

COLLEGE MATTERS

Volume 11 // Issue 2 // August 2019



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COLLEGE OF
APPLIED BIOLOGY
Professional Accountability



2019-2020 COUNCIL

From left to right (top row): Hannah Horn, RPBio; Brian Clark, RPBio, Alexandra Tait, RPBio; Brittany John, Lay Councillor; Dr. Vanessa Craig, RPBio; and Theresa Fresco, Lay Councillor.

From left to right (bottom row): Sean Sharpe, RPBio; Cairine Green, Lay Councillor; Victoria Burdett-Coutts, RPBio; Jocelyn White, RPBio, Steven Henstra, RPBio; and Cliff Nietvelt, RPBio.

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Cliff Nietvelt, RPBio
Sean Sharpe, RPBio

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ABOUT US

The College of Applied Biology is the regulator of applied biology professionals in British Columbia. Established by government legislation in 2003, the College protects the public interest by ensuring that applied biology professionals – Registered Professional Biologists (RPBios), Registered Biology Technologists (RBTEchs) and Applied Biology Technicians (ABTs) – meet rigorous standards of professional and ethical competency.

OUR VISION

The College is a leading voice to promote and uphold scientific principles and methods in applied biology, and the principles of stewardship. We provide assurance to the public of professionalism in the practice of applied biology by our members.

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This publication is made available to every member of the College. Decisions of the College on matters of standards, policies and guidelines are published in this bulletin. The College therefore assumes that each member is aware of these matters.

Past issues are available at www.cab-bc.org/news/publications.

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*Disclaimer: the opinions expressed in **College Matters** do not necessarily represent those of the College, its Council, or other members.



By Brian Clark, RPBio, President

Participating in College Governance Can Make You a Better Professional

The CEO's message lays out the changing times of professional biology in British Columbia, from new regulatory procedures to refinements in the College's Codes and Policies. There is a lot of work to do and greater responsibility for the College to protect the public interest through the regulation of its members.


So, what does this mean for you as an active practitioner of applied biology in BC? How are you regulated? How can you ensure you are representing the public interest? Would you pass an audit? Yes, you read the Code of Ethics (<https://www.cab-bc.org/file-download/code-ethics>) every time you pay your annual fees, but are you an accountable professional? I wonder sometimes whether members of the College consider often enough what is meant by serving the public interest, consider the College's role as a regulator of professional biology, or consider the responsibilities of membership.

One of the best ways to learn about the College is to get involved. The College as a regulator is reliant on volunteerism: the members who serve on Council, committees, task forces and working groups are donating their spare time and we are greater for it. In this way the public interest is reliant on volunteers like you to contribute, advance, and uphold the integrity of applied biology professionals. Participating in the College's working bodies is an excellent way to contribute to the profession, but it's also a wonderful way to learn about what the College does and what it means to be a regulated professional. It is an incredibly rewarding experience that I hope you will consider when we open Council elections this fall.

Speaking of the upcoming elections, there are some changes to the process that you need to know. First, the government has mandated that all elections are merit-based, meaning that nominees must meet a set of criteria in order to stand for election. The intent of these merit criteria is not to restrict who can run for Council; the goal is to screen candidates so that Council is represented by a diverse cross-section of College members who offer a variety of skill-sets to the governance of the College.

This idea of what Council needs to better represent the demographics of membership leads me to the second element of elections that has changed. Hitherto, elections were partly organized by our former Nominations Committee with support from the Registrar's Office and other College Staff. From now on, most of the process will be executed by the new Nomination Committee, a statutory body that is written into the *Professional Governance Act* (<https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/legislation-debates-proceedings/41st-parliament/3rd-session/bills/first-reading/gov49-1>). Among the Committee's duties will be to refine the merit-based criteria to be representative of what applied biology professionals do (all regulators under the *Act* must now do merit-based elections based on their criteria); perform a gap assessment of Council to identify which criteria it is missing as a collective; then run the election itself from nomination of candidates through balloting to counting and validation of voting results.

The Committee is meant to do its work independently with administrative support from the Registrar's Office. It will not be influenced by Council – no elected Councillors may serve on the Nomination Committee.

As I said before, participation in College activities is an exceedingly worthwhile experience. It contributes both to your development as a professional -- which means you can claim continuing professional development points for serving -- and allows you to provide your input on the evolving nature of the profession in protecting the public interest. If you are not interested or able to serve at this time, encourage others to get involved. And at the minimum, take an interest in the College elections and vote. A robust College requires full participation with every Council seat challenged. More to come on the 2020 Election process. 





The Changing Course of Natural Resource Management: What the College is Doing to Prepare

By Christine Houghton, Chief Executive Officer

Resource management is changing in British Columbia. There have been changes to federal and provincial statutes and processes that have significant impact on the work of applied biology professionals. Most recently the federal government enacted changes to the *Oceans Act*, the *Fisheries Act*, the *Canada Petroleum Resources Act*, and Bill C-69: an *Act* to enact the *Impact Assessment Act*, the *Canadian Energy Regulator Act*, amend the *Navigation Protection Act* and to make consequential amendments to other *Acts* as well as previous changes to the National Energy Board's consultation requirements.


On the provincial stage government is moving forward on Species at Risk legislation, is seeking input on potential changes to the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/forest-and-range-practices-act/>) and regulation and is moving ahead with governance changes under the *Professional Governance Act* (<https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/legislation-debates-proceedings/41st-parliament/3rd-session/bills/first-reading/gov49-1>) that impacts the five (5) professional regulators that are covered under the *Act*.

