's remarks will be given by the sitting president, Paul Mitchell, Jimmy V Silent Auction winners will be announced and instructions for credit sign ups will be reviewed.

12:00 p.m. End of Day 2

2024 Speakers	Bio
Koby Cutchall	<p>Koby has 15 years' experience in vegetation management. Currently Koby is a Vegetation Management Specialist with Arborchem Products. As a Vegetation Management Specialist Koby helps customers troubleshoot and answers any technical questions they may have. Koby presents at numerous vegetation management recertification meetings during the year. He also deals with sales across the United States in Utility ROW and Roadside Dot management programs. Along with these responsibilities Koby is also in charge of the warehouse where he oversees the daily operations. He is responsible for the most expedient delivery of industrial vegetation management products in the industry. Koby has an associate degree in Forestry from Penn State University. He is an ISA Certified Arborist, PA Certified Pesticide Applicator, WV Certified Pesticide Applicator, a member of ISA, and Utility Arborist Association (UAA). Koby serves on the Board of Directors for the Mountain Lake Vegetation Management Council where he currently holds the position of Past President.</p>
Jesse Peery	<p>Jesse Peery is a graduate of Concord University in Athens, WV where he received a BA in Geography with an emphasis in GIS and Cartography. Jesse has worked in the Vegetation Management industry since 2005. He began as seasonal backpack laborer while working for an application company during his summer breaks from college. He continued to pursue his career in Vegetation Management after graduation in 2010. Jesse has worked several roles including performing applications, operations, administration, and sales. Jesse's background is primarily in industrial bare ground and ROW herbicide applications with thousands of utility line miles under his belt and thousands of bare ground acres that he has treated as well. Jesse joined Envu Environmental Science in 2022 as an Area Sales Manager serving the east coast from South Carolina to Maine where he will serve the Industrial Vegetation Management and Forestry segments. In his free time, Jesse enjoys spending time with his family and enjoying outdoor activities.</p>
Travis Rodgers	<p>Travis Rodgers is the Director of Market Development for The Orion Companies. In his role Travis focuses on identifying opportunities to bring innovative, valued added solutions and services to the marketplaces served by the Orion Companies. He works within a cross functional team to create and commercialize differentiated solutions designed to address unmet needs and improve customer outcomes. Travis has more than 28 years of experience in the non-crop, specialty chemical industry. Prior to joining The Orion Companies, Travis spent 27 years with Corteva Agriscience and its legacy companies and 1.5 years with Nutrien Solutions. His experiences include sales, marketing, field research, product and market development, project and people management, communications, and business optimization. Travis has 19 years' experience working with transportation and energy companies, conservation organizations, and professional contractors within the vegetation management business. He's very passionate about serving the transportation and energy sectors which has shown through his many years of service. Travis has served in many leadership positions and supported various industry organizations including the Utility Arborist Association, the American Petroleum Institute, the Rights-of-Way (ROW) as Habitat Working Group, the ROW Stewardship Council, Environmental Concerns in ROW Management Symposium, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever Quail Forever, the North Carolina Vegetation Management Association, and South Carolina Vegetation Management Association. Travis has a B.S. in Agricultural Business and M.S. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Travis resides in Charleston, SC with his wife and family.</p>
Rick Johnstone	<p>Rick Johnstone serves as President and founder of the non-profit corporation IVM Partners and is Owner of VMES, LLC vegetation management consulting. He directs vegetation management research and training under IVM Partners and is an advisor for and liaison between federal, state and tribal land management agencies, universities, electric and natural gas utilities, and conservationists. Under VMES he provides vegetation management consultation and is an expert witness in litigation. Rick served as System Forester for two electric utilities and is past-President of the Utility Arborist Association and a Registered Professional Forester with a BS degree in Forest Resources Management from West Virginia University. He has 45 years experience and is a technical advisor for restoring native pollinator and wildlife habitat using cost effective integrated vegetation management strategies.</p>
Marcia Herman	<p>Marcia E. Herman-Giddens, PA, DrPH, is a consultant on ticks and tick-borne infections (TBI) and an adjunct professor at the Gillings School of Global Public Health, Department of Maternal and Child Health at UNC. She became interested in TBIs many years ago while practicing pediatrics at Duke University Medical Center where she specialized in child abuse and neglect.</p>
Stephen Hilbert	<p>Stephen has a long-held passion for tree care. Before he graduated from the Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Forestry, he worked summers within the green industry. He delivers the latest trends and industry best practices to Asplundh's field employees through trainings and presentations. He has 20 years of experience working as an Arborist including experience as a climber, plant health care technician and utility forester. Stephen is an ISA Certified Arborist and voting member for the ANSI A300 committee, and on the UAA Newsline Editorial Committee.</p> <p>Phil Stewart</p> <p>Phil Swart is the Director of Business Development & Marketing at ClearWay Industries, where he plays a pivotal role in helping utility companies overcome vegetation management challenges through science-based strategies. He is an ISA Certified Arborist, Utility Specialist, and Oak Wilt Qualified Arborist, and currently serves as the Chair of the UAA Professional Development Committee. In 2023, Phil was honored with the UAA's Rising Star award.</p> <p>Phil believes that educational opportunities should be accessible to everyone in utility arboriculture, empowering front-line workers with paths for growth and advancement. He is committed to enhancing the professionalism of the industry, recognizing that its future relies on a collective commitment to creating a better profession.</p>

