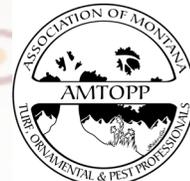


# AMTOPP Fall News



October 2017

## Summer Field Day East and West AMTOPP Makes A Difference!

### Camp Mak-A Dream Gold Creek, MT

Greetings to all Amtopp members, and friends! On behalf of the Board of Directors and our ever-vigilant Executive Director allow me to express our most sincere desire that everyone survived our summer of smoke unscathed. It seems that from east to west we all had our share of difficulties and setbacks related to the drought. There was, however, at least one bright spot that shined through the hazy August skies: Summer Field Day. This year under the leadership of President Rob Dillon (notice the subtle assignment of responsibility—thank me later, Rob) the board departed from the usual pattern of serving at a Veteran’s cemetery and instead held the event at Camp Mak-A-Dream, in Gold Creek. While there was certainly a lot of discussion on the move, the

decision was finally made to lend our services to the Camp with the intention of being a help to them. Oddly enough, it seems that it was just as encouraging and beneficial to us as participants as it was to them as campers and staff. Having spent a lot of time in children’s hospitals over the years with my kids, I wasn’t overly enthusiastic about the prospect of re-living all of those memories again. However, those fears proved to be unfounded thanks to the amazing attitudes of the individuals we interacted with over the course of the day at the camp. It can really change a person’s perspective to see kids with brain cancer display better attitudes than some adults who don’t have so much as a

**See Field Day  
Page 7**



### Eastern Montana State Veterans Cemetery Miles City, MT

AMTOPP members in Miles City, Billings, and Terry decided to keep up the tradition of providing services to a veteran’s facility in Montana, for the annual Summer Field Day.

While work was taking place on the west side of the state, over on the east side in Miles City, AMTOPP was also making a presence.

‘Bing’ Cherry with Evergreen Landscaping and Irrigation helping to coordinate the event, rounded up TruGreen in Billings to perform some work on the Eastern Montana State Veterans Cemetery, in Miles City.

With TruGreen in Billings (Robert Worden), providing product for fertilization and weed control; and the Tru-



Green branch, in Terry, (Kyle Kinn), applied the product.

Thanks to all who participated and made it possible!

# Meet Montana's Vertebrate Pest Specialist



Stephen M. Vantassel has held the position of Vertebrate Pest Specialist for the Montana Department of Agriculture since May 2015. What is a Vertebrate Pest Specialist? The Vertebrate Pest Specialist is an informational resource to help producers, landowners, and municipalities resolve conflicts with animals that have a spine. Have a problem with raccoons, pocket gophers or ground squirrels or other animals with a spine? Stephen can help guide you on what to do and what to not do to resolve your conflict. If your problem

is with bugs or plant diseases? Then you will need to speak with someone else as Stephen specializes in animals with bones.

Stephen began his work in vertebrate pest control (also known as wildlife damage management) in the 1980s when he obtained a Problem Animal Control permit from the state of Massachusetts. In 1994 transitioned from part-time to full-time when he started Wildlife Removal Service, Inc. (sold in 1998) that served clients in western Massachusetts. His work experience involved control of species such as moles, voles, woodchucks, chipmunks, pigeons, starlings, beaver, skunks, gray squirrels, red squirrels, flying squirrels, snapping turtle, raccoon, and others. In 2004, he was hired by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to coordinate their wildlife damage management program. Part of his job required him to run the Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management (ICWDM.org), an informational clearinghouse on wildlife control that received 1.1 million visitors a year. Along with being a webmaster, Stephen published informational documents on how to manage common vertebrate pests such as deer, voles, moles, raccoons, skunks, squirrels, unprotected birds, etc. as well as spoke at various training events.

Stephen's work in the field of vertebrate pest management also extends to his personal life. He has published scores of articles in trade publications such as Wildlife Control Technology, Pest Control

Technology, Pest Management Professional. Many of his publications are available online at <http://stephenmvantassel.academia.edu/>. He has also published several books, including The Wildlife Damage Inspection Handbook, 3rd ed., The Wildlife Removal Handbook, 3rd ed., Being Kind to Animal Pests rev. ed., and the Practical Guide to the Control of Feral Cats. He is a founding member of the National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA.com) and presently serves on the Board as the Director for the Western District (States west of the Mississippi). Stephen welcomes the opportunity to assist the public with its conflicts with vertebrate pests. He has updated many of Montana's vertebrate pest control bulletins <http://agr.mt.gov/Topics/Vertebrate-Pests> but he welcomes calls 406-538-3004, emails [svantassel@mt.gov](mailto:svantassel@mt.gov) or visits 625 NE Main St. Ste 3 Lewistown, MT 59457. Stephen is available for presentation, seminars, workshops and in the right circumstances, on-site consultations.



