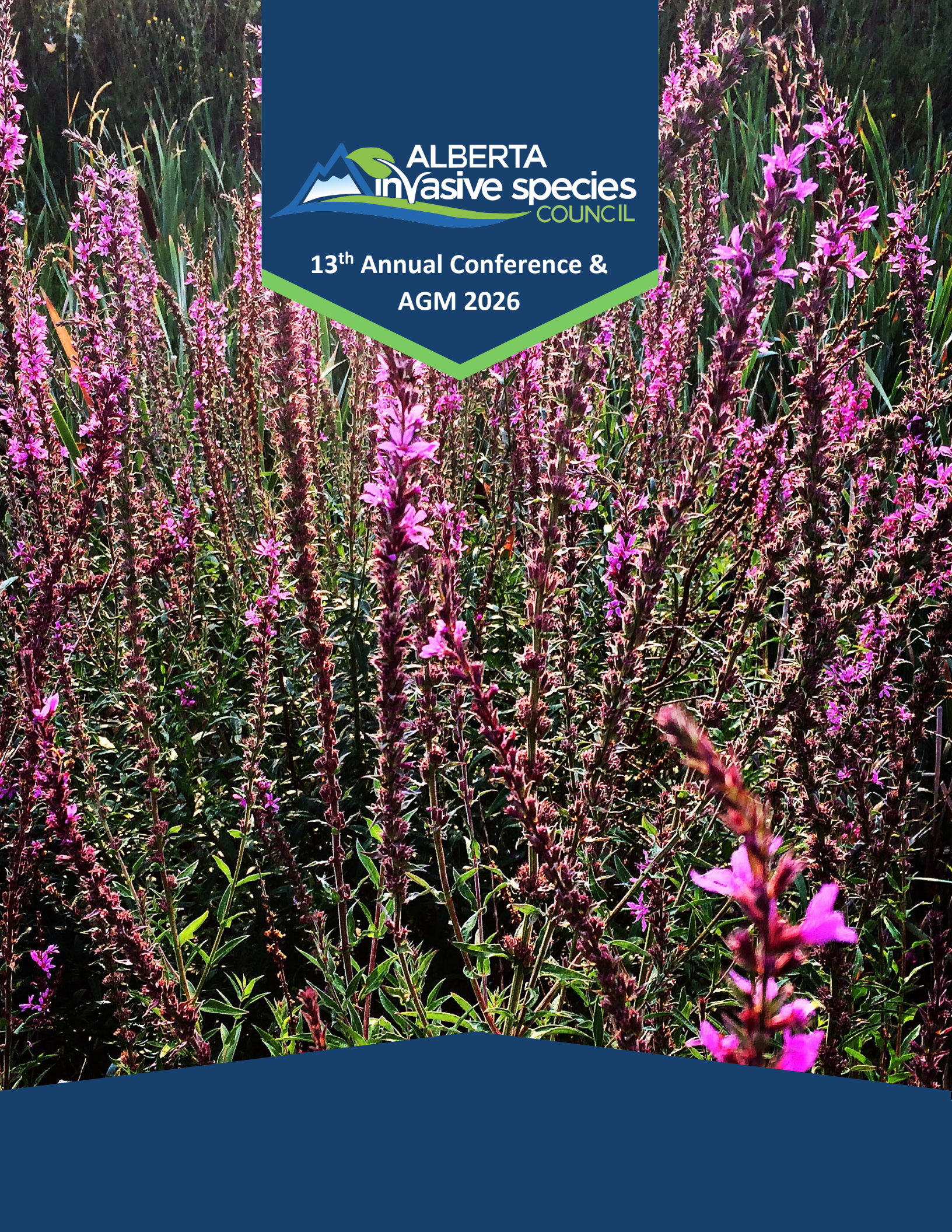




13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference &  
AGM 2026





Thanks for attending the Alberta Invasive Species Council's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting & Conference!

We hope you enjoy the dynamic exploration of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species, communication strategies, biocontrol, new discoveries, management tools and so much more at this year's event! There are 22 sessions scheduled to run from March 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Earn certified pesticide applicator credits, CEU credits, and engage with researchers and experts at the poster sessions.

Thank you for joining us this year to celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!!



***NOTE: Please park in Lot D - be sure to memorize your license plate number and register it at the registration table to avoid a parking fine.***

## Contact Us



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# Credit Instructions

**ATTENTION** - Please review the following to receive Certified Pesticide Applicator Credits:

1. See the [agenda](#) (or table below) for sessions that are approved for applicator credits.
2. In order to receive a pesticide applicator credit, you must:
  - a. Be present for the **entirety** of the session and answer **all** polling questions.
  - b. Record your **name and birthdate** (month and year) on the Attendance List. Applicators not included on the Attendance List will NOT be recognized for credit.
3. Please DO NOT take photos of the Attendance Lists after signing them as there is personal information on these sheets.

| Session Name  | Presenter & Title   | Concept Covered | Classes   | Date     |
|---|---|-----------------|---|----------|
| <b>Invasive Species Management &amp; Climate Change</b> | <b>KEYNOTE: From Reactive to Adaptive: Invasive Species Management in a Warming World</b><br>Dr. Annette Evans, University of Saint Joseph, Connecticut   | Pest Management | Aerial, RPAS, Agriculture, Industrial, Forestry, Landscape, Aquatic | March 11 |
| <b>Invasive Plants</b>                                  | <b>Invasion of annual bromes into Native Grasslands on the Milk River Natural Area: Rapid Survey Methodology and Survey Results</b><br>Steve Tannas, Tannas Conservation<br><b>Prescribed Fire and Pre-emergent Herbicide Application in South-Eastern British Columbia</b><br>Katherine Johnson, Tannas Conservation   | Pest Management | Aerial, RPAS, Agriculture, Industrial, Forestry, Landscape          | March 11 |
| <b>Biocontrol</b>                                       | <b>Using all the Tools in the Toolbox: Managing Invasive Species in Fish Creek Provincial Park</b><br>Emma Stroud, Friends of Fish Creek<br><b>Invasive Phragmites in Canada: Management Lessons and Biocontrol Research from Ontario</b><br>Matt Bolding, Ducks Unlimited<br><b>Alberta Biocontrol Consortium – What are we?</b><br>Stacy Berry, Strathcona County | Pest Management | Agriculture, Industrial, Forestry, Landscape                        | March 12 |
| <b>Aquatic Invasive Species</b>                         | <b>Aquatic Invasives &amp; Species at Risk: Impacts, Challenges, and Recovery Pathways</b><br>Lisa Schaubel, Government of Alberta<br><b>Provincial AIS Update</b><br>Nicole Kimmel, Government of Alberta<br><b>From Pipelines to Ponds: Innovative Approaches to Invasive Species Detection and Control</b><br>Dr. Zhongzhi Chen, Innotech Alberta                | Pest Management | Aquatic   | March 12 |
| <b>Invasive Vertebrates</b>                             | <b>Alberta's Wild Boar Control Program Update</b><br>Hannah Mckenzie, Government of Alberta<br><b>Alberta Wild Boar Eradication: A Trapper's Success Driven by Evolving and Well-Designed Provincial Strategy</b><br>Nick Gallagher, Coyote Den Wildlife Services   | Pest Management | Agriculture   | March 12 |



