

NEW VEGETATION MANAGEMENT DEGREE PROGRAM AT PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE

PAUL SMITHS, N.Y., November 22, 2005 – Paul Smith's College, located in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York, has a long and distinguished history of training forest technicians and pre-professional forestry students in unique "hands on" two-year programs.

In 2003, the New York State Department of Education gave the college authorization to provide baccalaureate programs in five forestry concentrations, including Utility Vegetation Management. The impetus for the vegetation management concentration came from alumni of the college's associate degree Urban Tree Management (UTM) program who became successful utility industry foresters and saw the benefits of additional college training for forestry students entering the field.

Forestry students in all five concentrations are required to take traditional courses in dendrology, ecology, mensuration, silviculture and mapping. Vegetation management students also receive extensive training in arboriculture, pest management and landscape fundamentals along with business and resource management courses.

A course in Utility Vegetation Management is taken by senior students and focuses on issues unique to the management of rights-of way (ROW). The course emphasis is on Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) and the judicious use of herbicides. Classes include the identification and ecology of shrubs and herbaceous plants and the cutting and spraying techniques used to develop and maintain stable ground covers. The role of a vegetation manager in the development and implementation of a ROW program, in a context involving governmental regulators, environmental groups and community stakeholders, is also addressed.

Lab classes provide students with an understanding of utility hardware and distribution line clearance, exposure to GPS/GIS software programs and training in the safe handling and application of herbicides. Field trips and activities include hazard tree evaluation, plant community identification and evaluation of different ROW treatments. Vegetation management in highway, railroad and pipeline ROWs is also presented.

Because there is no textbook about ROW management, training materials were gleaned from various sources. Research papers about ROW management and articles about utility company operations published in the Journal of Arboriculture and in the proceedings of the International Symposia on Environmental Concerns in Rights-of-Way Management were primary sources for student reading and lectures. The Utility Specialist Certification Study Guide published by ISA, the Purdue University Model Certification Training Manual for Right-of-Way Pesticide Applicators and the Transmission Right-of-Way Management Program manual for National Grid Co. provided the basis for both lecture and lab classes.

Many utilities, ROW maintenance firms, chemical companies, industry consultants, universities and governmental agencies also supplied reading materials and videos about their role in ROW

management. The students especially appreciated guest lecturers representing different segments of the industry.

On May 1, 2005 the first five utility vegetation management foresters graduated from Paul Smith's College. With the support of alumni and the ROW industry, the College hopes to provide well-prepared graduates for roles as managers in an increasingly complex business.

Paul Smith's College is a private institution with 850 students and is located on the shores of Lower St. Regis Lake in New York's northern Adirondack Park. The campus encompasses 14,200 acres of forests, streams, lakes and mountains for students to explore, study, and enjoy. The College offers both bachelor's and associate degree programs which focus on experiential learning in a variety of majors including biology; fish and wildlife sciences; natural resources; environmental science and forestry; surveying; recreation, adventure travel and ecotourism; culinary arts and hospitality management; liberal arts; and business management. Paul Smith's was named one of America's 25 Hottest Colleges for 2006 by the Newsweek Kaplan College Guide. For more information or to schedule a campus visit, please call the Admissions Office at 1-800-421-2605 or go online at www.paulsmiths.edu <<http://www.paulsmiths.edu>> .