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# AMTOPP In Washington DC

## Beautifying America's Most Sacred Grounds

One of the privileges of being the Vice President of AMTOPP is the opportunity to represent AMTOPP and its' members at the annual National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) Renewal and Remembrance Day of Service, as well as, the Legislative Day on the Hill. This year was NALP's 21st annual Renewal and Remembrance Day of Service. With over 400 green industry volunteers present for this year's day of service, the opportunity to give back and honor America's Veterans was a great success. Landscapers, arborists, irrigation specialists, and many others from the green industry helped preserve and beautify Arlington National Cemetery. New landscaping was installed, trees were pruned, sprinklers were brought to working order, and lime was laid down by the tons. For that matter, I think I can still taste the lime. The soil at Arlington is acidic; consequently, this can limit nutrient uptake by the grass and result in an unhealthy lawn.

In addition to Renewal and Remembrance, I was able to attend the Legislative Day on the Hill. NALP and its' legislative committee helped me prepare for the important issues the Green Industry faces on both the national and local levels. Those who were scheduled to meet with their senators, congressmen or women or their staffers were instructed on effective advocacy. This instruction prepared me to address issues regarding pesticide regulations both nationally and locally with confidence and direction. The pesticide regulation was an important topic, as pesticide applicators in Montana recently experienced an attempt to ban the use of Neonics during the 2017 Montana Legislative Session.

The morning following the Legislative Day on the Hill, I attended Montana Coffee where I had the opportunity to visit face to face with our newly elected congressman Gianforte, as well as, our Senators Daines and Tester. It was during this meeting that concerns about the future of pesticide usage in Montana were brought to the forefront



AMTOPP past President Gerald Landby in Washington D.C.  
(L to R): Jason Stringer, Gerald Landby, Tiana Stringer

and the concerns from their constituents of the pesticide industry were relayed. They were all very receptive and seemed genuinely interested in how such bans would harm Montana's professional pesticide applicators and farmers alike.

Overall, the trip was a success, and AMTOPP's presence at the National level was recognized. Many NALP representatives expressed their gratitude for AMTOPP's continued support and amazing dedication to the industry.

Jason Stringer  
2017 Vice President

## BOARD MEETING DATES

**November 3, 2017**

10AM - Perkins Restaurant - Helena

**January 28, 2018** (pre conference)

Fairmont Hot Springs Resort - Board Room - 4:30PM

**January 30, 2018** (post conference)

Fairmont Hot Springs Resort - Board Room - 3:30PM

All members are welcomed and encouraged to participate in all of AMTOPP's events and Board meetings. Contact any board member or Executive Director for more information.



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# ISA-RMC & MUCFA News

**Submitted by:**

**Patrick Plantenberg**

**RMC-ISA MT State Director**

## Montana ISA-RMC Update

### New Montana ISA-RMC Members

Montana has 6 new members since June for a total of 85. New members include: Robert Edwards, Missoula; David Burns, Alpine Tree Service, Belgrade; Gabriel Braveheart, Braveheart Tree Care, LLC; Missoula; Celesta Collacchi, Libby; Michael Thompson, Great falls; and Joshua Gordon, Billings. Please welcome these new members. I will try to contact past members that have dropped out to try and reenlist them. If you know any likely new members please reach out to them. The ISA-RMC Board is very interested in supporting arborist training opportunities in Montana, as well as Wyoming and New Mexico. Let's take advantage of this opportunity to increase our training and level of certification.

### Missoula Aerial Rescue Training Course

The City of Missoula in partnership with ISA-RMC, MUCFA, and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Urban and Community Forestry Program hosted an Aerial Rescue Training Course, August 10th and 11th, 2017 in McCormick Park. ACRT, Inc. taught the

course. Twenty-three attendees from around the State of Montana participated in the workshop.

### RMC-ISA Annual Conference

I attended the September 11-12 ISA-RMC Annual Conference in Colorado. The conference was almost entirely on safety. About 240 people attended the excellent conference. The State ISA-RMC Directors from New Mexico, Montana, and Wyoming met at the conference and put together draft budgets and work plans for 2018. The ISA-RMC Board is encouraging the states to sponsor more training which the Chapter will help fund. If you have a training need please contact me.

### Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association Update

The MUCFA Executive Committee had a face-to-face meeting September 19th in Helena, MT to plan 2018 work. Check out the MUCFA website and Facebook pages at: <http://muca.com/> and [www.facebook.com/MontanaUrbanForestry](http://www.facebook.com/MontanaUrbanForestry). This is the first year that MUCFA has given out grants to cities. MUCFA received five applications for grants from Dillon, Hamilton, Harlowton, the Garfield County Conservation District, and Sidney. New Board members were elected including Rob Ethridge as Secretary replacing Bob Logar, retired NRCS employee and Manhattan Tree Board member. Bob has been a staunch supporter of urban forestry in Montana for many years. Thank you Bob for your service

over the years. The Executive Committee also elected Steve McConnell, City of Billings City Forester as Treasurer. Five MUCFA members stayed over and helped at the Saluting Branches event on September 20 (see below). Please consider joining MUCFA. The next meeting will be March 15th in Lewistown before the Tree Board Retreat (see below).

### Saluting Branches

Montana sponsored the first Saluting Branches event on September 20 at the Ft. Harrison State Veterans' Cemetery in Helena, MT. Saluting Branches: Arborists United for Veteran Remembrance is an opportunity for tree care professionals and other volunteers throughout the country to unite and do what we do best – provide exceptional tree care – to keep our veterans cemeteries safe, beautiful places for all those who visit. This year events were planned at 45 cemeteries in 31 states. Over 2,200 volunteers took part in the events.

AMTOPP has been working at Montana veterans' cemeteries and other facilities each summer for 12 years. AMTOPP members including three Board members were major players in the event. Over 300 hours of labor were donated by 45 volunteers. Volunteers traveled from as far away as Kalispell, Havre, and Colstrip to work at the event. Nitrogreen of Helena donated the use of two bucket trucks and a chipper truck. Six climbers also helped at the event. Ten new trees were

planted. None of the staff at the cemetery or the neighboring VA facilities had ever had a pruning class. Twenty people attended the 2 hour basic pruning class offered by Toby Day, MSU Extension Horticulturalist. Plans are developing for more Saluting Branches events in 2018. Please plan on participating at these great events.

### ISA Exams

The 2017 Northern Rockies Tree School sponsored the ISA written exams September 27 in Billings. They also offered aerial lift and tree climber practical skills certification exams on September 29. The ISA-RMC helped fund travel and accommodations for the evaluators to be at the exam site. The next written exams will be in January at the Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest Professionals (AMTOPP) winter conference at Fairmont Hot Springs. The MT Urban and Community Forestry Association (MUCFA) and ISA-RMC are hoping to schedule tree worker and aerial lift practical skills certification exam in May 2018 in Bozeman and/or the Kalispell area. If you are interested please contact me.

### Northern Rockies Tree School

The 8th Annual Northern Rockies Tree School was held on September 27-29, 2017 in Billings, MT. Over 150 people registered for the event. Continuing education credits were awarded for ISA members; pesticide applicators from Montana, Wyoming, and

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Idaho; Society of American Foresters members, as well the MSU Urban Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program. Peter Del Tredici was the keynote speaker. Peter is a Senior Research Scientist Emeritus, Arnold Arboretum and Visiting Lecturer of Applied Ecology and Planning at MIT. Watch for a summary of the Tree School in the next newsletter.

## Statewide Public Tree Inventory Assessment

The DNRC Urban Forestry Program had Davey Tree Expert Company complete a full analysis of 61 MT community tree inventories. A summary of the results was presented at the Northern Rockies Tree School. Data summaries for each city's inventory are complete. Final statewide results will be in the final report when completed. Josh Stoychoff, MT DNRC Forester and Urban Forester from Lewistown will present a summary of the report to the MT League of Cities and Towns (MLCT) Conference Sep-

tember 26-28, 2018 in Butte, MT.

## Montana Trails, Recreation, and Parks Association (MTRPA) Annual Conference

MUCFA, DNRC Urban Forestry Program, and ISA-RMC will have a booth at the MTRPA Annual Conference October 5 and 6. The conference will be a joint conference with the Montana landscape architects this year.

## Tree Care 101

Josh Stoychoff, DNRC Service Forester from Lewistown will be teaching a Tree Care 101 Class in Lewistown October 16th. Thankx Josh for all you do in central and northeastern Montana.