It is a long (and incomplete) list of the changes that are occurring, and while these changes are significant the College is positioned well to do the work to tackle the shifts we are all required to make:

> The College's Strategic Plan that was launched earlier this year (<https://www.cab-bc.org/file-download/colleges-2019-2021-strategic-plan>) was developed and adopted with the implications and opportunities in the evolution of the profession of applied biology clearly in focus. The "Responsible resource management supported by accountable and trusted professionals" is exactly where we need to be as a regulator that has the public interest as its primary mandate. The four (4) goals (Enhancing Accountability and Transparency, Building Trust and Awareness, Strengthening Strategic Partnerships, and A Healthy and Progressive Organization) over the next three years are not only achievable but critical to strengthening

the profession and the important role that applied biology professionals play in ensuring healthy communities, economies and environments.

- > The College has added much needed resources to make sure that we are delivering on our statutory obligations. With the addition of a Director of Practice and a Regulatory Support Officer we now have the capacity to: process applications for registration more efficiently therefore ensuring that practitioners of applied biology are fully regulated professionals; implement the long overdue Practice Review program; and identify and develop practice guidance materials for critical areas of practice.
- > The critical Scope of Practice work done over the last year (<https://www.cab-bc.org/file-download/scope-practice-workshop-summary-report>) has given the College's governing Council the information and guidance needed to better define current areas of practice. The information is a sound basis for developing the draft practice policy that will be available this fall to begin a more detailed conversation with government and a long list of partners who have an interest in responsible, professional resource management.
- > Moving forward on bringing the governance and policies in line with implementing the directives coming out of the Professional Reliance Review. As repetitive as it has become the fact is the government's changes impacting governance in professional regulation continues to take up significant time and resources of College Council, volunteers and staff. The first step is already underway with a significant change to our election process. We are currently putting the final touches on how the new process will be implemented this fall. I urge all members to read their College Notices to get the most up-to-date information on how nominations and the election will proceed this fall.

This is all very exciting but it is going to take time, energy and diligence if we are going to continue to carve a path forward for the profession not just here in BC – but across Canada. 



Applications On The Rise, Up 35% on the Eight-Year Average

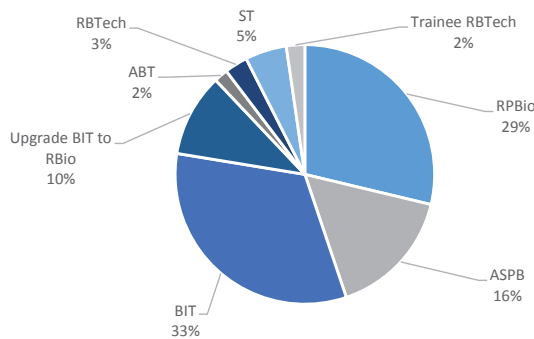
By Derek Marcoux, RPBio, Registrar & Director of Compliance

Applications and Credentialing

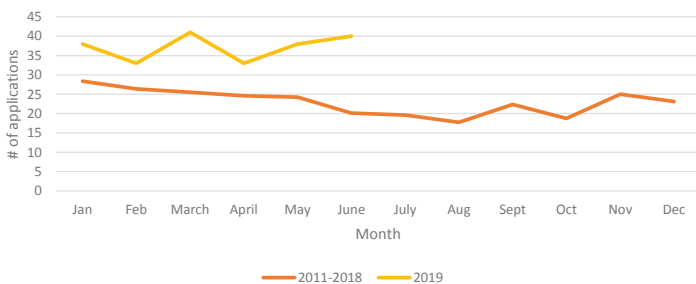
So far in 2019, there has been a marked increase in applications for membership. It is not clear if the increase is directly in response to the new *Professional Governance Act* and tentative practice rights for applied biology professionals. However, the increase in applications does coincide with the release of the intentions paper in late Fall 2018.

Over the past eight year average, applications are up 35%. Approximately 88% of the applications have been membership as an RPBio. Of the 88% that are targeted toward RPBio status, 29% were new applications, 33% were for in-training status (Biologist in Training), 10% were upgrading from BIT to RPBio, and 16% came through the trade agreement with Alberta and Saskatchewan via the Alberta Society of Professional Biology (ASPB).

2019 application breakdown (Jan-June)



Application trends 2011-2018 vs. 2019



As of June 2018, total applications received were 182 which is 61% of the total received in 2018. New inductees to the College totals 146. RPBio new inductees make up 52% of the total whereas RBTEch inductees make up 7%. Registered Biology Technologist (RBTEch) applications continue to be much less


than the RPBio category. The RBTEch category is well suited to individuals that have environmental science degrees with a biology focus as well as individuals with technology diplomas. The scope of practice for RBTEch is broad and allows for flexibility in work areas with a focus on maintaining strong technical skills. Members are encouraged to review Schedule 5 that outlines the scope of independent practice for RBTEch and advise prospective applicants that may be seeking registration as it is another option to be a regulated professional without a full biology focused degree.

Accreditation agreements

The College continues to expand our accreditation agreements with post-secondary institutions as well as private training providers. Accreditation agreements provide certainty for enrolled students as they know the program they are taking will meet the academic requirements for entry. As well, applications received from individuals that have completed an accredited program speed up the application process as detailed course by course evaluations are not needed by the credentialing committee.

The College currently has 12 accreditation agreements with universities that have biology focused programs that meet entrance standards. Five institutions have been assessed for meeting the education requirements for RBTEch. The latest addition is the Camosun College – Environmental Technology program. Also, three programs have been approved that meet the core competency requirements for the Applied Biology Technician category. All accreditation agreements can be found on the College website and members are encouraged to let prospective applicants know about these programs if they wish to be working in the applied biology field.

Discipline files

The College has received four complaints against registered members in 2019 regarding allegations of non-compliance with the College Code of Ethics. Three of the complaints are currently under investigation. Information regarding complaints and discipline can be found on the College website. Summaries of Discipline files are located in the Discipline Digest that is updated as files are closed after decisions are rendered. 

Message from the Superintendent of Professional Governance



By Paul Craven, Superintendent
Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance

I am pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself, and the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance, to the College of Applied Biology (CAB).

