

# Utility Arborist Newsline

JULY/AUG 2020

VOLUME 11

NUMBER 4

## INSIDE

President's Message .....4  
 Exec. Director Comments .....6  
 Officer List.....6  
 Industry News .....8  
 Safety Committee Update ....13  
 Spotlight: Environment.....14  
 Research Corner .....16

## FOCUS ON SAFETY

Do You Really Know the Ropes? .....19  
 Making the Most of Your Safety Program.....24  
 Using Safety Data to Improve Learning .....26  
 After Action Reviews: Not Just for Safety .....28  
 The Sacramento Power Academy .....31  
 VM Resilience in the Face of COVID-19.....37  
 SRP Electrical Safety Workshop.....39  
 Protect Yourself from Pesky Pests .....40

MAST PHOTO BY:  
 MOSHE HAROSH, PIXABAY



## Lead, Follow, or Get Out of Our Way!

### A LIFE REMEMBERED

By Renee Bissett, ACRT Services

A decade ago, the UAA membership elected a new president, Nelsen Money. None of us who knew Nelsen would be surprised at the legacy he created. Most notably was his contribution to this publication, *Newsline*. When he inherited the *UAA Quarterly* it was a challenge to provide diverse content representing our whole industry. The publication had begun in 1992 and much of the content was written by staff and with a lot of “arm twisting” according to, then executive director, Derek Vannice. That year—when he led the UAA—the publication got a makeover. Its new name stands today, the *Utility Arborist Newsline*.

“Nelsen was the driving force behind the UAA editorial committee, and we can thank him for having enough content so that we could move to six issues a year,” said Vannice.

Philip Charlton, the current Executive Director of the UAA, attributes Nelsen’s biggest accomplishment to his “transformation of the *Newsline*” and his ability to “mentor and encourage people, thanking those willing to help the UAA.”

“Nelsen represents what is good with our profession and the kind of role model most of us would like to be remembered for.”  
 —Will Nutter, Wright Tree



The late Nelsen Money and his wife Pam

Nelsen wasn’t shy to ask members to do their part and he didn’t make them do it alone. He’d stand shoulder to shoulder with you, providing guidance and support, and lifting you up when you needed it. According to Craig Kelly, PG&E, Nelsen saw something in him that he didn’t see in himself: “Nelsen recognized leadership when he saw it and helped vet individuals like myself to get the ‘tap’ for a leadership role in the UAA. He encouraged and constantly supported all his protégées guiding them on their professional succession trail.”

When Diona Neeser joined the UAA, it was partially due to Nelson’s nudge. He was among the first to show her the ropes, too. “He was always in my corner, cheering me on—be it in the workplace or as a



# STRONGER TOGETHER

**THANK YOU TO OUR UTILITY CLIENTS AND THE DAVEY EMPLOYEES WHO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES DURING COVID-19**

Since 1880, we have weathered many storms together. We will rise to meet this current challenge for our clients, employees and communities we serve.

[daveyutilitiesolutions.com](http://daveyutilitiesolutions.com)



ASSET MANAGEMENT



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING



LINE CLEARANCE



STORM RESPONSE



VEGETATION MANAGEMENT



TELECOM CONSTRUCTION



friend outside of work. He would call or text just to check in on me, give advice, and then head off to the next big fishing day or glass of fine wine that awaited him,” she said.

We have to remember that even though he was retired, he never stopped giving back to the industry. Others who worked closely with Nelsen echoed similar experiences.

“Nelsen is one of the most giving people I have ever met, giving of his time, experiences, and his wisdom. Nelsen always worked in the background as to not draw attention to himself. He preferred to pass the attention and torch to others around him for the greater good of our industry and profession,” said Will Nutter, Wright Tree Service.

Randy Miller followed Nelson’s tenure as President, describing him as a, “hall-of-famer caliber guy, both personally and professionally.” What he valued most from Nelson was his, “measured judgement and sound advice during a dynamic period in the UAA’s history.”

More than this publication, he established the partnership the UAA has with T&D World, producing an annual vegetation management supplement with them, which expanded our reach. Charlton credited Nelson for, “making the Western Regional meeting a huge success.” He also contributed to the ROW Stewardship accreditation and was a strong supporter of the program.

Vannice said, “He was tireless in his promotion of the UAA and IVM.” There were few corners of this industry Nelson didn’t touch. His legacy is profound.

Rich Hendler, ACRT, summarized Nelson’s contributions as immense: “To the UAA, our editorial committee, our UAA leadership team, our industry, and our life pur-



suits, we travel the road Nelson has built and what a positive influence on us all.”

He didn’t just lift up those of us lucky enough to know him. He did it for the whole industry. Lori Jones, Salt River Project, reminded me that “when industry legends leave us, we need to keep their memories alive.”

*“Many of us strive to leave a legacy in our profession and industry; Nelsen has.”  
—Derek Vannice, CNUC*

*“He led with grace and thunder, and let’s be honest, a few ruffled feathers along the way, but at the end of the day, we can all agree that his passion for the UAA was his fire.”  
—Diona Neeser, UAA*

*“The Newslines is a first-class publication today due in large measure to Nelsen’s determination, judgment, and dedication.”  
—Randy Miller, CNUC*

The best way to honor Nelson’s legacy is to lift those up around us, offering mentorship, friendship, and coaching to those that need it. Keep carrying his torch, and if you catch a big fish, remember him.

When Nelson handed over the reins of the editorial committee to me last fall, he told me, “It has been a great ride for many years and the team has done an excellent job. I’ll probably join some calls and can be a resource if needed. It’s time to fish more and enjoy each day.”

Nelsen would often check in with people and make sure they felt appreciated. After joining us for a recent editorial committee meeting, he sent me a text, “You are doing great.” He went on to say, “It was fun listening in.” That was his last meeting. Nelsen Money passed away peacefully in his sleep on May 23, 2020.

*“Nelsen was a guide, a leader, a mentor, and coach—something many of us have benefited from. One of my favorite Nelsen sayings is, ‘Lead, follow, or get out of our way!’ True words from a leader, a mentor, and a coach.”  
—Craig Kelly, PG&E*





# President's Message

By Eric Brown

I open by reflecting briefly on the challenges we all face either directly or indirectly across North America and beyond. Yes, I am referring to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has likely changed our lives, business operations, safety practices, and protocols certainly near term and potentially in perpetuity across the utility vegetation management (UVM) industry. Our industry (especially our highly skilled expert line clearance arborists) operates in arguably the highest risk work in any industry. Combine that with COVID-19—and the overarching duty and obligation to provide safe and reliable power to our clients—your safety culture, protocols, and practices will all be tested at exponential levels. I have witnessed firsthand and heard countless testimonials from industry colleagues highlighting the dedication and safety culture we all have developed across the UVM industry shine through to meet our essential duties.

In both daily UVM work and unexpected crises, industry leaders take a critical look at what worked well and what did not, potential areas for improvement, and most importantly, expertise and skills/practices needed for exceptional safety results. The UVM industry has transformed their safety culture within the last several years. The UAA, with its 5,000 dedicated members, as an industry leader, along with cross-functional industry expertise, and leaders across all UVM disciplines have ensured continuous improvement as a staple of our industry's safety values.

The UAA Safety Committee is an additional example of the continued dedication and laser focus on safety improvements across the industry. This committee is anchored by industry leaders across UVM disciplines, but the common thread is one of "safety" in the fabric of each member. The members have continuously driven results by starting Safety Summits, which have proven to be valuable ways to share best practices amongst peers in the UVM industry. Additionally, Safety Summits help our members raise the bar for their own operations from good to great. Subject matter experts and industry peers share selected cross-functional topics, practices/protocols, and processes across the safety palate to drive excellence. The summits also include noteworthy, positive stories that are shared with other members, and improvement recommendations for them to consider in their own program or company. These sharing opportunities have provided platforms for discussions that may not have occurred if not for these summits. The takeaways are not only valuable opportunities for idea sharing, but exceptional ways to foster and broaden relationships across the UVM industry.



## A Life Remembered

*"Nelsen Money was a true IVM/UVM ambassador, with unwavering passion, commitment, and industry-level engagement...a mentor, father, brother, colleague, friend, passionate fisherman, and loving husband. The UVM industry, colleagues/friends that Nelsen touched are exponentially superior from his expertise and spirited discussions."*  
 —Eric Brown, SMUD, UAA President

In closing, I'd like to share a message from UAA Safety Committee Chair and President Elect, Paul Hurysz: "The Utility Vegetation Management Industry (UVMI) is a resilient and talented industry. There are several UAA-affiliated companies that have taken steps to turn their company cultures into safety cultures. The reason that I know this to be a truth is because these companies won't allow distractions, such as an economy-crippling virus, keep them from thinking about or believing in what is important to them—their values. One of their most important values is safety, and it shows, even in these trying times! Now *that* is a 24/7 culture that all families/companies should strive for and be proud of! Take care and stay well!"

As you read this edition of the *Newsline*, please remember that volunteers write the excellent articles included within its pages. Our organization continues to be driven forward by those who are willing to give their time, share knowledge/ expertise, and volunteer on one of our UAA committees. We are always looking for volunteers and cannot be the successful organization that we are today without your participation. And for that, I want to say thank you!

Stay safe and healthy!

**CORRECTION:** In the 2020 May/June issue of the *Newsline* on page 30 of the article titled, "DTE Energy Leverages High-Density Distribution LiDAR in Detroit," there is a sentence that should be stated as, "The downturn also left Detroit with rising safety concerns and access issues, which resulted in a decade of limited maintenance for some regions."



Working together  
to shape the future  
of our industry and  
emerge from this  
stronger.

COVID-19  
will have many permanent,  
long-term implications for  
utilities and their contractors.  
The stay-at-home orders and  
social distancing will impact  
the future of vegetation  
management. Clearion  
stands with you.



# CLEARION

[clearion.com](http://clearion.com) | (404) 954-0297



**esri**

Partner Network  
Gold



## Executive Director Comments

By Phil Charlton

This month's *Newsline* is focused on safety, which is always timely. This is especially true right now, as we take proper measures to

protect against the ongoing pandemic, COVID-19. Hopefully, by the time you read this edition of the *Newsline*, we will all be out of hibernation and seeing the world slowly return to some sense of normalcy. We thought it might be helpful to quickly update our members on how the UAA has been impacted.

The University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point opened their first class for the utility vegetation management (UVM) certificate program. Since it is an online series of courses, there were no COVID-related delays. Registration for the first class started in March and the response was fantastic. The class filled quickly, and the waitlist grew so fast that

UWSP opened registration for a second class in May. I hope those that want to make a career on the management side of UVM will take a close look at this opportunity to move ahead of the crowd. The industry will be offering a credential to candidates completing all the courses.

The UAA's efforts to start the qualified line clearance worker training program did have to adjust due to safety precautions. The first class was to start at Butte College in Oroville, California in March. It has been rescheduled for June 1 with some restrictions on class size. As many as 25 other community colleges are ready to offer the course this summer if state restrictions allow.

Of course, our slate of spring regional meetings and safety summits was impacted. All meetings scheduled between March 15 and June 1 were postponed. UAA Operations



### Utility Arborist Association

2019 - 2020 Officers

#### Executive Director - Philip Charlton

(513) 623-1737  
philipcharlton@gmail.com

#### President - Eric Brown

SMUD  
(916) 732-6766 • eric.brown@smud.org

#### Vice President - Geoff Kempter

Asplundh Tree Expert Co.  
(215) 915-3998 • gkemp@asplundh.com

#### Past President - Bob Richens

ArborMetrics Solutions  
(828) 685-1880  
rrichens@arbormetrics.com

#### President Elect - Paul Hurysz

Duke Energy  
(980) 373-9371  
paul.hurysz@duke-energy.com

#### Treasurer - Jim Neeser

Davey Resource Group  
(651) 202-1088  
jim.neeser@davey.com

#### Director - Matt Goff

Georgia Power Company  
(215) 915-3998  
dmgoff@southernco.com

#### Director - Brandon Hughson

Rainbow Treecare Scientific  
Advancements  
(612) 685-5476  
bhughson@treecarescience.com

#### Director - Becky Spach

First Energy Group  
(330) 384-5533  
spachr@firstenergycorp.com

#### Director - Tim Walsh

The Davey Tree Expert Company  
(303) 673-9515  
tim.walsh@davey.com

#### Director - John Wasmer

ACRT, Inc.  
(209) 329-6246  
jwasmer@acrtinc.com

#### Utility Arborist Association

2009 W. Broadway Ave.  
Suite 400, PMB 315  
Forest Lake, MN 55025  
(651) 464-0380

#### Operations Manager -

Diona Neeser  
dneeser@gotouaa.org

#### Communications & Admin Assistant -

Renee Phillips  
rphillips@gotouaa.org

#### UAA Newsline

#### Editorial Chair - Renee Bissett

ACRT, Inc.  
rbissett@acrtinc.com

#### Editorial Coordination -

Pique Publishing, Inc.  
Nadia Geagea Pupa  
www.piquepublishing.com

#### Graphic Designer - Deb Eisenmann

djedesigner@comcast.net





©ISTOCKPHOTO/ARENACREATIVE

Manager Diona Neeser is working with the local planning teams and the venues to find alternative dates; we are providing updates as they are available.

