

Aquatic Plant Field School

This one-day aquatic plant field school will provide an outdoors, hands-on learning experience with the major submerged, floating, and emergent aquatic plant species present in and along Alberta's lakes and rivers. Identification and taxonomy of vascular aquatic and shoreline plants using features available in-field are emphasized.

Instructors:

Kallum McDonald, MSc | KCM Environmental

Kristen Andersen, P.Biol, PWS, CPESC | Sweetflag Environmental

Available Dates:

August 26, 2026

September 10, 2026

Registration:

\$150/participant, payable to Kallum McDonald by etransfer, cheque, or money order.

A minimum of 5 registrants are required for the course to run. The maximum registration is 25 participants in a single day.

Primary Learning Outcomes:

Plant Taxonomy and Identification: identify common aquatic and shoreline plants emphasizing field-available features; apply basic taxonomy and nomenclature to classify vascular aquatic plants into families and genera; distinguish between look-alike species, include invasive plants; and explore challenging-to-identify groups, including Pondweeds and aquatic/riparian graminoid species; observe variable aquatic plant growth forms and learn how different aquatic plants reproduce.

Secondary Learning Outcomes:

- Plants as Indicator Species: discern between upland and common wetland indicator plants present along lake shores.
- Ecosystem Services: describe the basic roles of aquatic plants in providing food and habitat to a wide range of fish, waterfowl, insects, and amphibians; understand the basic functions of aquatic plants in water turbidity, erosion mitigation, and nutrient uptake.
- Aquatic Plant Assessment: learn how to use various tools for handling and evaluating aquatic plants, such as rakes, float tubs, tweezers, and more.
- Laws & Regulations: understand the basics of the laws and regulations that apply to aquatic plants.

Target Audiences:

Consultants, students, fisheries biologists, researchers, water/environmental stewardship groups, shoreline community residents.

Locations:

Two lakes with different aquatic/riparian plant communities will be visited, with half the day spent at each location. Selected locations remain TBD pending activity permits/approvals, but will take place central Alberta, within a 1.5 hour drive from Edmonton.

Schedule:

Time	Activity	Location
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9AM	Meet at location 1; introductions, safety.	TBD
9AM-12PM	Aquatic plant field school at location 1	TBD
12-12:30PM	Lunch	TBD
12:30-2PM	Travel to location 2	TBD
2-4:30PM	Aquatic plant field school at location 2	TBD
4:30PM	Wrap up and return home	TBD

Please be aware of the following:

- We cannot guarantee access to bathrooms or running water at the field sites.
- Participants are required to bring their own food, water, medicine, sun screen, bug spray, and rubber boots. Rubber boots are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED**.
- Weather and unforeseen obstacles may require the cancellation and rescheduling of the field school. In this circumstance, full refunds will be issued as soon as reasonably possible upon request, or registration fees can be transferred to the rescheduled day.