## Grant Opportunities

The Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) Urban Forestry Program will give out Program Development Grants and Arbor Day grants in 2018. Check out application requirements and grant deadlines on the MT DNRC Forestry Division website at:

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/urban-and-community-forestry/urban-and-community-forestry-grants>.

## Think Trees Conference

I plan to attend the Think Trees Conference in Albuquerque, NM January 18-19, 2018. This event usually draws 300 people and has been running for over 30 years. This year's speakers include both James Urban and Jim Gilman. Please join me in Albuquerque!

## Tree Board Retreat

MUCFA, DNRC Urban Forestry Program, and the ISA-RMC are hosting a Tree Board Retreat in Lewistown, MT March 15 and 16. The Retreat will help small towns with their urban forestry programs and to train and inspire Tree Board members.

Montana members of ISA-RMC are trying to sponsor a tree climbing championship in Montana in Spring 2018. The winning Montana ISA-RMC member will win a free trip and can compete

in the ISA-RMC tree climbing championship in Colorado in July. Please contact me if you want to help organize a Montana Tree Climbing Championship.

## Tree Risk Assessment Qualification

MUCFA is planning to sponsor a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) course in spring 2018. Please contact me if you are interested. MT League of Cities and Towns Conference- John Ball has signed a contract to present three talks at the MLCT Conference in 2018. He will talk on "Trees Have Value", "Trees Require Care", and "Trees and the Law". This is the first time urban forestry has been on the MLCT agenda. Please consider attending.

Thank you.  
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## Our Unwelcome Home Visitors

**Submitted by**  
**Laurie Kerzicnik**  
**MSU Insect Diagnostician**

They are never invited into our homes as fall “guests”, but the list of insect and spider home invaders keeps growing. Some of the most common ones include root weevils (strawberry root weevil, lilac root weevil, and the black vine weevil), hobo spiders, cluster flies, Western conifer seed bugs, dirt-colored seed bugs, boxelder bugs, and now a new pest that was discovered in Montana in the fall of 2016, the elm seed bug.

Most of these pests feed on seeds or roots and are not harmful to humans. They do not breed indoors. The damage they cause to landscape plants is minimal.

An integrated pest management approach is key for tackling these pests. Seal all the cracks

and crevices around the home. Replace screens that have holes or openings. Replace older windows. If possible, remove all the leaf litter and pest hiding places that are close to the foundation, particularly on the south and southwest-facing sides of the building. A foundation spray with the active ingredients permethrin or bifenthrin can be sprayed around the perimeter of the building. Masses of insects found on the outside of the home can also be sprayed with insecticidal soap. For the boxelder bug, remove the female trees or the seed pods that have fallen. Once the insects have entered the home, have the homeowner vacuum them up or use sticky traps close to windows and entrances. Consider a monitoring program for your clients for the following year in late summer/early fall for some of these common pests.



Figure 1. Dirt-colored seed bug adult (7-8mm). Photo by Mike McPherson.



Figure 2. Elm seed bug adult (7mm). Photo by Chris Cable



Figure 3. Western conifer seed bug (15-20mm).

## Mites and Galls and Weeds Oh My!

**Submitted by Sarah Eilers**  
**Assistant IPM Coordinator**  
**MSU Bozeman**

Schutter Diagnostic Lab had a prolific season. Samples were submitted from all across the state from Richland County to Beaverhead. Over 1,500 samples were processed by mid-September. Submissions by organic and small acreage farms increased while agricultural samples decreased most likely due to the historical drought that hit Montana.

Bacterial Blight was significant this spring, likely due to our cool wet spring in most locations. Liliacs, apples, even peonies were all affected by the bacteria. Eriophyid mites were also noteworthy. They were identified on garden crops, landscape plants and even evergreen trees. Finally, one of the biggest jumps, in increased numbers, were the submissions that were suspected of herbicide exposure. These samples ranged from agricultural submissions to home gardens.

One of the highlights of the season was the creation of a new

IPM webpage <http://ipm.montana.edu/> which offers easier access to Montana State University resources. A new resource page was also created, within the Urban webpage, with links to relevant sites. Digital offerings will be available through this page.

The Turf to Trees – Urban IPM Workshop was in August. Dr. Eva Grimme, coordinated and hosted this event. Dr. Megan Kennelly, from Kansas State University was the guest speaker. Participants got a walking tour with Toby Day of the campus, with highlights of diseased, damaged and infested trees. A talk by Noelle Orloff had everyone on their feet using keys to identify common trees and shrubs. Dr. Laurie Kerzicnik presented on the challenging insect issues facing the urban landscape.