The System Utility Vegetation Managers Summit has also been postponed until 2021.

A team from the UAA has been working with First Energy, Corteva, Right-of-Way as Habitat Working Group, and Grow with Trees to host the 2020 Environmental Sustainability Summit at the Gamelands-33 research site in State College, Pennsylvania. This too has been rescheduled to 2021.

Of course, the UAA's biggest event is the annual Trees & Utilities Conference. It is scheduled for September 15-17 in Milwaukee. The program committee has continued its work and has put together an exceptional program. At the time of this writing, no final decision has been made, but you will be receiving updates around the same time you receive this *Newsline*. Wisconsin is now open for business, though recommendations relative to large events, such as the Trees & Utilities conference, will be followed. Safety is the most important concern, of course.

Regardless of the pandemic, UAA members continue to rely on UAA programming for the latest information and their continuing education units (CEUs). Since we have had to curtail in-person meetings, Renee Phillips and the Professional Development team have increased efforts to provide a full range of webinars and online quizzes. If you are interested in checking out the upcoming schedule, visit [gotouaa.org/project/webinars](http://gotouaa.org/project/webinars). We are also watching to see what other organizations, such as the ISA, TREE Fund, and others are offering in the way of webinars, and we will work to keep you informed.

The UAA's commitment to serving its members hasn't changed, though its methods are evolving with the conditions. All the committees are working to ensure the needs of the members and the industry are met one way or another. I hope you enjoy this *Newsline* and will stay in touch with your peers through the website and UAA social media sites.

SPONSOR  
SPOTLIGHT

SILVER  
LEVEL



ARBORMETRICS®

PEOPLE ARE OUR POWER

## Safe Vegetation Management with ARBORMETRICS

In vegetation management (VM), safe production is the product—for you, your property, and your community. Safety is an ongoing journey—a top priority addressed via proactive mitigation, continual assessment, and consistent improvement. The goal remains as conditions, work types, and locations change. And at **ARBORMETRICS**, our employees are integral to the process. *Our People Are Our Power*. They are out in the field ensuring safe delivery for you every day. And, we're always working tirelessly behind the scenes to keep it that way.

At **ARBORMETRICS**, we stress the importance of a safety culture that is built and reinforced through deep working relationships, in-person visits, and face-to-face meetings. With a formal and consistent structure, evaluation, and communication, this proactive approach demonstrates that employee well-being is our top priority and sets an overall company tone. Moreover, it ensures that our employees embrace and own their safety, as well as that of the larger community.

We infuse the science and discipline of the Project Management Institute® (PMI) into our safety program, monitoring compliance and participation, conducting audits, analyzing metrics, following up with team members, and ensuring remediation where necessary. The **ARBORMETRICS** safety program features:

- Mandatory one-one-one meetings between new hires and the safety department
- Weekly company-wide safety calls
- Industry-standard job briefings conducted twice daily by single-person crews to assess and ensure worksite and equipment safety
- Digital and in-person training that is tracked, verified, and documented
- Continual audit, evaluation, and training of personal protective equipment (PPE) and work equipment
- A structured monitoring and feedback loop via proprietary dashboards

At **ARBORMETRICS**, our mission is to improve the effectiveness of VM through safe, efficient planning, scheduling, and reporting services. Employee and customer safety drives everything we do. Learn more by contacting (866) 685-1880 or [info@arbormetrics.com](mailto:info@arbormetrics.com).

MYLENZ401 - PIXABAY

## Industry News

### Asplundh Workers Rushed to Aid Dad in Fight with Rabid Coyote

*By Jason Schreiber, Union Leader Correspondent  
Reprinted with permission from the New Hampshire Union Leader.*

Asplundh tree workers, Joseph Beachy and Nick Wright, were working on a tree removal job for Unutil on Drinkwater Road in New Hampshire when they rushed to the aid of a local father who was wrestling with a rabid coyote in the woods.

Ian O'Reilly and his family were on a walk along the Red Trail in the Phillips Exeter Academy forest when they encountered the aggressive coyote. O'Reilly jumped into action to protect his wife and three children from the coyote, which bit him and his wife as he tackled and choked the animal.

O'Reilly's account of the vicious attack has grabbed national headlines. It's an encounter he won't soon forget—neither will Beachy and Wright.

The two Asplundh tree workers were across from the trail when they said O'Reilly's distraught wife approached and told them her husband was being attacked by a coyote. Beachy took off into the woods with a stick in hand and Wright followed. The two said they ran about half a mile before they found O'Reilly on the ground on top of the coyote.

"We kind of knew it was rabid because usually they're not going to attack a big family like that. We knew there was something wrong with it," said Wright, 32, of Raymond, NH. Beachy said he moved in and climbed onto the coyote so O'Reilly could free himself.

"I took over because his wife said he was bit and injured. We wanted to take over so he could take account of himself, basically," said Beachy, 30, of Manchester, NH. The coyote made some gurgling sounds and was barely moving after its fight with O'Reilly, but it still appeared to be alive, Beachy said. As Beachy remained on top of the coyote, Wright said he pulled Beachy's knife from his pocket and handed it to him. Beachy said he stabbed the coyote three times in the throat.

"After a few minutes, it was pretty clear that it was dead," Beachy said. At that point, Wright said he grabbed the coyote and began dragging it out of the woods until he saw a police officer, who brought it out to the road.



*Asplundh workers, Joseph Beachy (left) and Nick Wright, said they assisted a Kensington father who fought with a rabid coyote.*

Beachy and Wright said they were wearing their gloves and other protective gear at the time. While O'Reilly and his wife are receiving rabies vaccinations. Beachy and Wright said they didn't seek treatment because they weren't bitten.

The attack wasn't the only one reported. Earlier in the day, a driver in the area told police that a coyote approached their car and tried to attack. A short time later, a 62-year-old woman also reported that she and her two dogs were attacked by a coyote on their porch. They were treated for rabies.

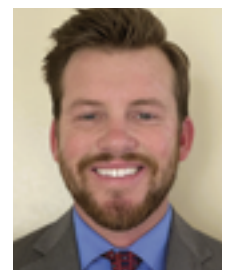
While Wright is a hunter and has seen coyotes before, the experience was a new one for Beachy, who said he's never encountered one. They said they didn't hesitate to rush into the woods to help out.

"We have one of the most dangerous jobs in America," Wright said, referring to the tree removal business. But it usually doesn't involve fighting with rabid coyotes. As soon as things calmed down, Beachy and Wright returned to work and took down eight more trees.

### CNUC Promotes Birkimer to Regional Supervisor

CNUC promoted Patrick Birkimer to regional supervisor in southern California, effective mid-April 2020.

Birkimer started with CNUC as a consulting utility forester (CUF) in 2017. He has been in the utility vegetation management (UVM) industry since 2015, and has varied experience with two of the largest utilities in California. Throughout his career at CNUC, he has worked as a CUF, lead CUF, and project manager before his promotion to regional supervisor. *(Continued on page 10)*



*Patrick Birkimer*



**COST**

Value

**Release the ideas of:**

*Being squeezed. Crunching numbers. Balance sheets. Scarcity. Hurting your bottom line.*

**Embrace the concepts of:**

*Cultivating relationships. Growing partnerships within our community. Realizing what is truly important.*

ARBORMETRICS — Reimagining how to streamline your vegetation management program.



**ARBORMETRICS®**

PEOPLE ARE OUR POWER®

[www.ARBORMETRICS.com](http://www.ARBORMETRICS.com) • 1.866.685.1880 toll free

Birkimer is an ISA Certified Arborist and Utility Specialist. Birkimer also attended the CNUC Leadership Academy in 2019. As regional supervisor, he will oversee operations in southern California.

“Patrick is known as ‘Mr. Dependable’ and is always very thorough and detailed in his work,” said Regional Manager Ben Keck. “Even more importantly, he always has a positive attitude and is up for any challenge or opportunity that will better himself and those around him.”



## Lumberjill Alex Miller Preps for Next STIHL Championship

*By Jenna Paul, Technical Writer, Davey Resource Group, Inc.*

Davey Resource Group, Inc. (DRG) is proud to support Alex Miller as she continues to train and compete in lumberjack sports. She was set to challenge the Stihl Timbersports U.S. Championship, but due to the cancellation of the qualifiers and championship, she will be spending this year training for a strong showing next year. Lumberjack sports is the oldest extreme sport, encompassing many events, all with origins from the bygone era of the logging industry when everything was done by hand. As a professional lumberjill, the championship is a major event for Alex.

She started competing in lumberjack sports seven years ago after seeing a demo at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. She had been looking for a new sport since softball—which she had played in community college—was not available. After participating in the first open practice, she was immediately hooked. Alex has been enjoying the sport ever since and has been steadily improving her times at each event as a professional.



Alex Miler

Unfortunately, due to the global pandemic, all events have been canceled until at least July, meaning that the qualifiers for the championship cannot be held. Alex earned sixth place last year in a larger pool of women and bested every time from her last showing when she placed fifth in 2018. This year’s championship had been especially promising to Alex, as the standing block—her strongest lumberjack sport discipline—was set to be added to the women’s competition this season.

In addition to that, she had just returned from a sabbatical in Tasmania, Australia to acquire new skills to take on this season and was finally receiving new equipment. The saws used by lumberjacks and lumberjills are crafted partially by hand, and there are only five companies in the world producing them. The pieces Alex had been waiting for took five years to receive, so she is looking forward to utilizing them in competition.

Alex is still able to train her skills in her parent’s barn to three times a week near their home in Alden, New York and serves as an important part of her staying physically and mentally fit during periods of the quarantine. Since she is practicing social distancing while in the barn and has all necessary supplies, it is a way for her to find an outlet during this time. Isolated sports like these can be especially useful to those wanting to cultivate a hobby and exercise during COVID-19.

Her mentors and fellow competitors from the lumberjack community also form an important part of her social network during this time of isolation. She can send videos to fellow lumberjacks, getting feedback and improving without direct contact. Alex has a few mentors who she met through the New York State Lumberjack Association, and have offered helped through her professional track.



Alex Miler



While the major competition is canceled, there are still opportunities to compete—even during these times of social distancing. There are other shows that may still happen this year; lumberjills can still host their own private shows. DRG has been proud to sponsor Alex as a professional lumberjill during this time, and we look forward to seeing her compete at the next Stihl Timbersports U.S. Championship.



## TREE Fund Perseveres Through COVID-19

The past few months have been a whirlwind of change at TREE Fund.

TREE Fund President and CEO J. Eric Smith retired in November 2019 and—after a national search by the TREE Fund Board of Trustees—was succeeded by Russell King. King is a seasoned nonprofit executive and consultant with more than 30 years of experience, including 25 years as a CEO. He holds a BS and MBA in Journalism, and is a graduate of the Institute for Organization Management. He is the author of four books, a long-time contributor to numerous online and traditional print media outlets, and has an extensive community service résumé, including election to the Verona (Wisconsin) Area Board of Education.

Leadership of the TREE Fund Board of Trustees also changed when, in January, Beau Brodbeck, PhD, was elected chair.

Like everyone else, TREE Fund is adjusting to the changes imposed by life in a global pandemic: The staff continues to serve the mission by working from home and using telephone, e-mail, and Zoom to create a virtual office.

Recognizing the difficulty created by the many canceled educational opportunities for certified arborists in need of continuing education units (CEUs), TREE Fund dramatically increased the number of free webinars.

The economic changes caused by the pandemic are still being monitored and analyzed for their effect on TREE Fund's signature annual event, the Tour des Trees, and other essential fundraising activities. As of this writing, the tour remains on schedule for August 29 through September 4.