# CERTIFIED CROP ADVISER

ATTENTION - Please review the following to receive Certified Crop Advisor CEU Credits:

1. See the table below for sessions that are approved for CEU credits.
2. In order to receive a CEU credit, you must:
  - a. Be present for the **entirety** of the session.
  - b. Record your **name, CCA, CPAg, CPSS or CPSC # and signature (in and out)** on the Attendance List OR you can download the [Certified Crop Adviser \(CCA\) app](#) on your mobile device to receive CEU credits immediately by scanning the QR code. Once scanned, the CCA app will automatically sign you in. Anyone not included on the Attendance List will NOT be recognized for credit.



March 11 Sign-In Sheet



March 12 Sign-In Sheet

| Presenter & Title   | CEU Concept                | CEU Credit | Date     |
|---|----------------------------|------------|----------|
| <b>KEYNOTE: From Reactive to Adaptive: Invasive Species Management in a Warming World</b><br>Dr. Annette Evans, University of Saint Joseph, Connecticut   | Integrated Pest Management | 1          | March 11 |
| <b>Invasion of annual bromes into Native Grasslands on the Milk River Natural Area: Rapid Survey Methodology and Survey Results</b><br>Steve Tannas, Tannas Conservation  | Integrated Pest Management | 0.5        | March 11 |
| <b>Growing Awareness: Advancing Invasive Species Education and Action</b><br>Megan Hoyer, Montana Department of Agriculture   | Professional Development   | 0.5        | March 11 |
| <b>Using all the Tools in the Toolbox: Managing Invasive Species in Fish Creek Provincial Park</b><br>Emma Stroud, Friends of Fish Creek  | Integrated Pest Management | 1          | March 12 |
| <b>Invasive Phragmites in Canada: Management Lessons and Biocontrol Research from Ontario</b><br>Matt Bolding, Ducks Unlimited<br><b>Alberta Biocontrol Consortium – What are we?</b><br>Stacy Berry, Strathcona County |                            |            |          |
| <b>Aquatic Invasives &amp; Species at Risk: Impacts, Challenges, and Recovery Pathways</b>  | Integrated Pest Management | 1          | March 12 |



|   |                            |   |          |
|---|----------------------------|---|----------|
| <p>Lisa Schaubel, Government of Alberta<br/><b>Provincial AIS Update</b><br/>Nicole Kimmel, Government of Alberta<br/><b>From Pipelines to Ponds: Innovative Approaches to Invasive Species Detection and Control</b><br/>Dr. Zhongzhi Chen, Innotech Alberta</p>           |                            |   |          |
| <p><b>Alberta's Wild Boar Control Program Update</b><br/>Hannah Mckenzie, Government of Alberta<br/><b>Alberta Wild Boar Eradication: A Trapper's Success Driven by Evolving and Well-Designed Provincial Strategy</b><br/>Nick Gallagher, Coyote Den Wildlife Services</p> | Integrated Pest Management | 1 | March 12 |



# Conference Details

## Poster Session (in Alumni Centre)

Please stay in the Alumni Centre on March 11<sup>th</sup> to see all the posters during the break from 2:45-3:15pm.

### **Ecological impacts of the invasive shrub *Caragana arborescens*, in the southern boreal of Alberta and Saskatchewan**

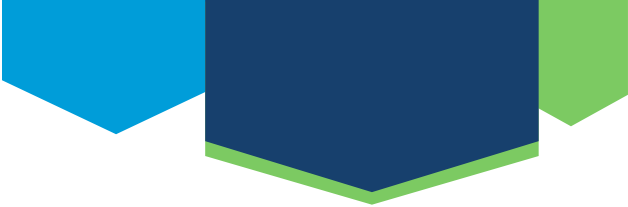
Jude Bibkewich, Martin Hinojosa, Yadhiera Despeines, James Cahill Jr, and Viktoria Wagner, *Department of Biology, University of Alberta*

*Caragana arborescens*, having been introduced from Asia and widely planted since the 1880s, is a non-native shrub that is spreading throughout the Canadian Boreal Region. It possesses several traits characteristic of an ecosystem transformer, including an ability to fix nitrogen, with the potential to significantly alter ecosystem functioning. This study assessed the ecological impacts of *C. arborescens* within the southern boreal forest of the Canadian prairie provinces. We compared plant community structure and soil properties between invaded, recently invaded, and uninvaded sites across 24 locations in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Within each site, we recorded all vascular plant species and their foliar cover and measured the base diameter of shrubs. In addition, we assessed light availability with hemispherical photography and analyzed soil nutrients. Our results show that invading *C. arborescens* form a distinct, well developed tall shrub (2 - 5m) layer which reduces understory light availability. The invaded communities were more compositionally homogenous and saw a reduction in plant richness and evenness, including an average loss of approximately a third of plant species compared to uninvaded communities. Furthermore, *Caragana arborescens* suppressed the abundance of both native shrub and herbaceous species. In line with its role as a nitrogen-fixer, there were elevated levels of available soil nitrogen in the invaded plots. Our results confirm that *C. arborescens* is associated with dramatic differences in plant communities and supports that *C. arborescens* is an invasive shrub which decreases plant biodiversity and alters soil functioning in the southern boreal forest of Canada's prairie provinces.