The *Professional Governance Act (PGA)* strengthens professional governance in British Columbia by establishing a consistent and modern framework, and by ensuring government oversight through the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance or the OSPG. As Superintendent, it is my role to oversee all regulatory bodies included under the *PGA* (currently 5) including CAB, with a focus on oversight of systemic or general matters relating to the governance of professions. As a 'regulatory body,' CAB will focus on serving and protecting the public interest with respect to the professional practices of Registered Professional Biologists (RPBios), Registered Biology Technologists (RBTEchs), and Applied Biology Technicians (ABTs) in British Columbia.

My immediate goal is to get my office up and running so that we can make sure that the OSPG, CAB, and the other regulatory bodies are ready when the professions are formally brought under the *PGA*.


At present, only certain sections of the *PGA* are operating or "in force". These include the provisions that establish the office and give the Superintendent specific powers. This first phase has also resulted in changes in the nomination and election process for council members that you may have noticed.

While a specific date is not known, it is expected that RPBios, RBTEchs, and ABTs, and other professionals (engineers, geoscientists, science technologists and technicians, agrologists and foresters), will come under the full authority of the *PGA* sometime in fall 2020. When that takes place, the *College of Applied Biology Act* will no longer exist.

Some of the more complicated aspects of implementing the new *Act* may take longer. These include issues such as firm regulation, scope of practice and practice rights, and competency and conflict of interest declarations. These issues were discussed in a recent intentions paper published on the Professional Reliance Review website - <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/professionalreliance/>, and more information on these topics is available there.

Since my appointment in early June, I have had the pleasure of meeting with Christine Houghton and many members of the CAB staff as well as hosting a meeting of the OSPG and all five regulatory bodies. I welcome the opportunity to work alongside the Council and staff of CAB to enhance professional governance in British Columbia to ensure that this system surpasses expectations and becomes an example of excellence into the future. Change will be required of all of us, whether it is from an oversight perspective, a shift in culture and attitudes, or in the day-to-day work and planning required to be ready to function within a new framework of governance.

Working together I am confident we will ensure that the expectations of the public, and their trust in professionals, is maintained and strengthened.

More information about the OSPG can be found on our website (<https://professionalgovernancebc.ca/>). I also hope to have the opportunity to meet with you at CAB events such as your Annual General Meeting and Conference. If you have questions – please do not hesitate to contact our office at OSPGEnquiries@gov.bc.ca 

Welcome New Council Members: Brittany John, Lay Member & Victoria Burdett-Coutts, RPBio




Brittany John is a Squamish Nation member but she grew up in St'át'imc territory (Lillooet) and has extended family from Tseycum (Vancouver Island). She is currently living in unceded Coast Salish territory in North Vancouver.

Brittany has a background in Ecology and Environmental Studies from Thompson Rivers University. She took extended leave from school to pursue an internship with the BC Environmental Assessment Office. There she was a part of the Compliance and Enforcement team where she learned the BC environmental assessment process.


At the end of her internship, Brittany pursued an opportunity with Tsleil-Waututh Nation (TWN) as an Environmental Specialist. She would review projects for impacts that could potentially occur in the ancestral territory of the TWN. As well, she managed the TWN's Fisheries Crew that operated within one of their secluded watersheds.

Brittany is currently working with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) in Environmental Public Health Services. She works within the Drinking Water Safety Program that ensures First Nations communities' drinking water is regularly tested and funding is available to do so. She also assists with funding and data management for FNHA's Environmental Contaminants Program.


Brittany is a Media Spokesperson for Squamish Nation's Election Commission that recently updated their election laws. She is the co-chair of the Squamish Nation's Housing Advisory Committee, which works with the Squamish Nation Council to address housing within the community.

Brittany is excited to be one of the voices on the College Council, and she is eager to participate in projects that support the College's Strategic Plan. 



My name is Victoria Burdett-Coutts and I currently work for Advisian in Burnaby BC. I have worked on BC's coast since 2012, with my first three years being based out of Port Hardy where I worked for Pacificus Biological Services. These two consultancies have provided me with excellent opportunities to work throughout coastal areas of British Columbia and Nunavut. I have worked in marine science for over two decades, with experience in all three of Canada's oceans. I have been an RPBio since 2015 and I'm excited for this opportunity to work at a member of the College of Applied Biology Council. I believe strongly in an integrated and collaborative approach to the applied science world we live in. My main goal with the Council would be to find ways that consultants can work together to share ideas on the development of best practices. The opportunity for consultants to share their experiences on such topics as the monitoring of underwater sound or construction management would allow a more consistent and successful approach to our professional objectives. 

Calling all members who are interested in participating on Council!


The College will be announcing elections for Council positions later this year. By participating on Council, you will have the opportunity to become part of the governance team leading the advancement of applied biology at a provincial level, influencing regulatory policy, and networking with peers situated throughout BC. Questions? Contact the office at <https://www.cab-bc.org/contact> 

Welcome New College Staff: Janet Shafer, Tory Davis, & Shona Lawson, RPBio




Janet joined the College on January 7 as the Regulatory Support Officer and will assist Senior staff and statutory committees with the execution of the College's statutory mandate.

Janet has a wide range of administrative experience, providing executive level support for the last ten years. In 2015, Janet moved to Victoria from Saskatchewan where she most recently worked in the president's office at the University of Regina. Previously, Janet was part of the regulatory services team at the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association (SRNA). There she attended courses on credential evaluation and prepared international files for final assessment. As a senior member of regulatory services at SRNA, she cultivated a knowledgeable and effective team during a time of departmental growth. Janet brings to the College her experience working with new and renewal applicants, database conversion, committee support, and policy writing.

Janet is enjoying the west coast and her new role at the College. 