TREE Fund has also launched a new strategic planning effort to forge its future in the coming years. As part of the process, a task force and group of stakeholders will examine everything from core values and mission-to-board composition, committee structures, bylaws, staff capacity, funding streams, and potential new

supporters, culminating in a new vision statement and a three-year strategic plan.

Meanwhile, TREE Fund has reached Guidestar's highest level of achievement for nonprofit transparency—the platinum award. GuideStar is the world's largest and most authoritative source of information on nonprofit organizations. Major donors tend to look to GuideStar as the “seal of approval” before making donations.

TREE Fund's most recent grant awards will support work by:

- Jason S. Gordon, PhD, University of Georgia Research Foundation, “Engaging underserved populations in community tree management activities”
- Brian Kane, PhD, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, “Comparing the efficacy of pull tests versus expert opinion when assessing decay and likelihood of tree failure”
- Andrew Millward, PhD, Ryerson University, “Advancing non-invasive tree root detection by creating a training data set of GPR tree root signatures”
- Fahad Rasheed, PhD, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan, “Contributing for a breathable future: Characterizing the efficiency of local tree species for controlling particulate matter in Faisalabad district”
- Matt Follett, University of Montreal, “Evaluation of load distribution in removal operations: a comparison of techniques and equipment”

TREE Fund's mission is to support scientific discovery and dissemination of new knowledge in arboriculture and urban forestry. It is funded entirely by personal and corporate donations.



Russell King



October 10-13, 2021  
Charlotte,  
North Carolina

# Call for Papers Opens September 1, 2020

Mark your calendars now and watch for the official call for papers to submit your abstracts for the **Environmental Concerns in Rights-of-Way Management 13th International Symposium** to be held in Charlotte, North Carolina, October 10-13, 2021 with our Symposium hosts from Duke Energy.

CALL FOR  
PAPERS

We will be seeking abstracts from researchers, students, and leaders from across our industry worldwide on a broad spectrum of topics that focus on environmental impacts from constructing, using, and maintaining rights-of-way.

The symposium presents the latest research and other information on wildlife and their habitats, technology, regulation, best practices, and more.

## PRESENTATION TOPICS TO CONSIDER

### STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND PERMITTING

- Cumulative effects
- Fluctuations in regulatory standards
- Public engagement
- Managing stakeholder expectations
- Innovative technology tools

### WILDLIFE

- Habitat protection
- Migration and breeding
- Pollinators and endangered species
- Integrated habitat management
- Technology integrations and applications

### VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

- Restoring native species and habitats
- Controlling invasive species
- Managing the ecosystem composition
- Biological control mechanisms
- Leveraging technology (e.g., remote sensing, software, geospatial, etc.)

### WILDFIRE

- Prevention strategies
- Protection strategies and success stories
- Successful collaboration efforts
- Response done well
- Technology: what's working; what's coming

**For more information visit [www.Rights-of-Way.org](http://www.Rights-of-Way.org)**  
Hosted by the Utility Arborist Association





## UAA Safety Committee Update

By Paul Huryz, Manager of Contractor Resources, Duke Energy

This spring, we have all been challenged in ways that we could never have imagined. Reflecting from a UAA perspective, one of the things that we have all been confronted with is: How do we make sure we are making a difference during these trying times? Many of our opportunities to meet, network, plan, and execute have been significantly altered this year. The utility vegetation management (UVM) industry is resilient and filled with many talented people. Additionally, there are several UAA-affiliated companies that have taken steps to include safety as part of their company culture as opposed to just another priority. Pandemic or no pandemic, these companies strive to keep values from changing as other priorities have changed in our businesses and lives in the recent months. Companies on a “culture of safety” path will continue down that path, regardless of the circumstances, checking and adjusting along the way to ensure employees and families are not distracted by the circumstances in which we work and live. Believe it or not, we are an essential industry that plays a vital role in helping all communities feel some degree of normalcy in our ever-changing environment.

The UAA Safety Committee is checking and adjusting as well. During the last several months, we have taken a strong look at how we have been and are making a difference in the industry. As with every self-assessment, sometimes it is uncomfortable to look in a mirror. Sometimes, when you’re looking in that mirror, you don’t like what you see. We have done good work, and accomplished good things, but there is always room for improvement. Recognizing that, we are excited to talk about our future.

Most of you have heard at one time or another that communication is the key to success. Well, collaboration is a component of communication. The UAA and the UAA Safety Committee are aligned on that thought. One of our greatest unrealized strengths as an organization is our opportunity to collaborate as an industry. A couple of years ago, the UAA made a conscious effort to make safety a core value. Our next step on that

path of maturity is to collaborate with other committees as it relates to safety. The Safety Committee is in the process of developing and supporting sub-committees that do just that. Some collaborative examples of our efforts moving forward are as follows:

- Identify educational environmental hazard awareness and exposure opportunities (e.g., fact sheets, *Newsline* articles) to share with members and the industry.
- Collaborate with the ISA, as a professional affiliate and partner on safety, for the purpose of leveraging our strengths to create added value with the professional expertise in both organizations.
- Identify and promote electrical training and research that is important to our industry and arboriculture as a whole.
- Continue to host Safety Summits throughout North America that not only help to develop a safety culture mindset in the next generation of VM professionals, but also assist programs and companies to develop that maturity path to a culture of safety.

There is another very important point that should be made with these collaboration efforts. We haven’t really done our best in the past of defining or measuring success as it relates to our goals and objectives. It is really a best management practice (BMP) we should put a focus on. It helps everyone to understand why a project is important and it helps bring project closure. We all want to feel like our efforts are making a difference, so there is no better way of doing that than helping people understand where the finish line is.

Lastly, I would be negligent if I didn’t make a pitch for others to join in on the fun we are having to help others and ourselves create and nurture a culture of safety. Please feel free to drop us a note and let us know what your interests, ideas, and/or suggestions are. You can find my contact information in the *Newsline*, or you can find our committee contact information on the UAA website. We certainly look forward to seeing you (virtually or otherwise) in the near future to exchange ideas and grow together!

©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/  
FREDEX8





# SPOTLIGHT on the Environment



NASA IMAGE

(Top of page) Dairyland solar site with native prairie habitat planted between solar panels. Photo: Brad Foss; (right) Bumblebee (*Bombus*) visiting purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*). Photo: A. Bennett; (far right) Juniper hairstreak (*Callophrys gryneus*) on goldenrod (*Solidago altissima* L.). Photo: A. Bennett

## How the Utility Industry is Supporting Pollinator Friendly Solar

By Ashley Bennett, PhD, Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)

Solar energy development is undergoing considerable expansion in the US. While renewable energy technologies such as solar can reduce carbon emissions, their land-use requirements are substantial. Land-use requirements for utility-scale photovoltaics (PV) have been calculated within different renewable energy goals with total land needed to meet 2050 renewable energy production targets ranging from roughly 2 to 3.5 million acres (Shum 2017; Hernandez 2016; Hartmann et al. 2016). The anticipated expansion of ground-mounted solar, habitat loss, and biodiversity impacts from land-use change are growing concerns. Pollinators are one group experiencing population declines, and habitat loss is one factor contributing to observed population losses (Potts et al. 2010; Vanburgen 2013; Goulson et al. 2015; Belsky and Joshi 2018; Agrawal and Inadmine 2018). Although solar installations may negatively impact land use and habitat quality, solar installations also have an opportunity to contribute positively to pollinator conservation through proper siting, revegetation, and pollinator friendly site maintenance.

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) has recently published a technical report, *Overview of Pollinator-Friendly Solar Energy*, that discusses how solar development can be compatible with pollinator conservation. The article specifically covers siting

and construction activities that can reduce habitat degradation, factors to consider when developing a pollinator seed mix, and vegetation maintenance activities that protect pollinators. The report is available for download at: <https://www.epri.com/#/pages/product/3002014869/>. Below are descriptions of two projects EPRI has underway, which support the integration of pollinator habitat at solar sites.



### Project 1: Quantifying Establishment, Maintenance, and Biodiversity Benefits for the Feasibility of Integrating Pollinator Habitat at Solar Site in the Southeastern U.S.

Southern Company is expanding renewable energy production in the Southeastern U.S. by investing in solar. The company has been promoting biodiversity conservation on rights-of-ways (ROWS) through integrated vegetation management (IVM) practices, and recognized an opportunity to advance the conservation



value of solar sites through thoughtful plant selection and VM. Both short- and long-term vegetation maintenance have significant costs associated with solar sites. However, little research is available to guide regionally specific plant mixtures that provide conservation benefits to species like pollinators, while also meeting the cost and maintenance needs of electric utilities. Southern Company and EPRI have initiated research aimed at documenting VM costs, establishment success, and pollinator benefits of two seed mixes: (1) a turfgrass mix and (2) a native pollinator mix. Project results will inform future management strategies, help refine seed mixtures, and further optimize the conservation value of pollinator plantings at solar sites across the Southeastern U.S.

## Project 2: Evaluating the Compatibility of Pollinator Friendly Solar with Sheep Grazing

Many U.S. electric utilities are transitioning from fossil fuel-based energy production to increasing renewable energy technologies that contribute to reductions in carbon emissions. Louisville Gas and Electric and Kentucky Utilities (LG&E and KU) is one such utility with plans to provide an additional 100 megawatts (MW) of solar energy to its customers. LG&E and KU recognize this expansion as a potential opportunity to support pollinator conservation, local agriculture, and reduce maintenance costs by utilizing native vegetation at their solar sites.

LG&E and KU, in collaboration with EPRI, have initiated research to develop regionally appropriate native seed mixes and VM strategies for use at solar sites across Kentucky. The overall goal of this project is to evaluate native and non-native seed mixes for their ecological benefits and cost effectiveness. Specifically, the project seeks to document potential benefits from using native seed mixes compared to non-native turfgrass at solar sites to increase pollinator abundance and richness, reduce water runoff and soil erosion, and reduce vegetation maintenance costs. This project is also evaluating whether sheep can reduce maintenance costs by replacing mowing, and whether sheep grazing is compatible with the establishment of pollinator habitat. Project collaborators are committed to creating VM solutions that promote pollinator and native plant conservation while lowering the costs of energy generation and supporting local agriculture in Kentucky.

### Highlights

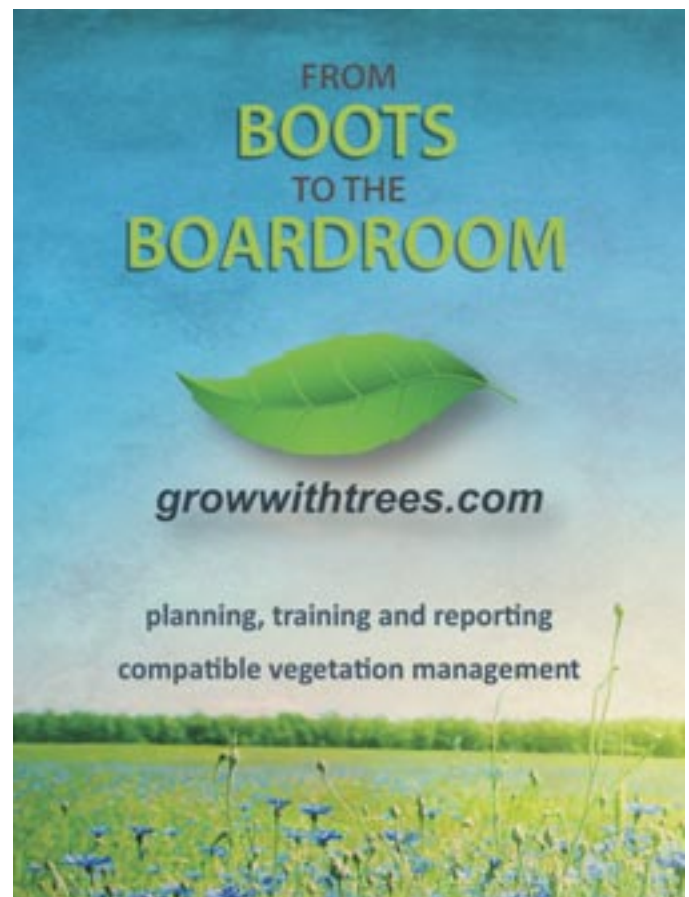
- Solar developments drive land use change and can result in habitat loss.
- Solar revegetation practices that use native flowering plants can create pollinator habitat with the potential to benefit local agriculture.
- As solar energy expands, an opportunity exists to couple renewable energy generation and conservation of biodiversity.

### References

Agrawal AA and Inamine H. 2018. Mechanisms behind the monarch's decline. *Science*, 360(6395): 1294-1296.