### **Provincial Biodiversity Indicator: Invasive Vascular Plants**

Brendan Casey<sup>1</sup>, Brandon Allen<sup>1</sup>, Danielle Pendlebury<sup>2</sup>, and Danique Boissonneault<sup>2</sup>, <sup>1</sup> *Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI)*, <sup>2</sup> *Lands Planning Branch, Environment and Protected Areas, Government of Alberta*

Biodiversity indicators are commonly used to assess cumulative effects of anthropogenic land disturbances on wildlife and vegetation. These indicators, which range from simple measures to complex indices, help summarize and communicate essential biodiversity information. They are critical for monitoring status and trends and can help us make decisions about land management. To address this need, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas and the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI) have been co-developing province-wide biodiversity indicators, with the most recent indicator focused on invasive vascular plants.



The project aims to develop an invasive vascular plant indicator that can track status and trends, identify high-risk areas, guide resource allocation, and support risk management. To achieve these goals, we are using a two-stage hierarchical modelling approach. The first stage involves developing Canada–U.S. presence-only models using bioclimatic predictors to generate bioclimatic suitability models across North America. The second stage integrates Alberta presence–absence data, combined with spectral and land-cover predictors, to build a provincial model capable of estimating habitat quality at a 100 m resolution. Remote sensing data is used in the regional Alberta models to improve model accuracy by capturing phenological patterns, vegetation structure, spectral characteristics, and other habitat features often missed in species habitat models. Once completed, individual species models (up to 97 individual species) will be grouped by regulatory status and combined to produce a set of indicators made available for users to download and apply as needed.

### **Monitoring for Aquatic Invasive Species with eDNA in Alberta**

*Aimee Gibson, Jodie Kupchenko & Nicole Kimmel, Fish and Wildlife Stewardship, Environment and Protected Areas, Government of Alberta*


In 2024, the Provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force recommended that the province establish an environmental DNA (eDNA) monitoring program to address the threats posed by AIS to Alberta’s waters. Since 2023, the Alberta AIS Program has worked with the Hanington Lab at University of Alberta and with multiple partner organizations to pilot the use of eDNA technology for provincial AIS monitoring. This early use of eDNA monitoring has been productive, and the Alberta AIS Program is now preparing to implement its 2026 AIS eDNA monitoring plan. While eDNA can be a powerful tool, there are many important factors that must be considered when designing an eDNA monitoring plan specific to Alberta’s waters. Taking these factors into account is necessary for interpreting the monitoring results and increases the probability of correctly detecting AIS if they are present.

### **Rapid Communications Response: A Framework for Communicating About New Species Detections**

*Lauren Rogers, Invasive Species Centre*

The detection of a new species - whether for the first time or in a new area - often prompts urgent scientific, regulatory, and public attention. Without a clear and timely communications plan, these situations can lead to confusion, misinformation, or delayed action. This poster presents a practical framework for urgent communications planning following a new species detection, designed to support rapid, accurate, and coordinated outreach responses. The framework emphasizes early collaboration between researchers, managers, policymakers, and communications professionals, alongside a rapid assessment of challenges, opportunities.

Key elements include setting clear communication objectives, identifying spokespeople, developing key messages, identifying clear calls to action, and tailoring messages for diverse audiences. Special attention is given to translating technical findings into plain language while maintaining scientific integrity. This poster will also showcase this framework in action through a case study of a new detection of water soldier in Ontario. While working as part of a collaborative group, the Invasive Species Centre developed a comprehensive communications plan to inform key audiences about the new detection, how it could impact them, and how they could support the response.



# Day 1

March 11, 2026

## Conference Welcome and Announcements – 9:30AM to 9:45AM

### From Reactive to Adaptive: Invasive Species Management in a Warming World – 9:45AM to 10:45AM

Dr. Annette Evans, University of Saint Joseph

Substantial evidence now demonstrates that climate change alters the dynamics of invasive species establishment, dispersal, and control. Over the past two decades, invasive species management has shifted from reactive control toward proactive, adaptive, and climate-informed approaches. In recent years, the field has evolved toward proactive, data-driven, and climate-informed strategies, that help bring climate-smart thinking into invasive species planning, research, and policy. Modern strategies such as habitat-suitability models are now routinely used to forecast invasion risks under different climate scenarios, helping managers identify range-shifting taxa and anticipate future hotspots. Secondly, biological control programs have become more sophisticated, with improved and expanded biocontrol releases that have proved safe and effective at managing species in challenging environments. Meanwhile, the rise of translational invasion ecology—linking research directly to on-the-ground management—has bridged the gap between science and practice, allowing primary research to be more effectively integrated into field operations, policy design, and community engagement. Together, these advances have improved the integration of climate change into invasive species management strategies.

Annette Evans is an Ecologist and Evolutionary Biologist based at the University of Saint Joseph in Connecticut. Growing up in New Zealand, she has a strong background in invasive species management and research. As a current member of the Northeast Regional Invasive Species and Climate Change (RISCC) leadership team, Annette has worked on a variety of invasive species projects including modeling range shifting invasive plants, synthesizing invasive species research and management priorities across the United States, and evaluating current evidence for climate change impacts on biocontrol organisms.



--- 15 MINUTE BREAK ---

### **Invasion of annual bromes into Native Grasslands on the Milk River Natural Area: Rapid Survey Methodology and Survey Results – 11:00AM to 11:30AM**

Steve Tannas, Tannas Conservation

In this talk, Steve will be discussing the rapid assessment protocol used to assess invasive species encroachment across the Milk River Natural Area (MRNA) and Kennedy Coulee Ecological Reserve (KCER). The assessment focuses on rapid data capture that allows an accurate and repeatable survey of large tracts of land. The survey is based on metrics collected within the Alberta Range Health Assessment Protocol along with density, phenology and area of infestations. We have used this survey over the past 15 years to effectively monitor invasive species spread for Parks Canada, First Nations and other Provincial lands. Within MRNA and KCER populations of annual grasses were noted to be invading from cropland in the USA. This resulted in concerns of invasion and the need to track it. The TCS team initiated the first survey in 2011 and then repeated this survey in 2021. We added the full survey of the MRNA and unsurveyed areas of KCER in 2024. During this time grazing was introduced to KCER to control weeds and a wildfire crossed the footprint. Our final report shows how grazing, and fire can both help manage annual grasses, but without direct intervention with herbicides the populations of these grasses continue to expand.