Tory Davis joined staff at the College of Applied Biology in November 2018. Since then, his primary contributions have been executing the 2019 Annual General Meeting and Conference, coordinating the 2019 Scope of Practice Workshop series, publication of fall 2018 issue of College Matters and the 2018 annual report, and preparing the College's communications through email and social media.

Tory has lived on Vancouver Island for his entire life, apart from earning his undergraduate degree from Bishop's University in Quebec. He brings five years' experience in communications and events from the craft beer industry. Despite leaving the industry, he has not lost his enthusiasm for craft beer. He lives in Victoria and enjoys spending time outdoors with his young family, visiting various Island attractions. His other areas of interest include cooking, history, language, sports and, increasingly, biology and professional regulation. 



Shona Lawson is an RPBio with more than 20 years' experience working in applied biology. Ms. Lawson has worked with a variety of organizations including provincial and federal governments, First Nations, private industry and non-profits. She has a Master of Science degree in Biology and a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Resources. Ms. Lawson's area of expertise is wildlife biology and she has worked on wildlife projects in Canada, the US, Micronesia, Australia and the Caribbean. Shona has worked for the last seven years with the Department of National Defense as an Environment Officer in Ontario and Northern Alberta. Shona enjoys gardening, cooking and sewing in her spare time. She is originally from BC and is looking forward to returning to the province. 



2019 Conference & AGM Summary

The College's 2019 Conference was well-received by attendees. The overall sentiment was that the Conference was a positive experience and some guests provided meaningful feedback through event surveys. Total in-person attendance to the conference was up with over 200 participants in Victoria at the Delta Ocean Pointe Resort. Another 51 joined the event through the online broadcast. Overall, this led to an increase in total revenue from registration fees due to the higher price of in-person attendance, totaling over \$41,000; this sum is nearly \$6,000 greater than registration revenue in 2018 and is over \$3,000 ahead of budget.

The 2019 Conference was the first iteration that included financial support from third-party organizations. The College approached two BC government ministries for support: the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

The College would like to thank all participants, speakers, guests, and volunteers for another successful conference. See you all in 2020 in Kelowna! 

2019 Highlights

163 ↑ +18 Guests
Over 2018
PAID IN-PERSON ENTRIES

93% ↑ +8%
Over 2018
POSITIVE OVERALL
EXPERIENCE

\$41k ↑ +\$5.8k
Over 2018
REGISTRATION REVENUE

\$2.5k ↓ Total
lower than
BUDGETED CONFERENCE
DEFICIT



www.cab-bc.org

Satisfaction with Services

92% **56%**
AUDIOVISUAL PACKAGE

85% **38%**
CONFERENCE CONTENT

91% **57%**
REGISTRATION PROCESS

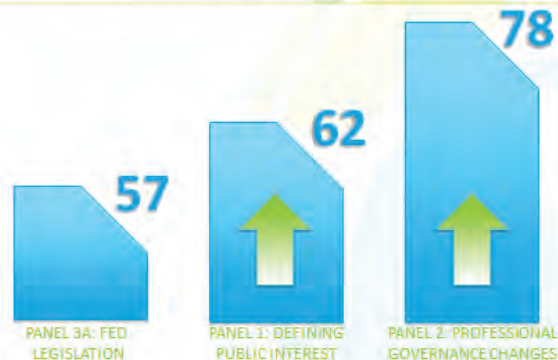
71% **31%**
CONF. VALUE FOR MONEY

NB: Percentage of respondents who indicated very satisfied or satisfied



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Features Relevant to Work



NB: Total votes – respondents = 103



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2019 Conference & AGM Photos



L to R: Derek Marcoux, Registrar; Brian Clark, President; Hon. George Heyman, Minister of Environment & Climate Change Strategy; and Christine Houghton, CEO.



Brian Clark, President, and Mel Kotyk, 2019 Linda Stordeur Meritorious Award recipient.



Panel #2: Jennifer McGuire, ADM; Christine Houghton, CEO; Derek Marcoux, Registrar; and Dr. Vanessa Craig, Past President.



Jacob Bradshaw, 2019 Linda Michaluk Scholarship recipient, and Jocelyn White, Vice-President.



The Meet and Greet the night before the AGM had a very successful turnout of over 60 participants!



Over 160 participated in person and 50 participated online at this year's Conference. Participants were engaged in the topics from start to finish.

Scope of Practice Task Force Workshop Report


By Hannah Horn, RPBio, Chair - Scope of Practice Task Force

College of Applied Biology Council representatives and staff held meetings throughout BC this year to seek input on scope of practice for applied biology professionals. The purpose of these meetings was to prepare for implementation of the *Professional Governance Act*, which has an enabling provision that allows the provincial government to grant right to practice to applied biology professionals. Defining scope of practice is important more generally to help the College effectively fulfill its statutory duties (audits, practice reviews, discipline).

The outcomes of these sessions are summarized in this document: <https://www.cab-bc.org/news/scope-practice-workshop-report-released>. There was a strong convergence of messages across all meetings, including the following:

- > Applied biology professionals represent a diverse array of skills and areas of practice in the domain of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.
- > Teams comprised of different professionals work together all the time; the most important thing in assigning responsibilities is to ensure that anyone who carries out an activity must be competent to do so, based on their training, education and experience.
- > The greater the risk to a biological resource, the greater the requirement for competency of the person responsible and the more important that the person be an applied biology professional, registered with the College to ensure accountability.
- > The challenge is when people work outside of their area of competency; particularly when they are not registered as a professional.
- > Guidance is needed on when to bring in an applied biology professional or other professional.
- > All professionals should be subject to their codes of ethics and, when warranted, disciplinary action.