- Belsky J and Joshi NK. 2018. Assessing role of major drivers in recent decline of monarch butterfly populations in North America. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 6:86. doi: 10.3389/fenvs.2018.00086
- Goulson D, Nicholls E, Botias C, Roggeray EL. 2015. Bee declines driven by combined stress from parasitism, pesticides, and lack of flowers. *Science*, 347(6229), 1259-1262.
- Hartmann, HM, Grippo, MA, Heath GA, Mackick J, Smith KP, Sullivan RG, Walston LJ, and Wescott KL. 2016. Understanding Emerging Impacts and Requirements Related to Utility-scale Solar Development. U.S. Department of Energy.
- Hernandez-Santana V, Zhou X, Helmers MJ, Asbjornsen H, Kolka R, and Tomer M. 2013. Native prairie filter strips reduce runoff from hillslopes under annual row-crop systems in Iowa, USA. *Journal of Hydrology*, 477: 94-103.
- Potts SG, Biesmeijer JC, Kremen C, Neumann P, Schweiger O, and Kunin WE. 2010. Global pollinator declines: trends, impacts, and drivers. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 25(6): 345-353.
- Shum RY. 2017. A comparison of land-use requirements in solar-based decarbonization scenarios. *Energy Policy*, 109: 460-462.
- Vanbergen AJ, Insect Pollinator Initiative. 2013. Threats to an ecosystem service: pressures on pollinators. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 11(5): 251-259.



# Research Corner

## RESEARCH STUDIES: TECHNICAL REVIEW



## ***A Review of United States Arboricultural Operation Fatal and Nonfatal Incidents (2001-2017): Implications for Safety Training***

*This technical summary is based on a peer-reviewed article published in the ISA Journal of Arboriculture & Urban Forestry (AUF), March 2020, 46(2): 67-83, written by John Ball, Shane Vosberg, and Timothy Walsh.*

### ● **Keywords**

ANSI Z; ANSI Z133; Arborist Safety; Hazards; Incidents; Training

### ● **Challenge**

There is a lack of compliance with the ANSI Z133 standards, and lack of specifically identifying leading sources/hazards for fatalities and hospitalization, which differ. High frequency, fatal, and serious nonfatal incidents could be avoided, eliminated, or reduced by implementing recommended mitigations published in the ANSI Z133 standards.

### ● **Main Objectives**

- Review arboricultural operation incidents, identify specific hazard sources, relative frequency, and injuries.
- Review and relate ANSI Z133 standards to avoid, eliminate, or reduce hazards associated with these incidents.
- Recommend practices to improve compliance with ANSI Z and to reduce arborist fatal and nonfatal incidents.

### ● **Process**

The research study compiled incident investigation data is from the OSHA Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) database, NIOSH and state OSHAs, and FACE databases. Arboriculture operation incidents were coded and analyzed by exposure categories, hazard sources, and severity of injury.

### ● **Conclusion**

Safety training programs should emphasize the most common hazard sources for fatal and nonfatal incidents. Corresponding standards, requirements, and recommendations within ANSI Z133 are among the best strategies to avoid, eliminate, or reduce the most common hazard sources. Incorporating the ANSI Z and sections relevant to the task at hand in job briefings is recommended.

### ● **Utilities Moving Forward**

Provide updated ANSI Z publications as references to vegetation management (VM) program managers and operations leads. Implement training and procedures regarding highest risk hazards for both fatal and nonfatal serious injuries, and implement ANSI Z recommendations for risk mitigation in operational activities.

*Technical review by Amy N. Murray and Morgan Browning*



The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges and hardships in all our communities. However, this has not distracted FirstEnergy from our commitment to keeping the lights on for our customers while the nation addresses this crisis. As states issue stay-at-home orders and businesses shut down, we take our responsibility to maintain and operate our vital infrastructure seriously. To achieve this, we are focused on taking well-informed, measured responses that protect our employees, contractors, customers, and our communities while delivering safe, reliable, and cost-effective electricity. Although the COVID-19 health emergency is likely to disrupt our daily lives for some time, FirstEnergy is prepared to face this crisis.

In order to ensure continued reliable and safe electric service, it is important to understand that trees are a leading cause of electrical power outages. Therefore, it is critical that utilities continue their vegetation management (VM) programs by performing regular maintenance unabated. However, to safeguard the health and safety of FirstEnergy employees, contractors, and the communities in which they work, we have implemented a series of engagement precautions that are aligned with our medical consultant's recommendations and state guidelines, as well as the CDC, the National Institutes of Health, and the World Health Organization.

Throughout the crisis, FirstEnergy has hosted routine conference calls with employees and VM partners to establish frequent communication, sharing business continuity updates and COVID-19 safety practices. FirstEnergy tree crews and employees rely upon multiple protective measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In fact, our efforts start before work even begins by ensuring truck cabs are wiped down daily. More extensive power-washing and the use of sanitizer "bombs" take place on the weekends. We are taking body temperatures and encouraging symptom self-reporting during daily work briefings, while also limiting the number of personnel in each vehicle and preventing unnecessary intermingling in the field. We have made additional personal protective equipment (PPE) available, including hand sanitizer, nitrile gloves, and masks. We have also provided reinforcement training to confirm PPE is used correctly and, for suitable masks, sanitized appropriately. Perhaps most importantly, we have found that the key to reducing personnel anxiety, avoiding complacency, and minimizing distractions is to simply communicate regularly and honestly about the changing circumstances and what we can do collectively to best adapt to them.

Besides supporting our employees and contractors, FirstEnergy recognizes it is also necessary that we implement strategies that protect our six million customers and their

# FirstEnergy®

communities. To this end, we are making every effort to avoid personal contact during notification procedures, and instead are relying on door card notifications and telephone communication. FirstEnergy has also pledged to halt service shutoffs during the pandemic for customers with delinquent accounts, and to work with any customers whose power was discontinued prior to March 13 to avoid the additional challenge of living without electricity. We understand that customers may be facing concerns and hardships due to the many business shutdowns and interruptions, so we will continue to work with our customers throughout this situation. Furthermore, the FirstEnergy Foundation has infused \$2 million into the communities we serve to assist those families in need during this crisis.

At FirstEnergy, safety is a core value, not just a priority. As always, we will focus on the safety of our employees, contractors, customers, and the members of our communities. Although the COVID-19 pandemic may challenge us in unique ways, we remain confident our protective measures will mitigate its spread. Only by working through this situation together can we best protect the safety of everyone, while keeping the lights on.





**SALUTING BRANCHES**  
Arborists United for Veteran Remembrance

**SEPT. 23  
2020**

**What is Saluting Branches?**

Saluting Branches:  
Arborists United for Veteran Remembrance is a national day of service charity for tree care professionals to give back to our military veterans and their families.



Saluting Branches is the largest volunteer tree care event of the year. At more than 80 veteran and memorial cemeteries, thousands of arborists from hundreds of companies will come together. Using our skills, dedication, and love of tree care, Saluting Branches provides an opportunity for us to say 'Thank You' to our military service people - and their families- for all they have sacrificed for our country.

Find a Site and Sign Up To Volunteer At:

**[www.SalutingBranches.org](http://www.SalutingBranches.org)**







## Do You Really Know the Ropes?

By Wes Tregilgas, Safety Manager, Wright Tree Service  
Photographs by Wes Tregilgas

After leading multiple breakout sessions on rope inspection at UAA Safety Summits, there were a few large industry knowledge gaps discovered that are critical and can be closed with training in the field. Rope is such a commonly used tool in our industry for so many applications. To know the exact outcome, one must first fully understand the type and characteristics of the rope they are going to use.

*The problem with our industry is that we do not track required rope use history to effectively determine the time of retirement, even though the visual inspection criteria is fairly common.*

I have asked the audience, “How do you know what day, before the day, your rope breaks?” as that is the day the rope needs to be decommissioned—before unexpected failure. No one in the UAA Safety Summit sessions could really answer this, although everyone had raised their hands to witnessing a rope breaking while in use. The rope manufacturer has a clear definition of when a rope should be retired based

on inspection *and known use*. The problem with our industry is that we do not track required rope use history to effectively determine the time of retirement, even though the visual inspection criteria is fairly common.

When the UAA audience was asked what “rope one is climbing on” means, the answer was often “climbing rope.” When they were asked which rope to use for rigging, many answered with a bull rope or rigging rope. Though these titles generally describe the use; however, it does not describe what the rope really is. So, when you are out in the field, ask the following questions:

- With what type of rope is someone climbing or rigging?
- Who makes it?
- What is the name of the rope?
- What is the diameter?
- What is the strength rating?
- What is the “percent of strength”?

If they can articulate these things to you, then the knowledge to put together a good plan, within the limitations of their rope tool, is off to a good start.

### Rope Name/Construction Type

If the name or type of rope construction being used is not identified, there is not a way to properly inspect it. Rope can have the strength portion on the outside fibers, inside fibers, or a combination of both. Without knowing the name of the rope and construction, there is no way to visually determine if the rope has truly been compromised in its strength and may not be safe to use.

### Rope Characteristics

If you are setting up rigging in a tree, and cannot identify the type of rope and characteristics of the rope being used, then there isn’t any way to determine the manufacturer’s strength ratings, the working load limit, potential elongation in the rig, or how it should be used. A rope will only go to the maximum breaking strength one time, so if we want to know whether or not we can predict an outcome using a rope, we have to know what the parameters. Without a working load limit understood, there is no way to safely determine what size the piece of wood should be cut or how much dynamic movement it can allow.

Just because a rope does not break during use does not mean it has not been critically compromised or damaged. When a rope has taken on an unexpected load or force beyond the working load limits, it needs to be decommissioned regardless of what it looks like during visual inspection. The rope manufacturers define this in their warnings with the ropes they sell. Once a rope has taken on forces outside of the working load limits, it no longer has the designed operating strength and begins to permanently weaken. This is described as “cycles to failure.”

The ANSI Z133-2017 standard states that the recommended maximum load for rigging ropes is a factor of five, or 20





Samson App for Rope Inspection and Retirement Criteria

percent of maximum breaking strength listed by the rope manufacturer. For life support and fall protection, it is a factor of one, or 10 percent of maximum breaking strength listed by the rope manufacturer.

Listed below are three great resources I use for identifying types of rope and understanding more about rope inspection in the field:

**1. Rope Guide Poster from Sherrilltree**

This full-color electronic PDF or wall poster version shows all the different manufacturers' rope products for both climbing and rigging with inspection and maintenance guide pictures. This is a great resource for matching a rope in the field with the name and manufacturer's specifications. Contact Sherrilltree customer service or sales representatives to obtain one.

**2. Samson App for Rope Inspection and Retirement Criteria**

This is an Apple iPhone/iPad-only app. This app is easy to use, and shows pictures of rope conditions that you can match up to your own and see what is recommended and what should be considered when inspecting rope while in the field.

**3. Rope User's Manual: A Guide to Rope Selection, Handling, Inspection, and Retirement**

This is a comprehensive 56-page, full-color electronic book found at [www.samsonrope.com](http://www.samsonrope.com) under the Resources Tab > Technical Documents > General Resources.

Join me in sharing the necessary knowledge about the ropes our teams use in the field so their work plans are sound, within the parameters to operate safely, and can provide predictable results!