Steven is the owner of Tannas Conservation Services Ltd. and a senior restoration ecologist and vegetation ecologist. Steven was born and raised in the world of plants and followed in his parents' footsteps becoming a vegetation specialist and ecologist. He has a particular passion for native species, their importance and their potential for restoration, and understanding their role in ecosystem function. He's been identifying, assessing and propagating native plants for nearly three decades.

### **Prescribed Fire and Pre-Emergent Herbicide Application in South-Eastern British Columbia – 11:30AM to 12:00PM**

Katherine Johnson, Tannas Conservation

The talk will give a brief overview of grassland savannas in southern BC, their fire regimes, and the invasive species presence. There will be a summary of early results on interactions between burning and herbicide application on a grassland in the East Kootenays of British Columbia.



Katherine graduated with a Bachelor of Science from the University of Alberta in 2022. Since 2022 she has been working at Tannas Conservation Services as a junior environmental scientist and is currently undertaking a Master of Science through the U of A under the supervision of Edward Bork. The focus is on the response of invasive plants to prescribed fire under various herbicide treatments.

### **Rejuvenate your Rangeland and Pastures with Rejuvra Powered by Rangeview – 12:00PM to 12:15PM**

Megan Kneller, Envu

This presentation will explain Envu’s new herbicide, Rejuvra and how it works, and what that means for producers - improving and rejuvenating native perennial rangelands by controlling invasive annual grasses (downy brome, ventenata, medusa head, foxtail and more). Megan will mention TruRange use in western Canada, now in its 5<sup>th</sup> season.



Megan Kneller is the Area Sales Manager for Envu covering the province of Alberta for range and pasture business. Megan enjoys working with her customers and explaining the benefits of TruRange with the addition of Rejuvra and Rangeview for their rangeland and pastures. Coming from a farming background, Megan has moved back to Castor, AB to be closer to the family farm. Megan and her partner, Clinton, assist on both of their family's mixed farms. Megan has achieved her Bachelor of Applied Science in Agribusiness with a dual major diploma in Agriculture Production from Olds College. Megan has a passion for the outdoors, with her spare time she enjoys being with her dog Angus and hunting locally.

**--- 1 HOUR LUNCH BREAK ---**

### **Montana Update & Developing an Invasive Species to Watch List for Alberta – 1:15PM to 2:10PM**

Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council

The Montana Invasive Species Council (MISC) was created by the Montana Legislature in 2016 to advise on invasive species issues and foster coordination to identify, prevent, eliminate, reduce and mitigate invasive species in Montana. MISC developed an “invasive species to watch” list to help highlight different species that can cause harm to the natural, cultural, and economic resources of Montana.

Liz Lodman joined the Montana Invasive Species Council in December 2021 after a long career managing outdoor education and outreach programs including aquatic invasive species. Liz is



dedicated to collaborating on the prevention of invasive species that can harm Montana's natural resources. She grew up on a ranch in central Montana, graduated from Montana State University with a degree in Communications, and lives in Helena where she enjoys exploring the outdoors in all four seasons.

### **Updates to the Weed Control Act in Saskatchewan and Perspectives on Kochia – 2:10PM to 2:30PM**

Cory Jacob, Government of Saskatchewan

The presentation will cover Saskatchewan's recent updates to The Weed Control Act, including new weed species added to each category. Also, Cory will present his perspective on kochia, *Bassia scoparia*, within the province and how it can be managed.

Cory is the Provincial Specialist, Weed Control for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture. He served in an acting capacity for 2 years before becoming permanent in the role 9 months ago. Cory works to provide information and recommendations on weed control and The Weed Control Act to producers, agronomists, government departments and agencies as well as municipalities. He grew up on a grain farm in southeast Saskatchewan near Montmartre. He received both his Bachelor and Master of Science in Agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan.



### **Regulated Weeds Update – 2:30PM to 2:40PM**

Gayah Sieusahai, Government of Alberta

This talk will highlight the recent updates to Schedules 1 and 2 of the Weed Control Regulation led to the addition, removal and reclassification of weeds. These changes have also introduced the inclusion of hybrid species of hawkweeds, knapweeds and burdocks.

Gayah Sieusahai is the Pest Regulatory Officer with Agriculture and Irrigation. Gayah has been with the Department for the last 20 years. He was previously involved with canola plant breed and other research and extension activities. He is very passionate about keeping harmful invasive species out of the province of Alberta, while protecting the environment and human health. Gayah looks forward to sharing his views on the importance of weed management with the AISC.



**--- 30 MIN POSTER SESSION ---**

## **Invasive Species Success Stories Aided by EDDMapS in Alberta - 2012 to 2026 – 3:15PM to 3:30PM**

Kelly Cooley, CoolPro Solutions

EDDMapS has come a long way since the Alberta Invasive Plants Council (forerunner organization to AISC) first applied for funding to work with Chuck Barger from the Georgia-based Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health (CISEH) to develop 'EDDMapS Alberta' in 2011. Kelly Cooley was part of that committee, helped develop the initial EDDMapS Alberta web portal, and served as its first Terrestrial Invasive Species Verifier (continuously through 2026).



EDDMapS Alberta launched in March of 2012, initially as a PC-based application with both digital and PDF-paper species sighting submission forms for users in Alberta. As the EDDMapS system grew and technology improved, the unique Alberta EDDMapS portal gave way to the main EDDMapS site, mobile phone and tablet-based applications were developed, and the entire experience for users of EDDMapS in Alberta became much more accessible and user-friendly.

Kelly will draw on his decade and a half's history with the development and implementation of the program to highlight some invasive species successes assisted by AISC's ongoing funding and support of EDDMapS in Alberta.