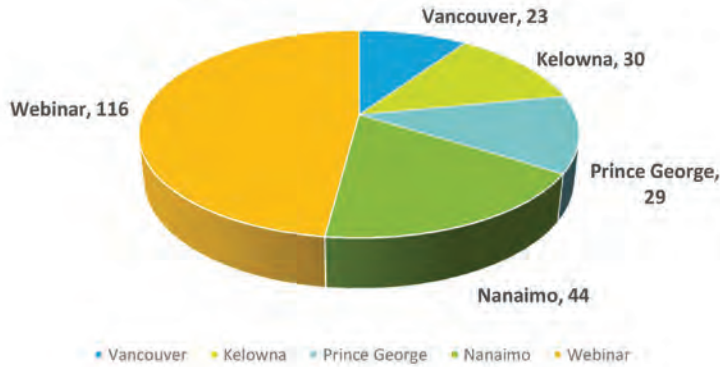
The College's Scope of Practice Task Force is using the information gained from these sessions to draft a Scope of Practice Policy Framework. The Framework document will be completed in the fall of 2019 and will include definitions, a description of what applied biology professionals do, their areas of activity and areas of practice, and proposed governance structures to deal with overlaps across professional associations. The draft Framework will be posted on the College website. The document will be used to focus the conversation between the College and its partners on what the road forward looks like. It will also be key to discussions with the provincial government as they implement the *Professional Governance Act*. Our goal is for government to include practice rights regulations for applied biology professionals in that package.

Any granting of right to practice will not solve all of the problems with professional reliance. Most of the problems reported to the College are of people who are not members engaging in applied biology work and that issue will likely continue. As a regulator, the College only has authority over its own members, but once the *Professional Governance Act* regulation is in place and if applied biology professionals have right to practice, the College of Applied Biology will be better positioned in fulfilling its mandate of protecting the public interest. 

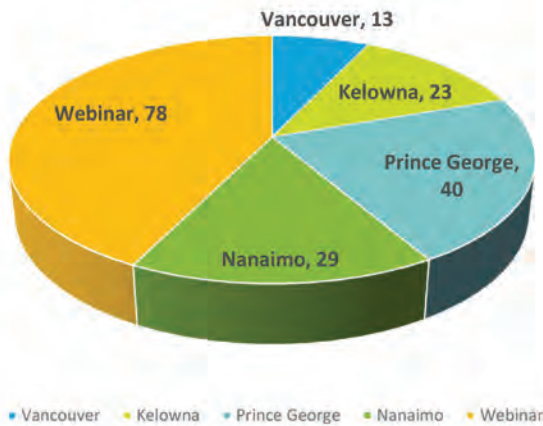
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- > Public meetings were held in Vancouver, Kelowna, Prince George, and Nanaimo. A webinar was also held in June.
 - > Most attendees were College members: RPBios, RBTechs, and BITS.
 - > Other attendees included professional foresters (4%), engineers and geoscientists (1%), agronomists (11%), applied science technologists (2%), landscape architects, non-governmental organizations, and members of the public.
 - > Focus sessions with other natural resource professionals were also conducted for more intensive discussions on practice overlaps. 

Summary of Scope of Practice Workshops

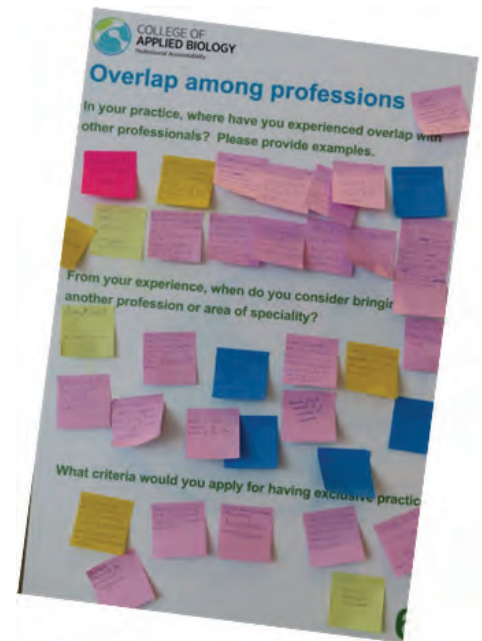
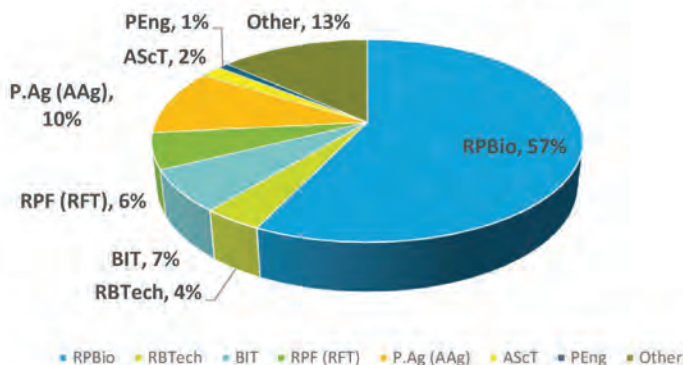
Total Registrations for Workshops