**NGG / NG GILBERT**  
Performance You Can Count On

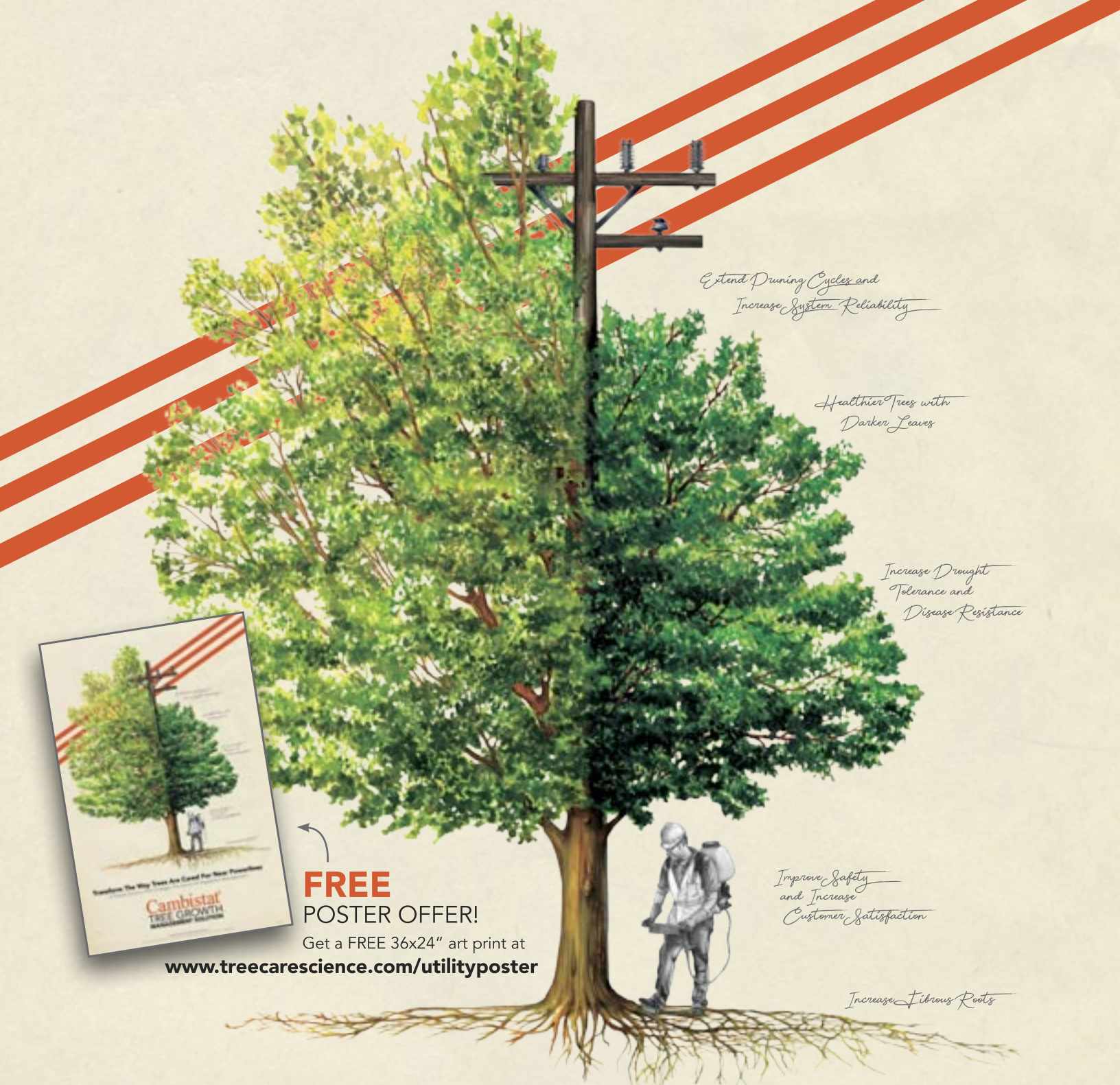


**CONTACT US**  
**800-428-8128**  
info@nggilbert.com

[www.nggilbert.com](http://www.nggilbert.com)







*Extend Pruning Cycles and  
Increase System Reliability*

*Healthier Trees with  
Darker Leaves*

*Increase Drought  
Tolerance and  
Disease Resistance*

*Improve Safety  
and Increase  
Customer Satisfaction*

*Increase Fibrous Roots*



**FREE**  
POSTER OFFER!  
Get a FREE 36x24" art print at  
[www.treecarescience.com/utilityposter](http://www.treecarescience.com/utilityposter)

## Transform The Way Trees Are Cared For Near Powerlines

A Proven Science That Changes The Game Of Vegetation Management

# Cambistat<sup>®</sup>

## TREE GROWTH MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

Rainbow Treecare Scientific Advancements

[www.treecarescience.com/utility](http://www.treecarescience.com/utility) | 11571 K-Tel Drive Minnetonka, MN 55343 | P: 855-922-3810 | F: 952-252-0504



# We Appreciate Our UAA Utility Supporters and Corporate Sponsors

## UAA Utility Supporters

### GOLD LEVEL



### SILVER LEVEL



## Group Membership Supporters



Environmental Consultants



ARBOR METRICS  
PEOPLE ARE OUR POWER

## UAA Webinar Sponsors



The Utility Arborist Association is pleased to have an outstanding group of utility supporters and corporate sponsors. We encourage you to visit their websites to explore their products, services, and mission.

## UAA Corporate Sponsors

### GOLD LEVEL



### SILVER LEVEL



ARBOR METRICS  
PEOPLE ARE OUR POWER



Environmental Consultants



LEWIS  
TREE SERVICE

Job Done Right®



TOWNSEND TREE SERVICE



### BRONZE LEVEL



### CONTRIBUTOR LEVEL





# Partners in Excellence Program

The Utility Arborist Association is the leading North American organization for the enhancement of quality utility arboriculture and right-of-way management. Our success relies on the support we receive from all of our members, sponsors, and volunteers.

Companies that go above and beyond to support our mission will be recognized annually through our Partners in Excellence (PinE) Program.

Membership, sponsorship, advertising, active committee volunteerism, and many other means have been quantified and assigned a value, all adding up to equal a PinE Score.

All applications and supporting material of qualifying companies are reviewed and selected by the PinE Committee.

We want to take this time to congratulate and thank our 2018 PinE Award Recipients.

Your continued support of the Utility Arborist Association is greatly appreciated on many levels.



## 2019 PinE Award Recipients



GOLD AWARD

**ASPLUNDH**

GOLD AWARD



GOLD AWARD



SILVER AWARD



SILVER AWARD



SILVER AWARD



SILVER AWARD



SILVER AWARD



BRONZE AWARD



BRONZE AWARD



BRONZE AWARD



BRONZE AWARD



BRONZE AWARD



BRONZE AWARD

## Making the Most of Your Safety Program

By Todd Walker, Regional Supervisor, CNUC

Long gone are my days of unknowingly working unsafely and imprudently in the drop zone as a groundman. After working in the private side of the tree care industry for eight years, I transitioned to the utility side as a lead consulting utility forester (CUF) for CNUC. With the transition, I started to believe in safety culture in a way I hadn't in previous positions. I started making sure I was fully equipped with sturdy hiking boots, a safety vest, a hard hat, safety glasses/sunglasses, plenty of water, food, and a first-aid kit. Our weekly safety text messages and calls, safety audit program, and the encouragement from my superiors convinced me that safety was not just another program or set



of rules. I had embraced CNUC's safety culture not because I had to, but because I wanted to.

With time, I've found myself in situations that could have been much worse if I hadn't bought in to safety accountability. One such time was the day I found myself patrolling a transmission circuit in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. It was a beautiful, sunny spring day as my patrol partner and I made our way up to a steep rock cropping. There was no way around. The

conductors were high enough to pose a difficult view in relationship to the top of the cropping, but also low enough to possibly strike vegetation on maximum blowout that could not be seen at ground level.

Working together with safety at our forefront, we made our way upward. When we were near the top, I grabbed ahold of a rock to pull myself up, scanning the terrain as I did so. Peeking above a small ledge, I came directly in line with a rattlesnake just a few feet away, tucked back in the rocky crag directly above the rest of my body. Without thinking, I stealthily and quickly lowered myself below the ledge, averting the near-disaster before the rattlesnake could even make a move. As close as it was to my face, it would have been an easy strike.

I did not wake up that morning with plans of greeting a rattlesnake in such close quarters, but I'm fairly convinced that being a part of a



## Do More For Less With



Learn more at [www.terra-spectrum.com](http://www.terra-spectrum.com)

## iOS-Based Data Collection App

- + Manage field assets, schedule work and record time digitally
- + Easy to follow in-person/virtual trainings
- + Deploy in days for minimal cost





safety culture that engages the whole person played—and still plays—a large role in the way I engage and implement our safety program.

As managers, we often focus on a safety program's wording, structure, or execution, but do we stop and think about how to create a program that engages the mind *and* the heart, so that it becomes part of who we are? That is to say, do our safety programs simply present a safer way to behave, or do they internally motivate us to act safely without having to think much about it, because we truly believe it is in our best interest and the interest of those around us?

Here are a few considerations that could help create a more effective, comprehensive safety program:

#### Safety Starts at the Top

If leadership does not promote safety culture buy-in, it will likely be

an uphill battle for everyone else in the company.

#### Be Genuine and Personal

Personalize aspects of your safety program to show regard for your employees as people, rather than just a workforce. This means crafting your safety program and presentations with your specific audience in mind—as opposed to simply throwing information against the wall in hopes that it sticks. Get to know your people and show them that you care about their safety more than you tell them.

#### Be Open

Simply listening and allowing exchange of ideas between leadership and subordinates creates an open atmosphere of trust and the ability to learn from shared experiences without retribution. Mistakes happen. If we punish or chastise employees for

close calls or near misses, it only instills fear for those who might have otherwise shared them. Instead, use the information employees share as a training opportunity for them and others in the company.

#### Better Buy-in Saves Time and Bets Your Bottom Line

When employees buy in to safety programs, they become internally motivated to live out the principles that comprise your program, and no longer need such rigorous supervision and follow-up to ensure compliance. This does not mean further training or auditing is not necessary anymore, but it does mean that employees have successfully internalized your core safety principles so that they hold themselves accountable to work more safely and efficiently. This saves time and reduces down time by more effectively preventing incidents before they ever occur.

**PROTECTING**  
*Essential Workers*  
**FOR OVER 40 YEARS**

**JARRAFF INDUSTRIES, INC.**  
MINI JARRAFF URBAN TREE TRIMMER  
**SAFER**  
**EASIER**  
**FASTER**  
**ACCURATE**  
**PROFITABLE**  
FOR THE SMARTEST WAY TO TRIM TREES

Manufactured in the USA, the **Mini-Jarraf Urban Tree Trimmer** is designed for Right-of-Way maintenance and tree trimming operations in neighborhoods and other municipal settings. The Mini-Jarraf is simply the smartest way to trim trees. Contact Jarraf Industries today.

**JARRAFF**  
Industries, Inc.

**JARRAFF.COM | 800-767-7112**

f t c i WEEN



## Safety as an Ethical Decision



For ACRT Services and our family of companies, safety is viewed as far more than just a practice—it's also about making sound choices and being accountable to ourselves and others. For ACRT Pacific Safety Manager Jeremiah Danielson, ingraining this perspective throughout our organization is the key to achieving success with our safety program.

"Connecting with our teams and sharing our vision of 'zero harm' is one of the key aspects of my role," Danielson said. "While it's important to demonstrate meaningful results and prevent incidents through the safety program, it's also about encouraging people to make choices that keep them safe and healthy at the end of every work shift."

As the safety leader for our California customers and employees, Jeremiah Danielson understands the higher levels of scrutiny and heavier compliance requirements in their region. To that end, he applies nearly 20 years of health and safety expertise with the U.S. government and various large corporations—including seven years in the U.S. Navy. And through it all, he's held fast to the mantra of positive influence through actions—not just words.

"A safety program itself doesn't achieve the end goal—it's up to people to put the words of the safety program into action," Danielson said. "It's not about 'getting by' or only meeting regulations, either. Safety is an ethical and moral choice. We succeed in our safety program when we are led by the conviction that safety must guide our decision-making."

Danielson holds a BS in Occupational Safety and Health Technology from the University of Akron and a MS in Environmental Policy and Management from American Military University.

Learn more about our safety philosophy at [pacific.acrt.com](http://pacific.acrt.com).

## Using Safety Data to Improve Learning

By Beth Lay, Director of Safety and Human Performance, Lewis Tree Service

“ It was 4:30 in the afternoon on nice, sunny day. Our crew had performed regular trimming on multiple oak trees around a three-phase, and was stacking brush while getting ready to shut down for the day. One of the crew members went to remove the drop-zone cones when all the sudden, he heard the sound of a limb slam on the ground. The employee was about 12-15 feet away from where the limb (15 feet long and eight inches in diameter-by-height) landed. It took us by surprise. This oak looked very healthy. ”

— Excerpt From a Lewis Close-Call Report about Situational Awareness

### From Data to Insights

In February 2019, Lewis Tree Service launched a mobile app with simple-to-use, voice-to-text capabilities to capture safety observations in the field and allow craftworkers to share their close calls. Within the first year, approximately 8,000 observation and close-call reports were logged into the system. As team members grew comfortable with the technology and gained trust that the information would not be used against them, the number of reports entered per month began increasing steadily.

To ensure success, instead of rewarding crews with the lowest number of incidents (leading to the unintended side effect of suppressing incident reports), Lewis Tree began encouraging all stories to be shared—especially those with serious injury potential—so we could begin learning from their experiences.