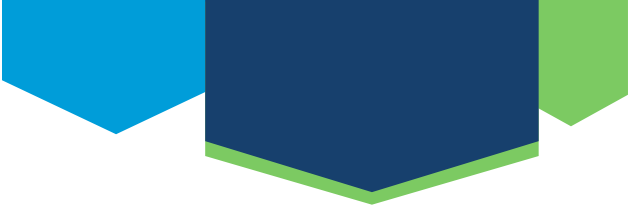
Kelly has been working in agricultural and environmental conservation across North America for 40 years. Over these decades he's been proud to work and volunteer with many great organizations. Kelly grew up on a mixed livestock-cropping family farm in southwest Alberta, and he and his wife continue to reside just south of Pincher Creek.

## **Growing Awareness: Advancing Invasive Species Education and Action – 3:30PM to 3:55PM**

Megan Hoyer, Montana Department of Agriculture

Growing Awareness: Advancing Invasive Species Education and Action explores practical, people focused strategies for growing awareness of invasive species and inspiring community action. It highlights how to connect with the public in meaningful ways, build partnerships with local groups, and empower volunteers through initiatives like Pull Your Share and Adopt a Trailhead. The session also showcases the impact of citizen science mapping efforts, demonstrating how simple tools and shared stewardship can strengthen early detection and long-term ecosystem protection.





Megan Hoyer is the Invasive Species Education coordinator for the Montana Department of Agriculture, where she coordinates statewide outreach and education efforts to prevent the human spread of invasive species with a background in education, noxious weed management and community involvement, she works to connect people, programs and prevention through hands-on education and public engagement.

**AISC's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – 3:55PM to 5:00PM**

- Adoption of Agenda and 2025 AGM Minutes
- Introduction of Board and Staff
- Chair Report
- Financial Report
- Appointment of Auditor
- 2026 Budget
- Operations & Communications Report
- Director Recognition
- Elections
- Big EDD Award
- New Business: AISC Rebrand
- 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Video and Cake!
- Adjournment

**Mixer and Dinner (provided) at The Crossing Pub – 6:00PM**

**SNAP**

**--- SNAP SCREEN PRINTING AND 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GAMES IN THE ALUMNI CENTRE AT 7PM ---**



# Day 2

March 12, 2026

**Welcome and Announcements – 8:15AM to 8:30AM**

**Using all the Tools in the Toolbox: Managing Invasive Species in Fish Creek Provincial Park – 8:30AM to 8:50AM**

Emma Stroud, Friends of Fish Creek

This presentation will outline the role of robust monitoring and inventory in guiding prioritization and supporting early detection and rapid response (EDRR). It will then explore the diverse suite of control tools used within the IPM framework, including manual and mechanical removal, targeted chemical control, biological control, competition-based approaches, and smothering techniques, with emphasis on selecting the right tools for the right site and species. A key component of the talk will be the innovative use of volunteers to support monitoring, control, and restoration activities, demonstrating how community engagement significantly expands capacity while fostering stewardship. The presentation will also highlight how invasive species management is intentionally linked to ecological restoration, ensuring treated areas are actively replanted with appropriate native species to support long-term resilience and prevent reinvasion. Overall, the talk will provide a practical case study of applied IPM in an urban park setting, offering transferable insights for municipalities, conservation organizations, and land managers.



Emma has been working in Fish Creek Provincial Park since 2020, working with volunteers and the community to raise awareness, protect and restore ecosystems in Fish Creek. Born on the prairies, Emma is passionate about highlighting grassland ecosystems that are often overlooked and undervalued by the public. Through showcasing the beauty and diversity of native grasslands, we can increase their value and appreciation and inspire more restoration of these important landscapes.

## **Invasive Phragmites in Canada: Management Lessons and Biocontrol Research from Ontario – 8:50AM to 9:20AM**

Matt Bolding, Ducks Unlimited

Invasive *Phragmites australis* (European common reed) is one of the most aggressive wetland invaders in Canada, with widespread and well-documented ecological and socioeconomic impacts in Ontario. Over the past two decades, Ontario has developed and implemented integrated management approaches that combine prevention, early detection, mechanical and chemical control, collaboration, and applied research, including the introduction of two biological control agents, two European stem-boring moths (*Archanara neurica* and *Lenisa geminipuncta*), for invasive Phragmites. Since their approval in 2019, over 40,000 moths have been released at multiple sites in Ontario as part of a long-term effort to develop sustainable, landscape-scale suppression tools. Early monitoring indicates successful establishment, overwintering, and feeding damage, with ongoing research evaluating efficacy and integration with existing control methods. Experiences managing a well-established invasive population can be valuable in regions where Phragmites is at an early stage of invasion.



Matt Bolding has been involved in wetland research for almost two decades, working across Alberta in many different habitats, including the Prairie Pothole Region, Rocky Mountains, and the Boreal, before moving to Ontario in 2016. He has led numerous research projects in Ontario dealing with invasive species management, species at risk, and coastal wetland restoration in the marshes of Long Point and Rondeau, on Lake Erie. Matt started at Ducks Unlimited Canada in August 2023 and coordinates Ontario's invasive species program, which includes supporting research into biological control for invasive Phragmites, the development of new tools to track aquatic invasive European water chestnut and water soldier and coordinating collaborative Phragmites management in Eastern Ontario for the Ontario Phragmites Action Program.

## **Alberta Biocontrol Consortium – What Are We? – 9:20AM to 9:40AM**

Stacy Berry, Strathcona County

If you haven't heard of the recently formalized Alberta Biocontrol Consortium, here is an introduction to the members and purpose of the ABC, and what you can do to help!

Stacy Berry is the Invasive Plant Specialist, Biocontrol with Strathcona County. Over the last decade, she has worked with a few counties around the Northwest region, ranging from a seasonal sprayer to



where she is now. Stacy is a Certified Crop Advisor, Professional Agrologist, and licensed herbicide applicator. She has always had a specific interest in biological control and is now the chair of the Alberta Biocontrol Consortium.