Cary Martin

Cary Martin began his love of all things water at an early age. His first job was working with Sharks, Stingrays and Sea Turtles at Sea World of Florida. Expanding on his newly obtained knowledge in aquatic eco-systems, he joined the U.S. Coast Guard as a Marine Scientist and spent his tour in the rough cold waters of the Bearing Sea. After his tour, he focused on learning the ins and outs of lake management by working for Florida’s largest lake management group. Cary reverted back to his Sea World days and thought about how aeration and circulation helped to improve the water quality. Taking a system that is used in aquariums and up-sizing it to be applied to the pond and lake scenarios, Cary invented the Lake Bed Aeration systems. His background in Environmental Science and Fisheries combined with his dedication to community as the Past President of the North Carolina Lake Management Society and Marine Safety officer in the US Coast Guard Auxiliary has allowed Cary the opportunity to work closely with groups about the entire Aquatic Eco System and how the parts work together.

Dr. Vanderhoof

Winner of the David H Nabi Award for dedication and service, Robert Vanderhoof earned his Ph.D. from the College of Forest Resources at Mississippi State University in 1995. He holds certifications as an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, a Utility Specialist and is TRAQ qualified. A veteran natural resource manager, Robert spent 15 years as Florida’s deer management program leader during which time he coordinated range management activities across Florida’s seven-million-acre wildlife management area system. In 2004 Robert earned the Florida Chapter of the Wildlife Society’s award for “Extraordinary Vision, Leadership, and Dedication”. From 2008-2023 Robert applied his management experience as a Utility Vegetation Manager for PacifiCorp across Utah, Idaho and Wyoming and is currently teaching Urban and Community Forestry at the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point. Robert also heads up Tall Tree Learning LLC which specializes in preparing students for ISA certification as arborists and Utility Specialists. Winner of the UAA Education Award in 2023, Robert currently sits on the UAA Board of Directors, has written several articles on natural resource management, and routinely speaks on utility vegetation management issues.

Sammy Keziah

Chris White

Chris joined Azelis A&ES (formerly Red River Specialties) in 2011. As Area Manager of Virginia/Carolinas, he has more than 20 years of experience in the herbicide industry ranging from consumer lawn & garden to specialty herbicides in the forestry, utility, right-of-way, aquatics and range and pasture markets. With clients from industry timber companies to TIMOs to consultants and private landowners, Chris has worked with landowners and land managers in nearly every silvicultural environment. The most rewarding part of his job is being able to be a part of helping clients achieve their forestry and land management goals. A native of the Lone Star State, his loyalty lies with the Texas Aggies even though his degree came from Campbell University in 2000. He is married to Lacy, and along with their 5 children, they live in Graham, NC.