We quickly realized that we needed to focus, near-term, across a few key areas: avoiding struck-by, managing drop zones, avoiding line of fire, working safely at elevations, and safe equipment operation. These initial insights informed the framework of our 2020 learning plan, and we now use real-time assessments to adjust our learning plan in a flexible, timely fashion. In fact, we recently adapted our learning plan to cover work zone situational awareness as well.



## From Reporting to Storytelling

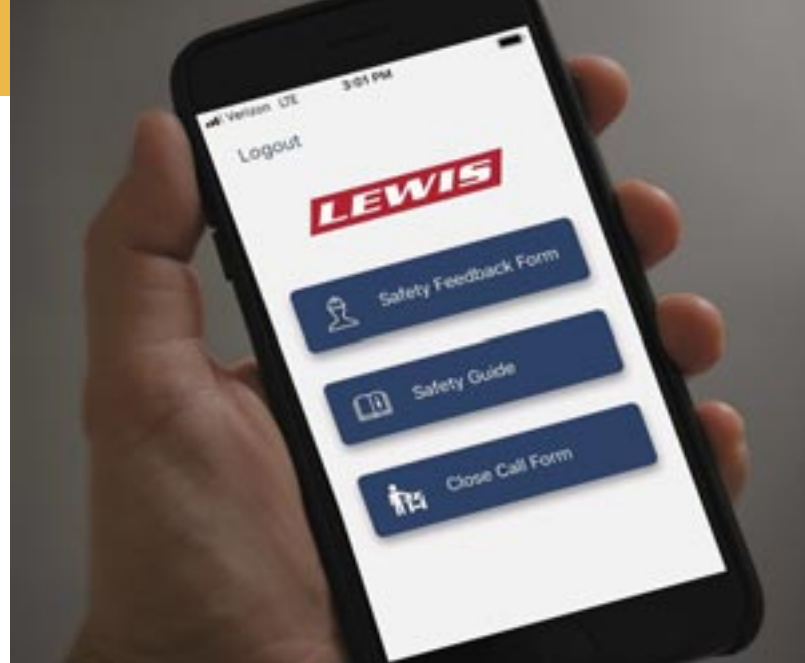
Along the way, as trust continued to build, an interesting thing happened. Our reporting shifted dramatically in the following two key areas:

### 1. Ownership and Point-of-View

As our company-wide desire to learn was continually emphasized, the stories collected began shifting from the passive voice (where our crew members were simply victims of an unfortunate series of events) to the active voice (where we played a role in the shape of the events, whether unintentional or intentional). This transition allowed us to have a more comprehensive view of the variability of our work environments. It also opened the door for us to begin talking about what surprised us, where risks are hiding, how we kept the event from getting worse, what we learned from the incident, and what we might do differently.

### 2. Depth of Content

By encouraging our craftworkers to tell stories in their own natural language—complete with cultural phrases, emotions, sensory engagement, and suspense—we’re collecting rich, vivid stories that build collective memory. Research confirms that narratives thoroughly engage people and activate the same area in the brain as if people



actually experienced the event firsthand. We can then call on this knowledge when faced with a similar situation.

### What’s Next

As Lewis continues to embrace a culture of learning, we remain committed to leveraging our stories and insights to build new actions and techniques (e.g., pausing, scanning, noticing, forecasting) into our human performance tools and practices. These actions will enable our workforce to reduce risks long term and achieve highly reliable outcomes.

# PROTECTING THE REPUTATION OF THE UTILITIES WE SERVE FOR 100 YEARS

IT'S PART OF OUR JOB

See the videos

800-522-4311  
[www.nelsontree.com](http://www.nelsontree.com)

1919 Nelson 2019  
TREE SERVICE, LLC

Vegetation Management Specialists

©2019 Nelson Tree Service, LLC. All rights reserved.



## After Action Reviews: Not Just for Safety Anymore

By Laura Ribas, Director of Marketing,  
Lewis Tree Service

A children's poem titled, *Jim, Who Ran Away from His Nurse, and Was Eaten by a Lion*, was published in 1907. Sounds frightening, right? The author, Hilaire Belloc, knew that there are two ways to learn: the hard way, through trial and error, and the easy way, through storytelling to learn from others' mistakes.

While none of us intentionally want to serve as a cautionary tale, we can

probably agree on the value of learning from others, so we do not repeat their mistakes and, more importantly, so that we replicate their successes.

In the fall of 2018, as our organization purposefully shifted to a culture of learning; Lewis Tree Service began using After Action Reviews (AARs). Originating in the army and since adopted by many critical-outcome industries, AARs are structured, debrief processes for understanding events, especially when there's devi-

ation from the norm (i.e., positive or negative) and lessons to be learned.

At Lewis Tree, we offer six simple questions and let the situation guide the conversation.

1. What was expected to happen?
2. What actually happened?
3. What surprised us?
4. What went well, and why?
5. What could be improved and how?
6. What did we learn that would help others?

If it is the end of a long day in the

**100% Employee Owned**

[www.pennline.com](http://www.pennline.com)  
724.887.9110

**PennLine**  
Since 1940  
Celebrating **80** years.

Utility Line Maintenance // Right-of-Way Clearing // Herbicide Application // Storm Restoration // Mowing



- What was expected to happen?
- What actually happened?
- What surprised us?
- What went well, and why?
- What could be improved and how?
- What did we learn that would help others?

©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/FLUKYFLUKY

pouring rain and dinner is waiting, the AAR can be a quick, five-minute conversation. The point is to hold an AAR while the memory is still fresh, but also to be respectful of people's time.

Initially, as an organization, we were focused on the safety application of AARs, but as we grew more comfortable and began appreciating the value they were bringing to us in terms of learning and improving, we began extending how we used them into further applications.

One of the first uses of our AAR process beyond safety incidents or close calls was to analyze our 2018 storm response after Hurricanes Florence and Michael. As a team, we discussed the different stages of storm deployment (e.g., mobilization, staging, active duty, and demobilization) and documented the key lessons learned in our storm preparedness plan. In 2019, we used the AAR process in real time during our storm calls to examine surprises and unmask hidden risks, discovering weak signals. By sharing stories, we helped our mobilized craftworkers plan for safety in unfamiliar conditions.

More commonly, we now use AARs as a feedback mechanism after a training session, workshop, or conference or as a 30-, 60-, and 90-day check-in for new tools that have been rolled out to the field. They're a great source of information when refining processes and seeking continuous improvements.

We're also finding that AARs are a useful, on-the-spot tool when coaching a new person or training someone on a task. By discussing the responses to each question in real time, we're building expertise-based intuition in new situations that can quickly and positively influence our organizational practices and effectiveness.

Our most recent adoption of AARs has been to debrief after customer meetings. We're learning that we all hear things differently and if we don't have an immediate, post-meeting huddle, we may miss critical cues and key action items that would truly make a difference for our customers. To be effective partners and fully engaged in our customers' success, there's no better use of our time.

AARs are not just for safety anymore.

## Scan and Focus

Have you ever seen the episode of *The Simpsons* when Ned Flanders is discussing the difference between apple cider and apple juice? Homer's brain floats away saying, "You can stay, but I'm leaving." We can all relate. When our brains get bored, we zone out. That's why, at Lewis, we're learning about a situational awareness tool called "scan and focus."



Scan first, because it's easier to move from scanning to focusing than vice versa. While scanning, ask, "If something were to go wrong, what would I see first?" and then look for that.

Focus next to see detail. Selective attention is like a spotlight. When we concentrate on a particular area, it can actually appear brighter with increased contrast. Conversely, we physically do not see what we don't pay attention to (i.e., inattentive blindness). We only notice things in our periphery if they have meaning for us, but we still don't notice the details.

The scan and focus tool is useful for spotters to identify hazards for themselves, crew members, and the general public. A spotter should always ask, "What can I see that my trimmer or driver can't see? What do I know that would help them accomplish their mission/keep them safe?" When it comes to spotting, there's no such thing as overcommunication.

Lastly, spotting should not be a stationary job. Spotters should move between a few safe locations and establish a scan rotation for what to check and in what order. By taking a couple of steps forward, back, left, or right, we trick our brains into thinking we are seeing something new.

We encourage everyone to use the scan and focus tool to spot problems before they happen, notice new details, and avoid zoning out.



# Storm Safety

At Lewis Tree Service, storm season is the perfect time to leverage our human performance tools and:

- Manage the risks of non-routine work
- Perform scenario modeling to probe what could go wrong
- Hold learning teams on removing trees from lines under tension
- Increase situational awareness
- Overcommunicate

We're learning to create safety in times of uncertainty and building a storm preparedness plan like no other. We would love to partner with you to provide the reliability and resilience your customers want during storm restoration.



**Job Done Right**

*100% employee owned*

To learn more about us and how we may best serve you, please visit: [www.lewistree.com](http://www.lewistree.com)



## The Sacramento Power Academy

By Christopher Capra, Public Information Specialist, and Juliet Swinger, Senior Learning Specialist, SMUD

The Sacramento Power Academy, powered by Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), trains future utility workers and relevant contractors for careers in many facets of electrical line work as electricians and technicians who build and maintain electric utility infrastructure, as well as utility vegetation management (UVM) professionals.

SMUD has trained its electrical line personnel in-house at the Power Academy for more than 50 years. Reimagined, rebranded, and launched as the Sacramento Power Academy, it quickly received accreditation from the state of California in fall 2015. It is the premier training center of its kind in the western US, and it has expanded its offerings recently.

### Contractor Safety Days

SMUD’s guiding principle is safety. The SMUD VM business unit, in collaboration with the Power Academy, recently (2017) started offering “Contractor Safety Day” opportunities, which are all-day safety training events for SMUD contractors, qualified line clearance utility tree work contractors, SMUD VM Planners, and SMUD leadership. A variety of training topics are offered, and the sessions are facilitated by subject matter experts in the classroom, out in the yard doing hands-on training, and participating in “live line” demonstrations.

Contractor Safety Days deliver on SMUD’s investment in supporting and enabling contractors to better understand the electric utility industry’s best safety practices and expectations. The curriculum provides additional education on topics participating contractors may not have access to, not being a utility.



Participants also get valuable exposure to, and interaction with, subject matter experts who are outside their everyday VM field. This encourages questions, discussions, and shared conversations between multiple electric departments for both in-house and contracted employees.

Attendees’ electrical awareness knowledge is expanded upon—identifying power sources such as transformers, reclosers, cutouts, and associated voltage identification for SMUD. A SMUD line foreman takes students through all the crucial knowledge needed to perform the job safely and professionally.

### Fire & Live Wire Demonstration Safety

SMUD journeyman linemen conduct a live arc flash demonstration where vegetation is placed on a “hot” high voltage electrical line where it arcs and causes a fault to show how breezy conditions, combined with loose branches, can cause a fault/power outage, and the danger to contractors, public, employees, and property.

The demonstration underscores the fire danger potential that looms in association with work near or on





high-voltage electrical equipment. Participants are taught what can start a fire—the potential ignition sources—so they can prevent a fire from starting, mitigating fire potential. They are also taught the characteristics and interactions of wildland fire environment—the fuels, weather, and topography, and how they influence a fire’s behavior.

Participants also learn how to properly report a fire and relay the relevant information to initiate a response for public safety agencies, as well as the utility, to respond. This is to meet their own employer’s company policies, procedures, and notification requirements in addition to those of the companies in which they are contracted.

The Power Academy tabs professional firefighter personnel such as Wildland Fire Expert Consultant Scott Holmquist to conduct this part of Contractor Safety Days. Instructors bring firefighting equipment, carry out live demonstrations in the yard that include proper orientation and use of the tools and methods, and give the participants opportunities to perform some hands-on training. Successful attendees can earn a

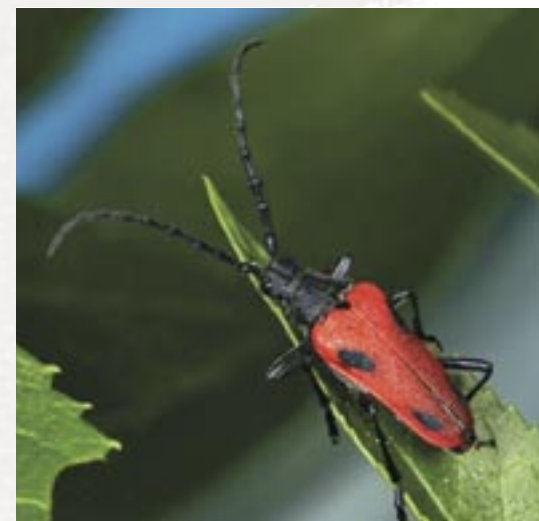
fire safety training certification. Recently, Scott Holmquist, a former Assistant Deputy Director of the California Department of Forestry’s Cal Fire division, who has also served as Senior Public Safety Specialist for PG&E, was brought in to conduct the class. He now does consulting work for the Power Academy and other agencies and companies who seek his valuable expertise.