--- 20 MINUTE BREAK ---

### **Aquatic Invasives & Species at Risk: Impacts, Challenges, and Recovery Pathways – 10:00AM to 10:25AM**

Lisa Schaubel, Government of Alberta

Invasive species disrupt freshwater ecosystems and intensify pressures on already vulnerable aquatic species. Aquatic invasives alter habitats, compete with native wildlife, and interfere with critical life stages such as spawning, migration, and juvenile survival. The focus of this presentation is on understanding general impact patterns, recognizing why at-risk species are especially susceptible, and highlighting the importance of prevention, early detection, and coordinated recovery actions across watersheds.



For the past 10 years Lisa has had the privilege of working across Fish and Wildlife Stewardship in fisheries operations, whirling disease management, species at risk and stewardship, and now as the Manager of aquatic health and biosecurity. With graduate training in stream ecology with a focus at species of concern and an early start studying invasive species in Ontario, Lisa likes to dig into how fish and their habitat respond to a changing environment. Lisa's passionate about conserving aquatic ecosystems and strive to pass that passion on to future generations, starting with my daughter and her friends, by getting them into the water and teaching them about Alberta's incredible fisheries.

### **AIS 2025 Year in Review – 10:25AM to 10:50AM**

Nicole Kimmel, Government of Alberta

This year's Alberta Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Team review highlights key efforts and challenges in preventing, monitoring, and responding to AIS threats across the province and a peak into 2026 efforts. While progress has been made, AIS prevention, response, and reporting remain ongoing challenges that demand ongoing dedication, innovation, and vigilance from all Albertans.

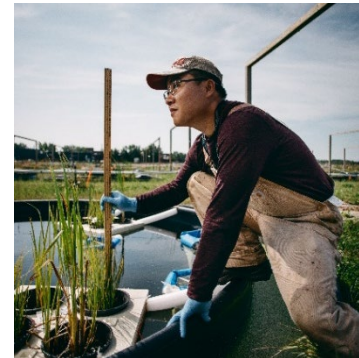
Nicole Kimmel received a B.Sc. of Environmental Conservation Sciences from the University of Alberta in 2000 with a Specialization in Wildlife and Rangeland Sciences. She began working with Alberta Government upon graduation, as a research assistant. Her work involved addressing weed management issues in forages and non-traditional crops. After 10 years in agricultural research, her role evolved to Weed Specialist, for an additional 7 years of employment. In 2018, she moved departments to the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Specialist. Now she supports the five elements of the AIS program: Policy & Legislation, Education & Outreach, Monitoring, Watercraft Inspections/Decontamination and Response. Nicole is approaching 25 years of service with the Government of Alberta.



**From Pipelines to Ponds: Innovative Approaches to Invasive Species Detection and Control – 10:50AM to 11:10AM**

Dr. Zhongzhi Chen, InnoTech Alberta

Invasive species continue to challenge the integrity of aquatic ecosystems and infrastructure across Alberta and beyond. Our presentation highlights a suite of innovative tools under development and validation to address these threats. These include anti-fouling coatings for irrigation pipelines to prevent mussel colonization, the application of environmental DNA (eDNA) for early detection of a wide range of invasive species, and the use of an aquatic mesocosm facility as a controlled environment for testing detection and control strategies. These innovative approaches offer scalable, science-based solutions for proactive invasive species management.



Dr. Zhongzhi Chen is an experienced Researcher with InnoTech Alberta's Environmental Services division. He holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science and brings over a decade of expertise in ecotoxicology, environmental chemistry, and ecosystem management. At InnoTech, he leads projects focused on de-risking technologies and processes to mitigate environmental impacts, including aquatic mesocosm research. Prior to joining InnoTech, he managed water treatment projects in the private sector and completed postdoctoral research in ecotoxicology and biogeochemistry. He is a Professional Biologist (P.Bio.) with ASPB and a certified Environmental Professional (EP, R&D) with ECO Canada.

### **Mid-Snake River Idaho Quagga Mussel- Lessons Learned – 11:10AM to 11:30AM**

Nic Zurfluh, Government of Idaho

This presentation will focus on the lessons learned from previous quagga mussel treatments for the 2025 treatment plan and implementation.

Nic Zurfluh is the Bureau Chief for the Invasive Species, Noxious Weed and Range Programs for the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.



### **AISC's CD3 Project – 11:30AM to 11:40AM**

Jacob Utrie, CD3 Systems and Megan Evans, AISC

This presentation will provide an overview of the CD3 Systems waterless boat cleaning systems deployed by the Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC) during the summer of 2025. We will discuss how these systems were implemented as a preventative strategy to reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species by improving watercraft cleaning practices at access points. The session will include a brief introduction to CD3 Systems, followed by key data and insights on system usage, user adoption, and operational performance throughout the season.

With a background in environmental sciences, Jacob has over a decade of experience as a former lake and watershed manager. He has specialized training in fisheries, water quality, and aquatic invasive species management. As an avid outdoorsman, he has honed his understanding of wildlife and aquatic ecosystems. Through his expertise, he is committed to preserving and nurturing our natural resources for future generations to enjoy.

Megan is a terrestrial ecologist with over 15 years of experience in conservation and environmental management. She is currently the Executive Director for the Alberta Invasive Species Council and the Executive Director of the Alberta Native Bee Council.



**--- 1 HOUR LUNCH BREAK ---**

## **Invasive Carp in Stormwater Systems – Wading Through Murky Waters – 12:40PM to 1:05PM**

Krish Purohit & Dean Foster, Associated Environmental Consultants Inc.

Over the past 4 years, the City of Calgary with Associated Environmental Consultants Inc (AE) has been developing and implementing a management strategy to address Prussian carp and goldfish in City stormwater ponds. This strategy has included trialing alternative eradication approaches and conducting studies on invasive carp movement and eDNA sampling. Many jurisdictions across Alberta face similar invasion threats, often tackling the issue independently. This presentation will share lessons learned from field observations—covering species behavior and effective management techniques—to support improved invasive carp management across the province.



Krish Purohit is an aquatic biologist with 4 years of experience working on projects involving Prussian Carp. Krish first encountered Prussian Carp in his undergraduate degree while sampling for native fish in a stormwater pond in Innisfail. After graduating, Krish thought he had escaped working with invasive carp; however, just like in nature, the carp returned. Krish has spent the last 3 years alongside Dean Foster, and others from AE, evaluating and implementing invasive carp management strategies with the City of Calgary.

