

Field tested and job ready

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North Bay, Ontario native Jason Chicquen started working with trees at age 18 when he got a job with an area logging company. Today he is a forestry inspector for the city of Ottawa and he credits his education, from Algonquin College's forest technician program, with getting him there.



"I was in my last year of high school and I was looking for a career. I worked in logging for a couple of years and then worked for an arborist company out of North Bay. It was a fly-in arborist company; we did all the islands on the French River. My employer told me to go to school because I didn't want to be climbing trees my whole life. I had heard about Algonquin from some forest techs at Tembec and some other people," Chicquen said.

"My experience at Algonquin was great. I am a huge Algonquin Park guy and I was in class for about four days and we had our first field trip into the Barron Canyon for forest inventory study. That sold me right there."

Chicquen says the hands-on, practical learning at Algonquin proved highly valuable down the line. "The instructors have all been in the field so we are not just getting taught theory but good orienteering and forest inventory skills from guys who actually did the work," Chicquen said. "It was predominantly field work and very relative to the industry in regards to proper silviculture."

"Field orientation was indeed the highlight of my year. No matter what the conditions we were outside learning," Chicquen said. "There's a general consensus with industry professionals that Algonquin students are field and job ready. I can attest to that. I felt very confident with my education and experience and gained employment within one week of graduation."



Page 2 - Algonquin's forest technician program was normally two years long but Chicquen opted for the condensed curriculum in which he studied for 47 weeks straight from August to August and jumped right into his career.

"I toured the country for a while and worked for practically every big name tree company from here to Alberta. After a couple of years, I came back to Ontario and applied for an arborist job with the city of Ottawa and they hired me right on the spot," Chicquen said.

"My training at Algonquin 100% helped get me hired. I am now a forestry inspector for the city and the minimum qualification for the job was completion of a forestry diploma from a recognized community college."

Chicquen is not shy about recommending Algonquin College to anyone interested in learning about forestry. He says there are numerous people he has told about the program who have now graduated from Algonquin and are doing extremely well. In fact there are no fewer than three Algonquin grads working with him at the City of Ottawa today.

"If someone was thinking of taking a forestry program, that would be the first one I would recommend," Chicquen said. "Just the proximity to the Petawawa Research Forest and Algonquin Park alone, if you wanted to learn about forestry there is no better place to learn."