**Leave It Better Than We Found It**

While safety is SMUD’s guiding principle, environmental stewardship is a core value. Participants in Contractor Safety Day workshops learn how to combine environmentally responsible practices with job safety. Environmental awareness and protection goes a long way in doing a professional job. Attendees learn how to ensure full compliance with all local, state, and federal laws, as well as the need to go the extra step to protect environmental resources to the greatest extent possible to fulfill SMUD’s field work edict of “leaving it better than we found it.”

Birds are a significant factor. A specialist takes participants through a thorough review of electric utility

work. A SMUD environmental expert of avian protection regulations reviews information regarding nesting birds and threatened bird species they might encounter at work in the field. Attendees learn about protected insects as well, like the Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), and how to protect their habitats while getting the job done the best way possible. They are also made aware



*California Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (Desmocerus californicus), photo by Jon Katz / USFWS*





# ENERGY EMPOWERED

## DISCOVER DAVEY'S LEADING LADIES IN THE UTILITY INDUSTRY

Women who work in the utility sector are plugging into an often-overlooked career path that has provided them with fulfillment and growth opportunities. We are proud of the women on the Davey Utility Solutions team who are redefining the industry and inspiring shifts in workforce demographics.

Read the stories of the women at Davey who will become the next generation of leaders in utility services.

[daveyutilitysolutions.com/empower](https://daveyutilitysolutions.com/empower)



ASSET  
MANAGEMENT



ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSULTING



LINE  
CLEARANCE



STORM  
RESPONSE



VEGETATION  
MANAGEMENT



TELECOM  
CONSTRUCTION

## SAFETY SERVICES



# SAFETY POWERED BY PEOPLE

**People drive the industry.** Without people, there is no industry. The same can be said with safety. Your safety program exists to protect your people, but they can only stay safe by using safety best practices themselves. That's why we offer a suite of Safety Services like safety gap analysis, crew assessments, safety auditing, auditing software, competency training, and expert witness testimony. These services ensure that your program is comprehensive, that your people follow it at all times, and that your organization benefits from a continual reduction in safety-related incidents.

Learn more at [acrt.com/safetyservices](https://acrt.com/safetyservices)



*We empower the best people to help  
sustain our world. 100% employee-owned.  
Independence guaranteed.*



of commonly encountered avian protection utility hardware.

**5G Is Here. Now What?**

Encountering telecommunication equipment is nothing new to VM professionals while on the job, but the latest 5G equipment likely is. In delivering fast bandwidth to urban and suburban populations, 5G is expected to be the next big thing. These “small cell equipment deployments” (as they’re known) present new and potentially hazardous situations for anyone working near them.

A SMUD safety specialist takes participants at Contractor Safety Day through an extensive step-by-step awareness and training seminar about Radio Frequency energy commonly known as “RF” that requires learning new areas of proper safety and awareness. Attendees learn about the common antenna types they’ll encounter and what kind of electromagnetic energy they emit. They learn about the electromagnetic spectrum, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation, as well as the permissible RF exposure categories and limits—all invaluable information for the VM professional for the next decade and beyond.

**The Positive Customer Experience**

As a customer-owned community electric company, our customers are our bread and butter. They elect the Board of Directors who set the policy for the company, and they attend Board meetings to rant, rave, or just add their two cents.

For these reasons and many more, the Power Academy offers the Customer Experience segment during Contractor Days. Customer Experience Guiding Principles provides the roadmap for the contractor to deliver solid customer service in the field.

First, the attendee learns how the customer may perceive the contractor who is near their home, cutting branches off a favorite tree. Then,

the contractor learns the proper skills to practice on the job to help deliver a positive customer experience. What is the proper tone of voice, body language, choice of words, level of humility, and dialogue to utilize and manage sometimes-difficult interactions? It’s all addressed in this very important facet of the training—very important because many times, our contractors are the only point of contact our customers have with SMUD. It can’t be overstated how important it is that they provide a quality customer interaction. Customers see them as a reflection of our business.

**The Sacramento Power Academy is Open for All Kinds of Contractor Business**

While the Academy offers many continuing education opportunities like those mentioned above, facilitated by SMUD and Power Academy professionals, it also offers an excellent location for contractors to conduct their own staff training.

Whether it is Academy professionals training SMUD employees, SMUD



contractors, or contractors training their own employees, the facility offers major benefits for professionals who work in potentially dangerous industries. The training enhances their Title 8 requirements, and they can leave with a documented record of training and awareness.

Contractors rely on what they’ve learned in training to handle real-world work situations, and they take away a realization of the dangers and risks through the live demonstrations in which they participate. They feel valued that SMUD invests in their safety and job-related training, and they get value from the interaction and engagement with SMUD employees and contractors.

**The Bottom Line**

The Power Academy survey of trainees earned 97 percent “Strongly Agreed” or “Agreed” when asked if: *“Overall, I was satisfied with the course content and delivery.”*



Here are some comments:

- “All the information that was given was beneficial to me, so I can perform a better and safer job when at work.”
- “All information provided was essential, and created common ground understanding.”
- “New information and examples were given based on current events.”
- “The training was very good, I learned things I didn’t know, and appreciated the hands-on training.”

For more information, visit us at [www.sacramentopoweracademy.com](http://www.sacramentopoweracademy.com)



# GREEN RUNS DEEP

“Our foundation is based on family, character and values. These values play directly into our culture. It’s a feeling... a way of life – not something you can necessarily put into words. Being a Brother’s or Sister’s Keeper is more than a title. It’s a responsibility that everyone takes pride in. In our world, green runs deep.”

Vegetation Management • Storm Restoration • Work Planning

Since 1933. Employee Owned.

1.800.882.1216 [www.wrighttree.com](http://www.wrighttree.com)

## ECI’s “Roll-up Our Sleeves to Fight COVID-19” Blood Drive

ECI recently launched a company-wide blood drive in response to COVID-19 and in support of our local communities where we live and work. “Roll-up Our Sleeves to Fight COVID-19!” encourages our employees and their friends and families to participate in the ECI Blood Drive which runs through Labor Day.

The nation’s blood supply requires a steady number of donors who generously donate life-saving blood and blood components each year. Every two seconds, a patient needs a blood transfusion. Because of COVID-19, the number of blood donations has been dramatically reduced. ECI deeply cares about the communities where we live and work and through this initiative, we hope to continue our mission to make a positive impact on the communities we serve.

ECI has provided safety guidelines to our employees on how to make a blood donation, and we are compensating our employees for their time spent to donate, as well as recognizing their efforts with a hardhat sticker. We are extremely proud of the response we have seen from our employees thus far and look forward to seeing how this initiative progresses through the summer months!



Environmental Consultants

SILVER  
LEVEL

SPONSOR  
SPOTLIGHT



©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/TAKASUU



## VM Resilience in the Face of COVID-19

By Chris Kelly, Co-founder and CEO, Clearion



The rapid emergence of COVID-19 has presented complex challenges for the utility industry and its vegetation management (VM) contractors. With little warning and within a very tight timeframe, companies dusted off their crisis preparedness plans. While some were quicker than others, contractors moved their entire back office staff to newly minted home offices. In the face of dwindling supplies, procurement teams and local operations management teams partnered together to secure masks and gallons of hand sanitizer. Safety leaders developed new guidelines regarding social distancing among crew members, in vehicles, and with homeowners. Many utilities quickly put into place online tracking systems for contractors to report the number of COVID-19 cases to enable contact tracing and help prevent the spread of the virus. And suddenly, with kids in the background and dogs at our feet, video conferences became the norm.



In short, it's been a wild ride in the world of crisis management for utility line clearance. Yet, a great deal of uncertainty remains.

During these times of significant disruption, we must adapt to face the reality of our new environment while simultaneously looking ahead to quickly and proactively design the future stages of this evolution.

### Redesigning Work Processes for Stay-at-Home Orders

In the spring of 2020, providing back-office employees with remote work options became an urgent requirement for companies worldwide. Enabling this capability hinged on a number of factors, including the availability of technology, such as laptops and Wi-Fi, along with at-home bandwidth, security tools,



remote access, and more. However, the ability to offer flexible options was also highly process driven. Entire departments had to reimagine and redesign the way they conducted business from remote locations.

For many utility mapping departments in charge of dispatching work to VM contractors, the transition to working from home came easily. For most large IOUs, cloud-based work management systems have been in place for years, rendering paper-based maps, and their associated processes, obsolete.

But let's all pause for a moment and think of those work groups that struggled, or continue to struggle, to

work from home. Which teams are occasionally still needed in the physical office and why? Where are in-person document handoffs still taking place and why?

For some utilities, customer trim requests and other reactive tickets continue to be printed at regional operations centers or district offices. After pre-inspection, the reactive tickets are then handed off to a contractor. For others, a similar process occurs when printing and issuing large-format circuit maps for cycle-based, preventative maintenance.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to review, through the lens of this pandemic, processes that have long been overlooked and make significant changes to the way we conduct our businesses.

If you're still employing a paper-based system, you're not alone; however, now may be a good time to benchmark those utilities that have deployed field apps and leverage their key learnings. At a time when urgency is more critical than ever, you can shave considerable time off your development timeline by employing others' best practices and established systems versus reinventing the wheel.

### Redesigning Work Processes for Social Distancing

As we've all become highly aware recently, every physical interaction we can avoid—from the grocery store to our front yard—can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.



For utilities and their contractors, interacting with homeowners at a safe distance is more critical than ever. Therefore, redesigning work processes to minimize risk during quarantine must be prioritized.

At this time, customers are increasingly uneasy with workers knocking on their doors or leaving door hangers. In a similar fashion to Pizza Hut rolling out contactless pizza delivery, some quick hits may be possible in areas, such as customer notification and permissioning. If not already deployed, near-term possibilities exist to manage customer contact (via email or outbound call) to ensure remote customer notification while meeting internal and external regulations for documentation (i.e., date, time, response).

However, the opportunity may be at hand to embrace a more strategic



approach in transforming the customer experience using a holistic, virtual platform. By integrating a customer-integrated system (CIS) or customer relationship management (CRM) system with a vegetation work management system, utilities can offer customer-facing portals that enable communication, collaboration, and coordination with customers that leverage information from historically separate systems and functions.

### Actively Designing the Future of VM

It is clear that COVID-19 will have many permanent, long-term implications for utilities and their contractors as stay-at-home orders and social distancing impact the future of VM. Preparing for this new reality is critical for our collective future.

As we look for ways to transform the way we work remotely, streamline interactions between work roles, and heighten the customer experience, we need to ask: What can and should our future look like? Answering this question requires thought and collaboration among energy industry groups, including operations, customer service, field service, contractors, and software vendors.

Let's work together to shape the future of our industry and emerge from this stronger.

# Securing the Grid.

Highly Trained. Ready to Take Action.

INSPECTION + AUDITING  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE  
CONSULTING  
RESEARCH

[CNUtility.com](http://CNUtility.com)



## SRP Electrical Safety Workshop

By Lori Jones, VM and Maintenance Services Manager, SRP

On February 29, 2020, the Salt River Project (SRP) hosted the 32nd annual Electrical Safety Workshop at the SRP PERA Conference and Training Center, with attendance in excess of 250 contractors and guests. Nancy Blevins, Manager Employee Safety Services, welcomed the guests; Vice President John Hoopes provided the safety minute; Associate General Manager Michael O'Connor addressed the audience with a safety message from a risk management perspective; and Lori Jones, manager maintenance services and vegetation management (VM), led speaker introductions throughout the program as well as led pre- and post-workshop safety-related polls to engage the attendees.

The Electrical Safety Workshop began as a collaborative effort by SRP and Arizona Public Service (APS) more than 30 years ago. The educational forum was intended to provide safety awareness and to keep tree workers and landscapers safe around overhead and underground utilities lines. In the late 1990s, SRP took the workshop in a separate direction with an even greater focus on safety. Historically, SRP's VM Department had partnered with SRP's Safety Services group to conduct the event, but had shouldered responsibilities for workshop logistics, including communication, registration, speaker engagement, facilities rental, food service, and Spanish translation. In 2016, SRP's Event Marketing group took over planning, logistics, and promoting the event. This allowed Safety Services, VM, and representatives from our contractors (ACRT and Asplundh) and other internal SRP business units (Blue Stake, Construction Services, Fault Locating, Field Operations, and Line Maintenance) to focus on improving the workshop quality and content.