Dean Foster is the Manager of the Applied Ecology team at AE's Calgary office. With over 13 years of experience in environmental consulting, he specializes in fish and fish habitat assessments and regulatory permitting for projects in or near aquatic environments. Dean has led the City of Calgary Storm pond Invasive Fish Project, developing management strategies, designing field studies, and overseeing data collection and interpretation to address invasive species challenges.

## **Meningeal Worm, *Parelaphostrongylus tenuis*, a New Invasive Threat to Free-Ranging Ungulates in Alberta, and Beyond – 1:05PM to 1:30PM**

Dr. Margo Pybus, Government of Alberta

Alberta first raised concerns about *P. tenuis* in 1987 with a ban on importation of live cervids that could potentially transfer this nematode into the province. We have been on the lookout ever since. Fast-forward to June 2024 when a young caribou with neurologic clinical signs was reported in the vicinity of Cold Lake, Alberta. Over the next few months four additional caribou and one moose from the same general area were reported with similar clinical signs or were found dead. Histopathology revealed suspect migratory tracts within the brains of the five caribou and nematode larvae within the brain of the moose. PCR and sequencing confirmed the diagnosis of *P. tenuis* in all six cases. Meningeal worm coevolved in white-tailed deer and causes few, if any, problems. However, in other cervids as well as domestic sheep, goats, llamas, and alpacas, infection often is fatal. Risk assessment conducted in 1996 indicated that once present, meningeal worm would likely sustain a population and spread westward through the boreal forest fringe, do an end-run around the prairies, and eventually move into the

foothills and beyond. Over coming decades, this parasite is expected to bring relatively slow incremental ecological change at a landscape level. Fish and Wildlife Stewardship, in conjunction with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative in Calgary and Alberta Agriculture & Irrigation, has stepped up surveillance and public awareness to determine the extent of current *P. tenuis* occurrence in northeast Alberta as the basis for evaluating possible management options in the province.

As the Provincial Wildlife Disease Specialist, Margo has province-wide responsibility to plan, organize, deliver, and evaluate wildlife disease-related resource management programs, and to develop and inform municipal, provincial, and national policy initiatives associated with wildlife parasites and diseases and their role in the management of wild populations in Alberta. Margo has led Alberta's wildlife disease efforts for four decades and is embedded in a wide range of disease-related conservation, management, and research programs. She is the primary provincial liaison at provincial, national, and international tables where wildlife parasites and diseases are on the agenda.



### **Cross-Country Knowledge Exchange: Sharing Hard Learned Lessons from Central Canada on Detection, Management and Recovery from our Most Notable Forest Pests – 1:30PM to 1:55PM**

Colin Cassin, Invasive Species Centre

Central Canada has faced several major invasive forest pests, including Dutch elm disease, emerald ash borer, and Asian longhorned beetle. This presentation will explore how these pests have strengthened early detection and reporting networks, informed management approaches, and shaped new outreach strategies. We'll provide practical insights that can inform emerging forest pest programs in Alberta and beyond.

Colin Cassin is the Executive Director at the Invasive Species Centre. Colin has worked on invasive species for more than 15 years. In previous roles at ISC he has been responsible for program development and invasive species policy. He has degrees in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Restoration Ecology. Colin lives in Peterborough, Ontario with his wife and 2 kids.



--- 20 MINUTE BREAK ---

## **Alberta Wild Boar Control Program Update – 2:15PM to 2:45PM**

Hannah McKenzie, Government of Alberta

In this presentation Hannah will provide an update on the Alberta Wild Boar Control program, including recent regulation changes, our field operations, and some collaborations we're part of. Hannah will talk about some of the challenges we face in eradicating wild boar in Alberta, some of the successes we've had so far, and where to next.

Hannah graduated from the University of Alberta with an MSc in Mathematical and Statistical Biology and an MSc in Applied Mathematics. Prior to taking on her current role as Wild Boar Specialist, Hannah worked with the Alberta Aquatic Invasive Species program along with her K9 partner Seuss. Hannah employs her quantitative skills to make evidence-informed policy and program decisions.



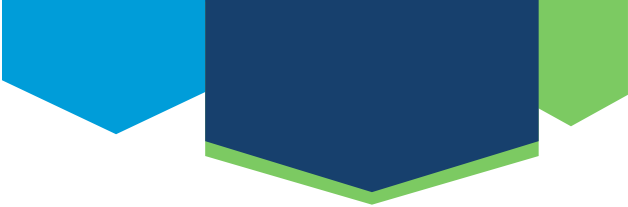
## **Alberta Wild Boar Eradication: A Trapper's Success Driven by Evolving and Well-designed Provincial Strategy – 2:45PM to 3:15PM**

Nick Gallagher, Coyote Den Wildlife Services

In this presentation, Nick will share his experience as a professional trapper working to eradicate wild boar in Alberta. He'll highlight the crucial role trappers play in achieving results on the ground and explain how our success has been made possible by an evolving, well-designed provincial strategy grounded in data and science. He'll emphasize the value of collaboration—bringing together local trappers, landowners, provincial and municipal authorities, industry, and other stakeholders—to show how a coordinated approach is essential for managing and ultimately eradicating invasive wild boar populations. Drawing on his last 18 months removing wild boar from the landscape, he'll discuss how the behaviour of these animals drives effective management techniques, share the current challenges and proven strategies, and suggest areas for further exploration. His experience demonstrates that prevention and eradication of this alien invasive species remain not only possible but also the best path forward for our province.



A conservation minded outdoorsman, trapper, and hunter, Nick has spent 25 years in leadership roles as an infantry officer in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). In this role, he had the privilege to be immersed in varying landscapes across the world, but most rewarding was time spent in Canada's Arctic Territories working, living and learning on the land with our great indigenous cultures. Upon retirement from the CAF he pursued his passion for wildlife conservations completing an Environmental Sciences Diploma at



Lakeland College becoming a certified Wildlife and Fisheries Technician. His conservation roles include being an active trapper for 16 years, worked as a Municipal District Wildlife Control Officer, Fish Technician conducting wild salmon enhancement project in the Yukon/Northern BC, and now, has his dream job of applying his skills to eradicate wild boar, while knowing that his efforts protect our native ecosystems.

