

ALUMNI In Focus

Current Job:

**Operations Forester of Silviculture,
Nisokapawino Forestry Management
Corporation (NPMC) in The Pas, Manitoba.**

What her job entails:

A mix of field and office work. I am responsible for planning and executing all renewal programs such as tree plant, scarification, cone collection, vegetation management, and Free to Grow surveys.

While in the field I am mainly responsible for supervising contractors and conducting field assessments of forest plantations. This often entails hiking, quading, flying helicopters, and utilizing drones. My office work varies a lot and includes responsibilities such as producing maps for the renewal programs, managing renewal data, reporting to the government, and preparing contracts for the upcoming season.

How did your UCN Program help you achieve and advance your career goals to-date?

The NRMT program focuses on developing strong practical, hands-on technical skills. Much of the program is geared toward developing skills that could be used directly in the work force. This gave me a strong foundation as I was starting out as a forest technician working in the field.

Entering college, I was unsure of which direction I wanted to go in. The NRMT program includes a wide range of disciplines including forestry, wildlife, fisheries, and natural resource enforcement. This afforded me a wide range of job opportunities while I narrowed down interests, leading me to forestry.



Jeanne Besaw

Natural Resources Management Technology Program, 2014

Anything else you would like to share to encourage prospective students?

Forestry is a very dynamic field to work in. It requires being adaptive to social, economic, technological, and landscape level changes. To be effective in my position I must continuously engage with government and land stakeholders, discover and invest in new forestry technology, and research forestry practices and scientific studies. I began my career in forestry six years ago as a summer student while at UCN and every year that goes by has been just as engaging as the last.

What key competencies did you acquire?

Thanks to the UCN program, I have experience with a wide range of technical skills and local ecological knowledge. The program gives students significant field experience so that a person has the time to really get comfortable working outdoors in challenging situations. Field work seemed like a desirable but intimidating aspect of natural resource management but practicing field based skills over and over again developed my confidence and love for working outdoors.

Some technical skills I learned at UCN that were integral to becoming a forest technician were creating field maps and managing data using GIS software, navigating in the forest using a field map and compass, tree planting, and learning how to conduct various forestry survey methodologies and the equipment associated with them.

Much of the ecological knowledge that was taught in the program focused on the local landscape. This is a great benefit to me both at work and in my personal life as I still live and work in the area. We learned about local plant and wildlife identification, forest stand types, forest diseases, weather patterns, wetlands, and mineral identification - just to name a few. Not only has this benefited me greatly in my career, but I also love being able to name all the song birds in my back yard and waterfowl on the lake. The knowledge gained has enriched my life beyond preparing me for a career in forestry.