July–August 2020



Fast forward to 2020: the workshop target audience has expanded to include painters, scaffolding contractors, asphalt and paving contractors, and many other trades who work in and around overhead and underground powerlines on a daily basis.

The workshop presentation topics included the following:

- Job Briefing Assessment (CJ Fuson, Troubleshooting)
- Chainsaw Safety and Equipment Checks (Branden Peters, Asplundh)
- Electrical Step/Touch Potential (Leonard Rondeau, Safety Services)
- Underground, Electrical Hazard Awareness, and Arizona 811 Locate (Jason Hovis, Claims Services)

The outdoor demonstrations featured the following:

- Hurt Man Bucket Rescue (Branden Peters, Asplundh)



- Step-and-Touch Potential from a downed pole line on a vehicle (Leonard Rondeau and Ryan Balzer, Safety Services)
- Hazard Recognition with SRP's BRAT Wagon (Mark Henle, Jim Green, and Chris Stinski, Distribution Line Maintenance)
- Burn Risk Awareness Training (BRAT)
- Trench and Underground Safety (Mark Burkhart, Construction Services, supported by Michael Herrington, Blue Stake, and John Baker, Field Operations)

To this day, we receive positive feedback from our guests, and we often host repeat attendees. We are always looking for engaged safety enthusiasts at SRP to join the workshop planning committee, and to assist with innovation and improvement that makes the workshop better. To quote an attendee this year, "This event just gets better every year."



# BUZZ OFF!

It's a wild world out there, and you may encounter some dangerous critters in the field. Proper protection can help fend off these threatening insects and arachnids.



## MOSQUITOES

### Threat

Carriers and transmitters of West Nile Virus

Bites can result in a range of symptoms, from flu-like conditions (West Nile fever) to potentially life-threatening disease (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis)

### Prevention



Keep skin covered as much as possible



Avoid use of scented lotions, perfumes/cologne



Use repellents with DEET or Picaridin; spray on skin and outside of clothing



## BEEES & WASPS

### Threat

Allergic reaction



### Precaution/Treatment

Verify any bee allergies via skin testing and consider immunization

Carry sting kit (EpiPen®) if necessary

Carry identification notifying hypersensitivity

Keep sweet items covered, such as soft drinks, ripened fruit

Avoid use of scented lotions, perfumes/cologne

Watch out for insect entry/activity, being particularly cautious near likely nesting habitats (such as white firs in the Sierras)



**DON'T MOVE RAPIDLY**  
This often provokes attack



**DON'T SWAT**  
Wasp venom contains pheromones, signaling nearby wasps to swarm

Remove any bee stingers as quickly as possible—the longer the stinger remains in the skin, the stronger the reaction can be

## Protect Yourself from Pesky Pests

By Keith Pancake, Safety Manager, ACRT and Bermex

With the arrival of spring and warmer weather, we should be considering a different risk. Utility vegetation management (UVM) takes place almost exclusively in environments that are suitable habitats for numerous insects that transmit serious diseases. Ticks and mosquitoes thrive in humid tree lines, tall grass, brushy areas, and around open, standing water—which could describe many rights-of-ways (ROW). Learning the different hazardous insect species in your region is an important preparation to avoid a potentially painful incident.

Ticks are widespread across the country, with 16 regionally specific, tick-borne diseases, including Lyme, Powassan, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Once the daytime temperature gets above freezing, ticks are actively questing. Peak tick activity can be expected from March to mid-May and mid-August to November.

We focus a lot on Lyme disease, which is only caused by the Black-Legged Deer Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*). Female adult deer ticks and nymphs are the only stages that feed on humans and their combined life cycles can mean year-round risk.

If you are bitten, remove the tick using tweezers or a tick spoon. Prompt removal of ticks can prevent transmission of tick-borne pathogens. Next, try to identify the tick species, clean the area, and monitor yourself for symptoms for 30 days—that includes rash, fever, fatigue, and joint pain. If you develop symptoms, tell your doctor about the tick bite (when and where it occurred). A small number of diseases can develop shortly after the bite; deer tick nymphs must be embedded for 36 hours to transmit the Lyme disease bacteria, and even longer to transmit Babesia parasites. The CDC strongly discourages using results from lab tests to determine the need for antibiotics, and does not recommend taking these after bites to prevent tick-borne diseases.







Frequent body checks throughout the day and after work are critical for finding any ticks that may have slipped through your defenses; check the hairline, waistline, legs, and arms. When you shower at home, use a mirror to check hard-to-see areas. Using the high-heat setting when drying work clothes will kill any remaining ticks.

At least 10 mosquito-borne diseases are identified in the U.S. The most common is West Nile Virus; however, Zika Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis are on the rise. Mosquitoes need open, standing water to complete the larvae cycle. In many areas, there is almost a year-round threat; they are most active at dusk and dawn.

Another threat to be aware of are stinging insects. Wasps, hornets, and yellowjackets differ from bees by stinging multiple times and often in swarms. Colonies nest in ground cavities, tree hollows, eaves, and overhangs, and typically are not aggressive until disturbed. If you see yellowjackets, take measures to avoid disturbing the colony. If you disturb a colony or are being stung, move away slowly, avoiding swift movements, and use both hands to protect your face and other sensitive areas. Avoidance and understanding of seasonal habits are the best means of protection. If you or someone on your team is allergic to these or bee stings, and requires an Epi-Pen® to avoid anaphylaxis, make sure others are aware and know where to locate it.

Spiders, wasps, chiggers, and fire ants can also cause a significant amount of pain and potentially lifelong suffering. For those traveling, checking hotels for bedbugs is also advised. Brown recluse and black widow spiders prefer dark, protected areas and are not a threat unless provoked. Spider bites can cause significant tissue and neurological damage, and require rapid medical attention. In the southern-tier states, fire ants have established large populations and are named from the pain after their bites, which can be numerous and cause severe reactions. Being able to identify and avoid their mounds and avoid disturbing them is key.

Understanding the risk of running into something that wants to bite, sting, or feed on your blood is the first and most important step in prevention. Knowing this, we can consider the hierarchy of controls and use administrative tools and personal protective equipment to reduce the risk. Minimizing the amount of exposed skin with long sleeves, along with tucking in pant cuffs are additional layers of protection against most insect threats. The recommended protection includes the combination of repellent (DEET or



## TICKS

### Threat

Blacklegged ticks are carriers and transmitters of Lyme Disease (*Borrelia Burgdorferi*)

Without treatment, bacteria from an infected bite can spread to joints, heart, and nervous system

Ticks latch onto skin, requiring careful removal

### Prevention



Use repellents with DEET or Picaridin on skin

Use Permethrin as extra protection  
**FOR CLOTHING/GEAR USE ONLY!**



Wear light colors to make ticks more visible; check for ticks every 2-3 hours



Wear long sleeves and pants, tucking pants into socks or shoes

### Removal

Using tweezers, grasp mouthparts as close to skin as possible. Gently pull straight out.

After removal, disinfect the bite and wash hands. Contact doctor with any concerns. If possible, capture insect for proper identification.



**DON'T SQUEEZE!**

Body of tick can contain infectious fluids



## CHIGGERS

### Threat

Chiggers are NOT known to carry disease

However, bites can cause irritation comparable to cases of poison ivy

Scratching or breaking bites may cause secondary infection

### Prevention



Chiggers are found in low, damp areas with rank vegetation

Most numerous in early summer when grass, weeds, and vegetation are at their heaviest



Laundry clothes immediately after leaving a chigger-infested area

To relieve itching, apply ointment of benzocaine, hydrocortisone, calamine lotion, or others as recommended by a pharmacist or doctor



## SPIDERS & STINGING INSECTS

### Threat

Insect stings or bites require quick action

Brown recluse spiders, fire ants, scorpions

- Tissue-destroying bites; watch for marked swelling or discoloration

Black widow spiders

- Neurotoxic bites may not cause swelling or discoloration



### Prevention/Treatment

Apply ice to site or immerse affected body part in ice water until a physician can be reached



If possible, capture insect for proper identification

Get more tips and information to work safer at [ACRT.com/articles](http://ACRT.com/articles)

Source: OSHA Safety Presentation 2015

Picardin-based product) on exposed skin to keep insects away, and pesticide to kill them on contact (Permethrin) on all outerwear, including boots. Clothing that is pre-treated with Permethrin is available, as well as services that will treat clothes. A University of Rhode Island study found that people wearing Permethrin-treated boots are 73.6 times less likely to have a tick bite than those wearing untreated footwear. With Permethrin, it is important to follow the directions, apply in a ventilated area, and allow the item to dry.

We can safely work in areas where insects and arachnids exist as long as the appropriate measures are put in place.

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS PUBLICATION IS PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY, AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS LEGAL ADVICE ON ANY SUBJECT MATTER. YOU SHOULD NOT ACT OR REFRAIN FROM ACTING ON THE BASIS OF ANY CONTENT INCLUDED IN THIS PUBLICATION WITHOUT SEEKING LEGAL OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL ADVICE. WE DO NOT GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF THIS INFORMATION OR ANY RESULTS AND FURTHER ASSUME NO LIABILITY IN CONNECTION WITH THIS PUBLICATION AND SAMPLE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, INCLUDING ANY INFORMATION, METHODS, OR SAFETY SUGGESTIONS CONTAINED HEREIN. MOREOVER, THIS PUBLICATION CANNOT BE ASSUMED TO CONTAIN EVERY ACCEPTABLE SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE PROCEDURE OR THAT ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES MIGHT NOT BE APPROPRIATE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

## SILVER LEVEL

### A Culture of Safety Starts with Interaction

At ACRT Services and our family of companies, safety permeates all that we think, say, and do—from how we serve customers in the field to how we train the industry. For Keith Pancake, safety manager at Bermex (an independent vegetation management consulting firm and metering services company of ACRT), keeping safety at the forefront of employees' minds is his mission.

With more than 10 years of industry experience, Pancake understands the challenges that we all face. At ACRT and Bermex, he uses this knowledge to guide and inform our safety strategy, ensuring that incidents are prevented wherever our team members are working.

"Building a culture of safety starts with interacting with employees, customers, and partners to help them understand that hazards exist at all times," Pancake said. "Energy and resources invested in building that culture will always return positive dividends."



## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



For Pancake, part of that interaction includes sharing his own personal safety story with associates to help them understand the applications and importance of safety.

"Having experienced significant injury myself, I openly share that experience with those who are interested in an effort to advance safety across our industry. It's critical that people have a sense for how safety affects every moment of our daily lives and the decisions we make. As a safety manager, it's my job to align that reality with the tools, technology, and equipment we all need to work safely."

Pancake is an ISA Certified Arborist and Utility Specialist, National Safety Council Defensive Driving Instructor, New Hampshire Certified Arborist, Licensed Pesticide Applicator, former New Hampshire Arborist Association board member, UAA member, and UAA Safety Committee member. He is also a recipient of the UAA Silver Shield Award for his efforts to promote a culture of safety.

Learn more about our safety philosophy at [careers.acrt.com](http://careers.acrt.com).





# UTILITY WILDFIRE PREVENTION & PROTECTION

ECI can help mitigate and manage your wildfire risk:

- 1 RISK ASSESSMENT & PRIORITIZATION**
- 2 ENHANCED SITUATIONAL AWARENESS**
- 3 SYSTEM HARDENING**
- 4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**
- 5 STRATEGIC & TACTICAL PLANNING**
- 6 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**
- 7 WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW**

<https://www.eci-consulting.com/utility-solutions/utility-vegetation-consulting-services/wildfire-prevention-protection/>

eci-consulting.com  
1-800-919-9274

**UTILITY ARBORIST ASSOCIATION**

A Professional Affiliation of the  
International Society of Arboriculture

**Utility Arborist  
Newsline**

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
MOS

2009 W. Broadway Avenue, Suite 400, PMB 315  
Forest Lake, MN 55025



**SAFE  
IS THE ONLY  
WAY WE WORK**

**At Asplundh**, we have always equipped our workforce with the tools, knowledge, and support to ensure a strong safety culture and secure workplace, including:

- **Safety Management Process**
- **SafetySuite**
- **TapRoot®**

**ASPLUNDH.COM** ■ 1-800-248-TREE

**ASPLUNDH®**

A BETTER WAY