Total Attendees for Workshops




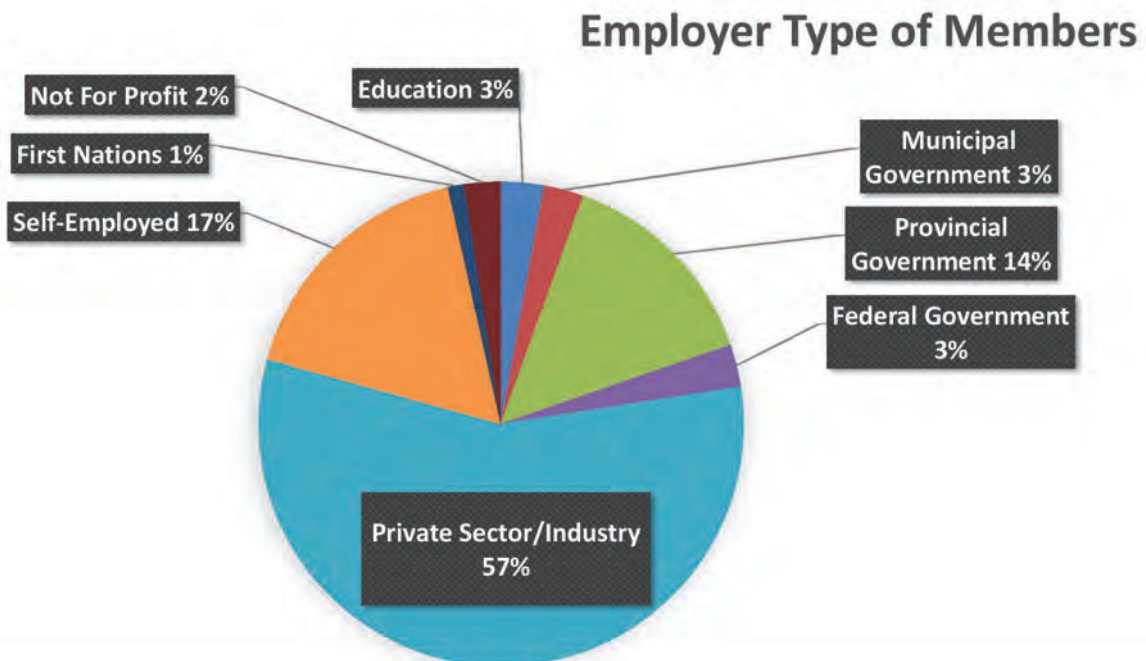
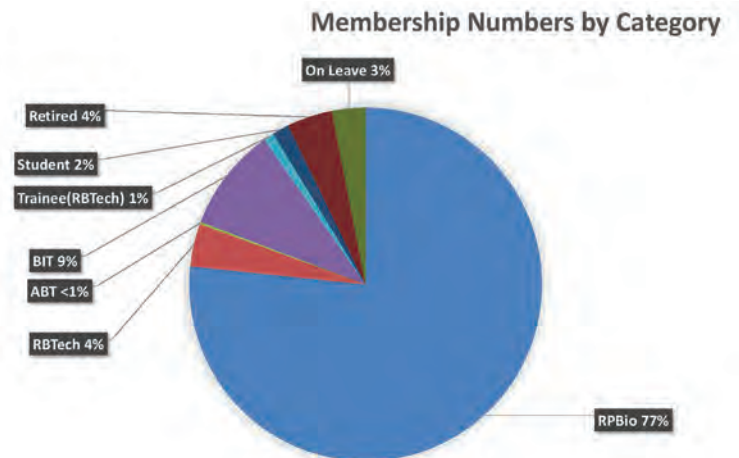
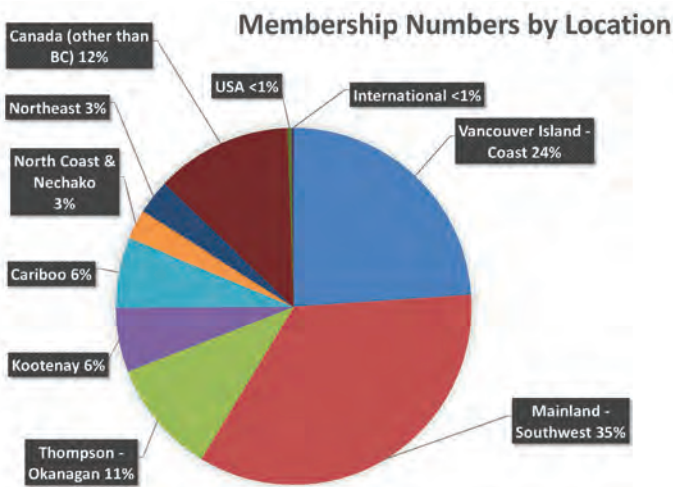
Attendee % by Professional Designation



*Designation figures are estimates only.

Snapshot of College Members

- > Total new inductees to the College is 146 members as of June 2019.
- > Total applications received up to June 19, 2019 is 182. This value is 35% higher than the same time period over the past 8 years.
- > RPBios continue to make >75% of total membership.
- > Increase in membership outside of BC (up from 7.7% in 2014). 



MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

New Registered Professional Biologists (RPBio)

Timothy Adam	3180
Erika Anderson	3107
Jeremy Appleton	3166
Barbara Bleho	3160
Aimée Brisebois	3192
Wesley Caldwell	3187
Alexandra Crichton	3158
Merle Crombie	3170
Amy Darling	3163
Cara Dawson	3178
Stefana Dranga	3156
Rory Fogarty	3198
Kurt Frei	3201
Audrey Gagné-Delorme	3150
Carissa Gaskell	3177
Marie-Eve Gauthier	3129
Stefania Gorgopa	3169
Erica Graham	3167
Kathryn Graham	3162
Alison Grover	3182
Cassidy Hedden	3190
Brian Hindley	3171
Jessica Holden	3179
Scott Horley	3173
Marla Ives	3155
Thomas Jackman	3199
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Sharing Paradise: Shorebird Conservation in The Bahamas

By: Shona Lawson, RPBio, Director of Practice & Deputy Registrar

Most people think of the Caribbean as a vacation destination with beautiful white sand beaches and tropical fish rather than an area supporting a large diversity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial wildlife. We tend to think of the Caribbean as a place to see tropical bird species, but the area also supports many breeding shorebirds some of whom also breed here in Canada. However, the Bahamas archipelago spans an impressive 100,000 square miles of ocean, and includes 700 islands, 2000-plus rocks and cays and is home to several breeding populations of shorebirds.