The quality and complexity of the samples that have been submitted this season to The Schutter Diagnostic Lab has been exceptional. Those who submit samples have assisted with the mission of the Schutter Diagnostic Lab to safeguard Montana agriculture, landscapes and public spaces.

## Read and Understand Product Labels to Help Prevent Non-Target Herbicide Injury

**Submitted by Noelle Orloff**  
**MSU Schutter Diagnostic Lab**

One of our roles at the Schutter Diagnostic Lab (SDL) is diagnosing herbicide injury of plants. We visually assess samples rather than performing tissue tests, meaning we are never certain a herbicide was involved. This season herbicide injury was suspected as the main cause of plant symptoms in 70 cases. Two leading sources have been drift and carryover in garden amendments. Reading and understanding product labels can help avoid these types of

non-target injury. Almost half of the herbicide injury cases submitted to SDL this year were from suspected drift of plant growth regulator (PGR) herbicides in residential settings. Symptoms include distortion and stunting that is most pronounced on the newest growth. This group of herbicides includes many that are commonly used for broadleaf weed control in lawns such as 2,4-D and dicamba. Some formulations of these herbicides may drift during application or can volatilize and drift long distances as gases on

hot days. Air temperature restrictions may be listed on product labels to prevent issues of volatilization-based drift. Some PGR herbicides can persist in manure, compost, topsoil, and hay for years, and applying contaminated amendments to gardens or vegetable crops is akin to applying these herbicides to plants- they can cause symptoms of leaf distortion, stem cracking, and poor emergence. We assessed many vegetable samples with these symptoms of PGR herbicide carryover, especially tomatoes and

potatoes. These more persistent PGR herbicides are used to control broadleaf weeds in rangeland and pasture, including picloram and aminopyralid. To reduce the prevalence of this issue, applicators should read and understand the product label. For example, aminopyralid products have supplemental labelling with information about distributing manure or hay offsite.

For assistance diagnosing herbicide injury or other plant-related issues, contact the Schutter Diagnostic Lab: <http://diagnostics.montana.edu/>



# AMTOPP partners with Saluting Branches to spruce up Veterans Cemetery and Grounds in Helena



AMTOPP Board Members L to R: Jon Higgins; Jason Stringer (VP); Chris Anderson



AMTOPP member: Nitro-Green of Helena Saluting Branches Crew



AMTOPP member: Hesper Tree Service Saluting Branches Crew



AMTOPP member, Saluting Branches Organizer, ISA-RMC MT State Director: Patrick Plantenberg

## Field Day continued from page 1

common cold. We were even invited to eat lunch with the campers and staff and had some great home-made pizza and entertainment to boot. All in all, it was a very rewarding day! As far as the actual nuts and bolts of the event, we accomplished quite a lot. Rob and crew did a climbing exhibition for a large group of kids and adults along with a simultaneous question and answer session / running

commentary with Sam Strickland, Jason Stringer, and others. They, as well as the rest of the volunteers, did some training pruning on the smaller trees as well as some cosmetic pruning throughout the property. We also installed some native plants around the memorial site and gazebo, on the slope above the amphitheater. At the risk of being tedious, I would like to thank all of those who volunteered by name. These events only happen through the efforts of individuals who give their time and money to

make them happen. So, thanks to Rob Dillon, Mary Ellen Dupre, Jason Stringer, Casey Campbell, Sam Strickland, Ed Nolder, Chris Anderson, Pat Plantenberg, Eric Maisch, Jon Higgins, Gabe Braveheart, Chole Grabowski, to all who brought equipment, and provided support. We would also like to recognize Intermountain STIHL,

who provided financial support through their generous donation. Special thanks from the board to all those who help make Amtopp a success and a special invitation to join us next year for another great Field Day.

Jon Higgins  
Director



Jason Stringer (L) and Sam Strickland (R) talking to an interested group of campers at Camp Mak-A-Dream, during Summer Field Day about AMTOPP and trees.



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Sam Strickland, All Things Green, LLC; 406-531-7125; samthegardener@msn.com; Term Expires:2/2020

Jon Higgins, Nitro-Green of Helena; 406-443-5088; jon@nitrogreenhelena.com; Term Expires: 2/2020

Chris Anderson, Frontier Lawn & Landscaping; 406-265-1670; chevls01@yahoo.com; Term Expires: 2/2020

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Trudie Southwick - trudieamtopped@gmail.com - (406) 204-0100

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### Contact AMTOPP

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