

**North Carolina Vegetation Management Annual Meeting**  
**December 10-11, 2025**



**Tuesday, December 9th**

3:00 p.m. Registration Opens (closes at 5:00 p.m.)

**Wednesday, December 10th**

8:00 a.m. **Registration Open / Vendor & Sponsor Visits**

8:30 a.m. **Welcome / Safety Briefing / President's Remarks**

*Paul Mitchell, Wright Tree*

8:45 a.m. **Notify Your Neighbor**

*Abby Aycock, Corteva*

For vegetation managers, notifying landowners and the general public of programs along rights-of-way is an important responsibility. To help increase compliance, reduce complaints and improve overall productivity, we'll discuss notification programs, communication skills, public interaction, key messages and habitat benefits.

9:30 a.m. **Catch My Drift? The Best Practices of Managing Drift**

*Drew Arsi, Opterra*

This presentation will highlight the drift problems that vegetation management professionals encounter. Often labels document research based off of an agricultural application and not off of a ROW or other related vegetation management scenarios. This will dive into real problems that we encounter through documented drift horror and success stories and the ways to combat these problems.

10:15 a.m. **Break / Vendor & Sponsor Visits**

10:45 a.m. **The Evolution of IVM**

*Matt Nespeca, The Orion Companies*

The past 30 years has brought many impactful changes to the vegetation management industry. In this presentation, Matt will discuss the shift of innovation in vegetation management from mechanical to chemical methods, from innovation in herbicide actives to innovation in delivery systems, from broad to precise vegetation outcomes and success metrics, and the displacement of labor with digital innovation.

11:30 a.m. **Presentation of Lifetime Achievement Award**

12:00 p.m. **Lunch**

1:00 p.m. **Site-Specific Resource Management in Loblolly Pine Plantations**

*Rachel Cook, NC State*

An overview of research by the Forest Productivity Cooperative on the trade-offs of fertilization vs vegetation control and how we can use remote sensing and soil mapping to inform our decisions to optimize inputs.

1:45 p.m. **Vendor Shoutout**

Sponsors and Exhibitors will have the opportunity to introduce their company and services provided.

2:00 p.m. **License Update**

*Travis Snodgrass, NCDA & CS*

2:15 p.m. **Drone Applications- Past, Present, & Future**

*Dustin Polasek, Nutrien*

This presentation will cover the advancements in drone applications over the previous 4 years, where we are at today, and the future of drone operations. We will look at gains & efficiency, efficacy, and safety in operations. Lastly, we will cover the barriers of entry into drone operations.

3:00 p.m. **Turf & Ornamental**

*Will McEwen, The Orion Companies*

This session will highlight the importance of product stewardship in turf and vegetation management, focusing on correct label usage, application sites, and stewardship of chemistries. We'll explore common mistakes in the field, such as misusing products with similar actives but different label restrictions (e.g., Celsius vs. Derigo, Rezilon vs. Esplanade). Attendees will learn how proper product selection, custom blending, and compliance with EPA/FIFRA guidelines can optimize performance, reduce risk, and protect both applicators and the environment. Practical examples and solutions will be shared for both industrial and improved turf settings.

3:45 p.m. **Jimmy V Foundation**

4:15 p.m. **Adjourn / Vendors open until 5:00 p.m.**

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### Thursday, December 11th

#### 8:00 a.m. **Safety Briefing / NCVMA Board Business Meeting**

*Paul Mitchell, Wright Tree*

During the 2025 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 2026 outlook.

#### 8:15 a.m. **Scholarship Committee Update**

*NCVMA Scholarship Committee Members*

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, committee members 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. **Importance of Adjuvants in Vegetation Management**

*Chris Blodget, Nutrien*

During this discussion, Chris will present Environmental, Efficacy and Safety benefits of using Adjuvants in Herbicide Programs including drift/droplet control, penetration benefits, buffering water elements, soil binding adjuvant benefits, the difference between Adjuvants and Surfactants, and proper mixing order – Herbicide Formulations + Adjuvants.

#### 9:15 a.m. **Resistance**

*Dr. David Spak, Envu*

Herbicide resistance is the failure of a herbicide to control a weed with an herbicide that once controlled that weed. Herbicide resistance to specific modes of action (MOA) will continue to be an important issue for vegetation managers in the future due to the increased reliance on a few herbicide modes of action combined with a limited number of new herbicides in development on the horizon. This presentation will review the classification of herbicides, mode and mechanism of action, define the difference between herbicide resistance and herbicide tolerance, and best practices to delay the spread or development of herbicide resistance.

#### 10:00 a.m. **Break / Vendor & Sponsor Visits / Last Chance for Silent Auction**

#### 10:45 a.m. **Practical Aquatic Plant Identification, Management, and Technology Integration**

*Andrew Howell, NC State University*

Managing aquatic plants presents unique challenges due to the complexity of aquatic ecosystems. Accurate weed identification is especially important, as the distinct biological traits of aquatic plants often complicate control efforts compared to terrestrial vegetation. Additionally, limited site access and the labor-intensive nature of monitoring and treatment restrict the scope and effectiveness of many management programs. This presentation will cover practical methods for distinguishing native aquatic plants from invasive species, common strategies for monitoring and control, and emerging technologies that are helping to modernize and enhance aquatic weed management.

11:45 a.m **Technology Based VM**

*Dr. Robert Vanderhoof, Arbormetrics*

Dr. Vandershoof will discuss how technological advances in workflow management and in remote sensing techniques like drones, LiDAR, and high-altitude imagery, in conjunction with Artificial Intelligence (AI) are poised to fundamentally transform our approach to Utility Vegetation Management (UVM). Moving from a cycle-based pest control model to a data-driven asset management model has the potential to target expensive vegetation management activities on those assets with the highest risk of contacting vegetation.

12:30 p.m **Closing Session and New President Welcome**

*Paul Mitchell, Wright Tree / Jesse Peery, Envu*

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

12:45 p.m. **Adjourn**