For two weeks in May 2016, I volunteered for an inaugural field season for a new shorebird conservation program in The Bahamas. The program is a joint initiative by several organizations focused on bird and habitat conservation. The program is led by Conservian, a U.S. based non-profit organization (NGO). Other partners include, but are not limited to: The Bahamas National Trust, an NGO that manages The Bahamas national parks; Birds Caribbean, an NGO that focuses on conserving Caribbean birds and their habitats; and International Conservation Fund of Canada (ICFC), a Canadian based NGO that conserves nature and biodiversity in the tropics and other priority areas worldwide. Shorebirds unfortunately like many bird species around the world are declining. There are many contributing factors to the declines such as human disturbance, loss and destruction of habitat, low reproductive success, food availability and climate change.

The Bahamas shorebird program is led by Margo Zdravkovic, the Conservian Director. The program focuses on shorebird and habitat conservation and includes outreach, education and awareness, surveys, data collection and habitat restoration components. As with many conservation programs, there is a lot of work done throughout the year to secure funding, educate and bring awareness to the program, publish the data and information collected and arrange logistics for the next field season. However, the fun part is the field work and the islands of The Bahamas are an amazing part of the world to work in. To implement this program that covers such a large geographic area, the question of how and where to start can seem logistically challenging. However, Margo, like many

biologists, was not fazed by the challenge. Leading up to the 2016 field season, she spent considerable time in a small light aircraft flying over the many islands in The Bahamas identifying potential shorebird breeding habitat. These areas would then be surveyed on foot to confirm suitable breeding habitat and to look for breeding shorebirds. It was determined that the best mode of transportation to get around The Bahamas and access these habitats was by boat. A sailboat is used as the main mode of transport and smaller boats such as zodiacs are used to drop off field crews on the islands.



Photo by Shona Lawson, RPBio. Conducting shorebird surveys.

Field work consists of surveying, assessing habitats (essentially ground truthing the data collected by the aerial surveys) and collecting nesting and breeding information such as habitat types, clutch size, and if adults and/or chicks were present for various shorebird species. The surveys focused on Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*), however, data was collected for other shorebird species such as Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*), Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*), plus other species including the Antillean Nighthawk (*Chordeiles gundlachi*), and Least and Sooty Terns (*Sternula antillarum* and *Onychoprion fuscatus* respectively).

Unfortunately, beach and shoreline breeding habitats for shorebirds around the world continue to be impacted. Human disturbances including beach raking, and walking in the high tide area (i.e. rack line) can negatively impact breeding habitat, destroying nests and eggs and even killing nestlings. These activities can also deter adults from nesting. Nests and young are extremely camouflaged and very hard to see if you are not aware of their presence. In an effort to raise awareness, Conservian posts protective signage in nesting habitats during the breeding season, on beaches and protected areas, to educate local people and tourists regarding the presence of breeding birds and their importance.




Photo by Dawn Rasmussen. Nesting White-tailed Tropicbird.

In The Bahamas, as with other Caribbean areas, much of the natural shoreline and beach nesting habitat has been lost and degraded due to the invasive Australian Pine, *Casuarina equisetifolia*. The Australian Pine is an invasive tree species that establishes along shorelines, grows quickly, outcompetes native dune and beach vegetation and contributes to erosion and therefore habitat loss. Additionally, this invasive species changes the soil chemistry, hydrology, light and temperatures of shorelines and the leaf litter inhibits the growth and establishment of native vegetation. Shorebirds rely upon the native vegetation for nesting habitat and cover. Because Australian Pines grow large quickly, they produce abundant shade which is something people enjoy when visiting beaches in hot climates. This and the fast growth

have led, in the past, to the prolific planting of the species over native species. However, there is an active undertaking to remove the species from coastal areas and replant with native vegetation to restore dunes and beaches and to help minimize erosion. Conservian, along with The Bahamas National Trust, has implemented habitat restoration efforts by removing and controlling the spread of the species on beaches and shorelines in many areas. An important part of this restoration work involves installing signage in an effort to educate more people about the negative impacts of this non-native pine and the goals of the restoration project.

In May 2016 and again in May 2018, I was part of a group of volunteers who sailed around The Bahamas conducting field work for the shorebird program. In 2018, I had the opportunity to conduct some field work with Birds Caribbean on two other species, White-tailed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon lepturus*) and Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*), in addition to the shorebird program. Volunteers ranged from young adults 19-plus years to 70-plus years in age and included biologists, naturalists and people just interested in contributing to conservation. I was fortunate to work with great people and see an array of wildlife including fish, conch, rays, sea turtles, seabirds, shorebirds, landbirds, iguanas, curly-tailed lizards and mosquitos. I experienced a diversity of habitats including fresh and saltwater lakes, forests and mangroves. Sailing around the archipelago, trekking and bushwhacking through the uplands, walking remote beaches and interacting with local people was an amazing way to experience all The Bahamas has to offer and of course contribute to conservation of this remarkable region of the world. As for the shorebird program, I am happy to report Conservian just completed its fourth successful field season and planning for the fifth field season is in the works. If you or someone you know is interested in participating and/or learning more about the program and organizations mentioned in the article, please visit their websites:

- Conservian & Coastal Bird Conservation <https://www.coastalbird.org>
- The Bahamas National Trust <https://bnt.bs/>
- Birds Caribbean <https://www.birdscaribbean.org/>
- International Conservation Fund of Canada (ICFC) <https://icfcanda.org/> 

Member Marc-Andre Beaucher, MSc, RPBio #2197



How did you become interested in pursuing biology as a career?

A bit by chance and probably by circumstances! I spent a lot of time playing outdoors and running through the forest while growing up. We lived near a river and walked along it regularly with my father, looking at birds and other wildlife. I never closely kept track of what we saw on those excursions, but I always went back for more. My Grade 6 ecology teacher introduced our class to ornithology and took us out on great field trips, that might have done it without really knowing at the time.

What is your academic background?

I completed my undergraduate studies in Applied Zoology at McGill University (Macdonald Campus), in 1996 and obtained a Master of Science degree in Environment and Management at Royal Roads University a bit later, in 2005.

What does your job entail and what are our favorite aspects of the job you do?


