

**A**lgonquin College graduate Andrea Coote has set her sights on working her way up the chain of command in the fire suppression branch of Alberta's ministry of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

Coote, a wildfire ranger for five years, is one of the few women who have pursued a career as a wildfire ranger in Alberta. It is a path she decided to follow when she was training at Algonquin College.

"I've been on a lot of overhead teams in logistics, plans, and operations roles based on the ICS (Incident Command system) and not necessarily working in the ashes," she explained.

Coote is a graduate of the Forestry Technician program offered at the school's Pembroke campus. It is a one-year diploma program which she graduated from in 2006.

"I chose Algonquin because it was a one-year program and didn't want to go back to school for another two years," Coote explained. "I was already a mature student and just wanted to get it done."

Algonquin College offers an all-encompassing two-year Forestry Technician program within a compressed format of 47 weeks. Approximately, a third of the



Andrea Coote, Alberta

courses are conducted outside in nearby settings such as Algonquin Park, the Petawawa Research Forest as well as various Crown lands, country forests and private woodlots.

"One thing I really liked about the program was that we got a lot of hands-on experience

in real working environments and in different locations," said Coote.

A real testament to the quality of the program for her was the visit by Alberta representatives to the Algonquin campus early in her last term and interviewed students for prospective job openings. At the time, they were recruiting seasonal employees to help monitor the spread of the mountain pine beetle by setting up bait trees and doing population surveys.

That's how Coote, formerly a resident of Brampton, Ont., ended up moving west.

She was offered the position of a crew chief for the mountain pine beetle project supervising a crew of 10 people, creating daily work plans, mapping out areas where they would be spread out and making effective use of ministry helicopters when needed.

Further contracts with the public lands section, eventually led to a full-time position. It didn't take long before she was able to shift into the section she really wanted - fire suppression.

Looking back at the courses she took at Algonquin, including silviculture, mensuration, tree marking, fire management and geographic information systems, Coote said she was able to establish a solid career path while applying her training.◇

## earn your **FORESTRY DIPLOMA** in less than one year

Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley has been training forestry workers for over 40 years at our Pembroke Campus. Our fast-track program allows students to earn their Forestry Technician Diploma in a compressed format of just 47 weeks instead of two years.

### program features include:

- One-third of the classes are field trips including training in Algonquin Park
- Earn government and industry-recognized certifications such as tree marking, firefighting, chainsaw operator, land management, bear awareness, aircraft safety and night navigation
- Small class sizes with professors who are well-connected to forestry industry and government employers
- 2 weeks of professional certifications and 2 weeks of field placement



For more information about Forestry training in Pembroke, Ontario, contact us at 613-735-4700, ext. 2756 or visit us at: [algonquincollege.com/pembroke](http://algonquincollege.com/pembroke)

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