

CONNECTIVITY™

NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN ProVM MARKET

SINGING THE UNSUNG STORY

BY DOUGLAS MARTIN

As business people, we talk about value all the time. Or, at least, we want to talk about value. Many times though, it seems, we discuss value within our industry circle with a slight resonance of frustration that even key, obvious value points aren't grasped or appreciated, let alone the gigantic ones lurking ever-so-closely to the oblivious masses.



Now, the previous statement may sound a little over the top and I would completely agree if I hadn't had the rare opportunity to roll up my sleeves with a couple of groups of top business folks in the vegetation management field. Our goal was to dig up and articulate genuine value propositions that would be applicable to their paying customers and perhaps

overflow in some meaningful way into the communities these businesses operate in.

To the uninitiated, the term vegetation management sounds rather innocuous and I was certainly that person, having done enough research to determine this industry more or less spruces up the edges of everyday life in a way that nobody really pays any attention to or even notices, much less cares about. I quickly learned if ever there was a lesson of, "What you don't know can hurt you." this was it.

The context of which is, we had a representative group of hardworking people providing important services to a variety of sectors that, to varying degrees, purchase and support those efforts. But the underlying frustration was that the enormity of the true invisible benefit was nearly completely hidden. And as I fumbled to yank out interesting value bullets to put up on the flipcharts, a seasoned participant brought everything into perspective, "Back off what we **do** for a second and imagine a world in which we **don't**."

"If the reality of something's absence is proportionately worse than its presence, then that something has constituted value", someone really important once said. The next three hours scared the hell out of me.

Before you can even consider what would happen if vegetation wasn't managed, it behooves you to understand that plant life, in all its precious forms, has a 360 million year track record of just continuing to grow and grow and grow...wherever it likes... so with that kind of a head start, it's not too much of a stretch to think they [plants] aren't going to abate themselves simply because they bump into civilization. And this is what vegetation people know and they also know the speed in which plant life can overtake a situation. That, in part, is the burden of knowledge they look to communicate to an unsuspecting world ... except it sounds like a Sci-Fi movie and kind of nutty.

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SINGING THE UNSUNG STORY cont.

When you stop and think about the cascading ramifications of complete absence of vegetation management, and we did for a brief time, it's honestly overwhelming and I think that it's just so impossibly unimaginable that we don't know how to tell the story. So we don't. And consequently, a monstrous value equation, not just from a client perspective, but also from an embracing community perspective, gets lost.



So we tell the story in bite-sized pieces that are relatable to the uninitiated. A narrative begins with, "We've all witnessed a house or a farm building or even a business building on an otherwise busy street, become abandoned. And I

know you marvel at how quickly the decay happens ... it seemed like just yesterday it was a solid structure...yet almost overnight the parking lot is cracked and sprouts are coming up, the grass has turned wild and destruction is evident. What you're actually watching is the power of plant life in an uncontrolled environment. It's flat out destructive. But apart from being an eyesore that you are pretty sure someone is going to get around to at some point, it has no real impact on you as an individual.

That's not the case for the unchecked sapling starting its life under an electric tower miles from your backyard...where it will eventually short out a wire connection and knock out your household power...forget the inconvenience of no internet and calculate the value of the food that had to be tossed. Multiply that by the number of your neighbors affected. What if your municipality decided not to swath alongside the secondary roads in your community? Within 40 days the traffic speed would be reduced due to perceived narrowing by 15%... in 80 days it would be half...the domino effective on commercial transportation would cause goods and services shortages and likely the obvious price adjustment that follow the supply and demand adage. In a hundred ways, perhaps thousands of ways, vegetation management impacts your life in a positive productive way...almost always outside your consciousness.

You will rarely see the result of what we do, but I will assure you that you will feel the impact if we don't.

Today's vegetation management experts are the current shepherd's of Mankind's continuous unwanted plant problem, whose only answer is to control encroachment. With applied technologies and community sensitivities, the unsung value is enjoyed by all, and appreciated by some.

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Visit our [product page for more information](#). Existing customers may log in to see pricing online. Look for our order form with updated pricing in the coming days. To order, contact your local Univar ES Sales Representative, Customer Service or our Equipment Specialist, Ron Standish <http://www.provmweb.com/people>.



Industry News

[Province investigating after allegations CN Rail improperly used herbicide](#)

CN says it's also reviewing vegetation control plan on rail line between Terrace and Prince Rupert. B.C.'s Ministry of Environment is reviewing claims that CN Rail improperly sprayed pesticides directly adjacent to the Skeena...

[Charlottetown pesticide bylaw faces amendment, City inspections unnecessary, says councillor](#)

Charlottetown's cosmetic pesticide ban, which came into effect in January, is going back to committee following a challenge from a city councillor. Coun. Bob Doiron wants a \$50 fee associated with the bylaw eliminated. The f...

[Fall is the best time for controlling foxtail barley](#)

It might be too late in the season now, but there are ways to tackle this weed in the spring too. Fall is the best time to control many perennial weeds with glyphosate, including foxtail barley, but it might already be too late. Weed surveys show fox...

[County voices concern over secondary highway mowing](#)

Woodland County Council forwarded a letter to the Alberta government detailing its concerns with the vegetation management plan for provincial highways. The letter specifically states that sides of secondary highways needed to be mowed more...

[Release the weevils](#)

The MD of Bonnyville has released thousands of Canada Thistle Stem Mining Weevils into areas throughout the municipality. Janice Boden, assistant agriculture fieldman for the MD, said this is their attempt to rid natural pathways of the thistle,...

['Dead zones' after wilderness chemical spraying worry residents](#)

A chemical-spraying program is sparking public apprehension, but officials call the campaign a safe way to ensure ecological balance. Canadian Kraft Paper Industries has been spraying herbicide on certain sections of wilderness in the...

Industry Events

[MWSA Fall Seminar](#)

Dec 5-8, 2017

Portage La Prairie, MB

[2018 Summit Herbicide Resistance](#)

Feb 27-28, 2018

Saskatoon, SK



Attention Alberta Students! PVMA HAS A SCHOLARSHIP FOR YOU!

Deadline to apply is November 30th

The PVMA will be awarding one scholarship of \$1000.00 each year to an Alberta student who is enrolled in an Alberta Post-Secondary Institute with preference given to those enrolled in a vegetation management-related program. In addition to the scholarship, the winner will be invited, expenses paid, to the Spring Seminar.



Visit PVMA's website for more information:

https://www.pvma.ca/awards_scholarships_and_bursaries

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