Working for a small organization like CVWMA, the tasks are broad, numerous, and varied. I am responsible for the overall administration of the Area (budget, annual workplan, human resources, etc.), as well as for the habitat management activities, wildlife monitoring and research projects coordination, access management, communication, and public outreach and relations. The best part of my job is connecting with other biologists and participating in a wide variety of projects conducted on CVWMA and in the Creston Valley, for example bat monitoring, invasive species management, grizzly

bear trapping, aerial waterfowl surveys, and habitat restoration, just to name a few!

How has the RPBio designation benefited your career?

The most valuable aspect of the designation for me has been the requirement for annual Continuing Professional Development; it motivates me to get out to conferences and workshops, and get involved in volunteer activities that complement the work I do, discover new ideas, and meet all kind of fascinating and like-minded individuals.

What advice do you have for other members who are beginning their careers as professional biologists or seeking professional development?

Get into it and be passionate about the work you want to do, there are more needs than ever to preserve our natural environment and we need all the energy and knowledge you can bring. Go out and volunteer to get work experience and make personal/professional connections, it will open doors for you! Manage time on your digital devices wisely, real things happen out in the wild! 

Have a favourite field photo? We're seeking cover shots for *College Matters*.

We'd like to display our members' talents by featuring their photos or artwork in future editions of *College Matters*. Contributors will be attributed and should be prepared to grant both copyright and moral rights to the College for the use of the submissions, in the event that editing is required. Please submit your images in as high a resolution as possible to adminassist@cab-bc.org.



Member Jason Emery, MSc, RBTech #001



What compelled/inspired you to be a RBTech?

Regardless of designation, it was important to me professionally to be affiliated with, and supported by, an “umbrella” entity (the College) that held its membership accountable for their professional actions, provided standards of conduct while instilling confidence to the public in the capabilities of applied science practitioners. I had a mixed educational background prior to streamlining my career within the environmental sector however; I was immediately able to meet the RBTech entrance requirements and get in with the College early on without the need for additional schooling at that time. Who knew I would be RBTech member # 001!

What’s your favorite aspect of your role as Director of Conservation Land Management?

I am new to the role as Director of Conservation Land Management for The Nature Trust of British Columbia. I will be working with our regional Conservation Land Managers identifying innovative stewardship opportunities and landscape-scale approaches to conservation on Nature Trust lands across the province. I was previously working at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) as an instructor, helping train the next generation of conservation professionals in the Ecological Restoration Program and the Fish, Wildlife and Recreation Program. Prior to that, I spent many years working in the environmental consulting sector as a wildlife and restoration scientist. Earlier in my career, I had the opportunity to work as an independent consultant for The Nature Trust of BC (NTBC) a leading non-profit land conservation organization. I have always had a passion for conservation and all things wild. The great thing about land management is there is never a dull moment and we (NTBC) manage 175,000 acres of ecologically important habitat across our province for wildlife, fish and plants. There is always something happening on the land base whether it is related to acquiring the land, managing issues around grazing and

access, removing invasive species, conducting small and large scale ecosystem restoration and enhancement projects or developing ecological monitoring programs. I am able to work with a wide suite of conservation partners and stakeholders including federal, provincial, and local governments, Indigenous groups, non-government organizations and individual land owners. The key is that I feel I am able to directly contribute to conservation, scientific learning and build relationships with so many great people. It is very rewarding day to day to see how many people really care about nature, species and ecosystems in BC and demonstrate that through a variety of generous donations, ecological gifts and support for our organization.


How has the RBTech designation benefited you in your career?

The RBTech designation, and for that matter any designation within the college membership, I believe is important. While there may not be a quantitative measure of the benefit of the designation, I think it says to potential and existing clients and contacts that you are committed to your area of practice and adhere to an established code of ethics and standards.

Which advice do you have for fellow members in the non-profit sector with respect to maintaining their requirements as College members?

For many of the reasons already noted, I would encourage anyone, including individuals working in the non-profit sector, to attain/maintain membership with the College. Members become part of an ever growing network of applied science practitioners, have access to numerous resources and are able to bolster their respective professional roles with an additional credential that speaks to commitment and accountability.

What advice do you have for young members/students beginning their careers as applied biologists?

I would encourage them to take time and really absorb everything they can as they develop their careers. There are so many realms within the applied science field and multi-disciplinary teams and integrated approaches are the norm. There is a growing emphasis on “the generalist” who knows little bits about a lot of things as opposed to being very narrowly focused (although there is a place for that too!). Remaining open minded is a great attribute. The pathway to doing work you really enjoy is not always obvious. Finally, developing strong communication skills and the ability to work effectively with others is paramount...yes even for scientists! 

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COLLEGE MATTERS

COVER PHOTO:

Photo by Steven Henstra, RPBio. A pollinator visiting some mountain death camas (*Anticlea elegans*) in the southern Kootenays, BC.
Graphic design template by Rocketday Arts

2020 Conference & AGM in Kelowna, BC!

Save the dates! The College's 2020 conference will take place in Kelowna on April 2 & 3, 2020!



Ask your questions, share your knowledge, send us an image!

We are pleased to take on the role of Co-Chairs for the College's Editorial Board. We are very interested in making this publication as useful and practical as possible for all applied biology professionals. To that end, the Editorial Board encourages members to ask questions about the College or share knowledge regarding their specific area of practice. In addition, we always need some good images to use on the front cover. As many of us concentrate a lot of our time in our own field, posing questions or sharing knowledge is a fantastic way for all of us to see what happens in other professional biology areas. There's a good chance that many of us share more common ground than we might think.

So please, don't be shy. Submit a question, comment on a topic, or pass along a great picture in the field of applied biology and get a dialogue going with your fellow professional members. College Matters is written for you to enjoy. Make it work for you!

Raychl Lukie, RPBio & Mariah Arnold, Co-Chairs, Editorial Board