**Closing Remarks for Day 2 – 3:15PM to 3:30PM**





## AISC's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Wishes & Memories

*We connected with people who have helped shape AISC's journey over the years, including volunteers, staff, friends, board members, and especially founding board members! We decided to include favourite AISC memories, "birthday wishes" for the organization, or reflections on their experience with AISC.*

Happy 20th Anniversary AISC!

So happy I was able to contribute as a board member between 2009-2012. It was during this time that I have made some lifelong friends through AISC. Keep up the great work and I look forward to attending this year's conference in Olds 😊

Andrea Sharpe

20 years is quite the milestone. A milestone that would not be possible without the dedicated efforts of the Board and staff at the AISC. My time on the board was a short 6 years, starting as a director and ending as the treasurer. One thing that stands out to me is the unwavering energy that the AISC team has for their mandate. From fact sheets to educational speeches, from tradeshow to hosting conferences, from bio control to social media stories - the team at AISC is second to none and have done an amazing job of raising the profile of invasive species education and management. My role as a municipal Weed Inspector and Pest Officer allows me to interact with Megan and her team regularly. It is always a pleasure, and I am encouraged every time to be just a little more vigilant. Congratulation to the AISC on 20 years, I look forward to continuing our partnership for 20 more.

Todd Green

Director of Agricultural Services, County of Newell


Happy 20th Anniversary to the Alberta Invasive Species Council...

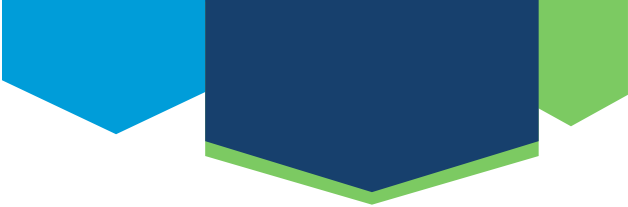
From humble beginnings as the Alberta Invasive Plant Council to what the AISC has become today this organization has increased awareness on the impact of Invasive species in Alberta & beyond!

Keep up the amazing work! Here's to keeping Alberta Invasive Species Free!

Chris Fulkerth, Plant Science Instructor

I look back fondly upon my time with the AISC. Being part of the journey from the Alberta Invasive Plant Council to the Alberta Invasive Species Council - and then watching it continue to grow was a privilege. The directors and friends I served with left a lasting mark on me – passionate, smart people who poured their hearts into making a real difference. Together, through hard work, laughter, and the occasional fiery but respectful debate, we helped lay the groundwork for the Council you see today.





I laugh when I recall how much time and debate went into settling on 'Prevention Inspired, Alberta Protected' as our slogan.

Happy 20th AISC - may your roots grow deeper and stronger than Canada Thistle!

Dave Hayman

Senior Planner, Climate Policy & Planning

Right now, I'm out in West Texas for work, but I wanted to make sure I contributed to your anniversary project. My involvement with the Alberta Invasive Species Council was truly a pivotal experience for me. It played a significant role in developing my professional career, giving me opportunities to represent both the interests of industry partners in the province and the needs of the public. I walked away from my time on the board with a much broader understanding of governance and what it takes to balance the interests of all Albertans.

This might make you blush but, the biggest highlight of my time might have been Megan's hiring... You have brought energy and passion to the group. I love seeing all your incredible initiatives and how you have grown the council as it's Executive Director. Keep up the good work 😊

Congratulations on reaching 20 years! I wish the Council continued success and growth in the years ahead. Thanks again for the invitation and for all the work you do.

Best regards,

Matt Gibson


My reminders of positive events for AISC include the great goldfish Roundup in a St Albert storm pond, aha moments with sportsmen at Cabela's in Edmonton, Clean-Drain-Dry events at Alberta Lakes, and successful conferences.

Thanks for all you do and good luck at the conference.

Jay Byer

Thank you so much for reaching out and for including me in AISC's 20th anniversary celebrations. Congratulations on this incredible milestone! It's inspiring to see how far AISC has come, and I'm honoured to have contributed in a small way to its journey.

I truly value the continued opportunity to work with the AISC team and appreciate the dedication they bring to preventing the introduction of highly invasive species into Alberta. Megan and her staff are always friendly, knowledgeable, and exceptionally skilled in invasive species identification and management. I look forward to continuing our work together in the years ahead.





Gayah Sieusahai

Congratulations AISC on celebrating 20 years of innovation, education and action. Your efforts to address invasive species in Alberta have greatly benefited the province, its people and the environment. Cheers to many more years of ground-breaking research, outreach, and positive change for the planet

Sincerely,

Ken Fry

Congratulations to the AISC on your 20th anniversary. This organization has grown so much since I joined the AISC Board 10 years ago.

When I hear an interview from a member of the AISC board on the radio, mention on TV about a program being spear-headed by the AISC, see literature at different stores about an AISC initiative - I feel proud that I was once a small part of helping this organization to grow. You are in good hands, Alberta Invasive Species Council!

Jeannie Suffern

My best memory of a AISC conference has to be the Olds College Brewery tour and tasting event! And now my worst memory is forgetting to check my passport early enough and discovering that it was expired before the AISC's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and conference – cheers to 20 more!

Mark Daluge, Teton County Weed and Pest District

Happy 20th Alberta Invasive Species Council! How exciting! I was on the Council from ~2012-2017 and while there were certainly some challenging times related to funding and forging a sustainable future, I remember the time very fondly. It was a growth period – we were building the first Aquatic Invasive Species Program in Alberta, coming together w/other invasive species managers and stakeholders to strengthen our missions, finessing our outreach, and bringing industry stakeholders to the board. We made a lot of progress in those years, and I am so happy to see what seems to be a thriving Council working for Alberta today! While my hats have changed several times since my Alberta days, the Council and the team that has consistently “made it happen” on the invasive species front in Alberta will always hold a special place; and many of the relationships have survived the years and the distance! It’s where we found creative solutions, never gave up, and worked so well as a team. My birthday wish for AISC is to continue to thrive and give a strong voice to multi-taxa invasive species prevention and management in the province, the country, and the region – your work is so important!

Kate Wilson



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