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 Matt Quinn, Vice President
 Heidi Watson, Exec. Secretary/Treas.
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Greetings from our President

Ryan Liberty

Greetings MCTA members!

I think I can speak for most when I say this year's "more normal" weather pattern has made for easier Christmas tree farming. Last year's excessive rains, and the lack of rain for a few years prior, certainly had its challenges. Brett Johnson of the University of Maine's Cooperative Extension made a visit to Crooked Brook last December, to help me develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan. As we walked the farm and looked at what I thought were healthy, vibrant trees, he warned me of what was probably to come. He estimated that with all the rain last year that I'd see the negative impact this year in the way of Phytophthora (Root Rot). He was right. My small farm of roughly 4,000 trees had never seen mortality of more than 10 to 15 trees per year. This year I've culled 75 already, and I'd be quite happy if I only get to 100. This was a dramatic increase for our little farm, and highlights the value of an IPM plan. Along with tips on how to reduce the risk of Phytophthora, Brett provided best practices for managing other pests that we deal with, such as invasive weeds, Balsam Twig Aphid, and Diplodia Tip Blight.

Quinn's Tree Farm recently hosted Brett and others to speak on developing Integrated Pest Management plans. The Cooperative Extension's services are free, so I strongly encourage our members to take advantage of them. Make your appointment with Brett today: (207) 323-3405 / brett.w.johnson@maine.edu

In other news, the summer/fall meeting season has arrived. The New Hampshire/Vermont growers will be hosting a meeting at the South Farm in Bethlehem, NH on Saturday, June 22nd. Maine growers are encouraged to attend. And of course, a joint meeting between the New Hampshire/Vermont and Maine growers will be held on September 21st-22nd at Great Works Tree Farm in North Berwick.

Colleen and I wish you all a great summer with your families!

Best,

Ryan Liberty, MCTA President



SAVE THE DATE!

Fall Meeting

Saturday, September 21, 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Sunday, September 22, 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Great Works Tree Farm
 392 Oak Woods Rd, North Berwick, ME 03906

Sponsored by Maine Christmas Tree Association and
 NH-VT Christmas Tree Association

For more information contact Matt Quinn: matthew.quinn141@gmail.com

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Maine Christmas Tree Association**

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Heidi Watson

Good day!

I'll take this moment to introduce myself. I'm Heidi Watson, your new Secretary and Treasurer for MCTA. I'm very thankful for Joanne's service and all her help in this transition through the past 3 months. I'm a farmer too, and although I am a young/new farmer, I'm eager to learn and help the organization by serving in these roles. We have also hired an Executive Secretary, Jennifer Hicks! She has been working hard for the organization, bringing more value to our memberships.

There are two events you need to know about: The Fall meeting is September 21-22, 2024, at Great Works Tree Farm in North Berwick. Also, the Fryeburg Fair is September 29th to October 6th. Please consider bringing a tree and wreath to enter the competition.

Membership dues for 2024 must be paid by the end of the September meeting. You will be removed from the website and membership list if not paid.

If you have any questions, give me a call or text. My cell phone number is (207) 576-5076. You can also email me at watsonoutdoors@gmail.com.

Thank You,

Heidi Watson
Executive Secretary/Treasurer

TREASURY REPORT

Heidi Watson

Summary of MCTA's account balances as of 6/15/2024:

Account	Balance 1/01/2024	Y-T-D Deposits	Y-T-D Expenses	Balance 6/15/2024
General	\$ 27,057.03	\$ 6,285.58	(\$ 6,012.49)	\$ 27,330.12
Marketing	\$ 1,979.99	\$ 0.00	(\$ 100.00)	\$ 1,879.99
Website	\$ 7,675.50	\$ 900.00	(\$ 630.00)	\$ 7,945.50
Seed Orchard	\$ 10,202.58	\$ 0.00	(\$ 90.00)	\$ 10,112.58
Meetings	\$ 5,752.34	\$ 1,194.00	(\$ 1,308.30)	\$ 5,638.04
Scholarships	\$ 6,398.52	\$ 0.00	(\$ 2,072.95)	\$ 4,325.57
Totals	\$ 59,065.96	\$ 8,379.58	(\$ 10,213.74)	\$ 57,231.80

2024 Annual Fall Meeting to be Held at Great Works Tree Farm in North Berwick

The 2024 MCTA Fall Meeting will be held Saturday, September 21, and Sunday, September 22, at Great Works Tree Farm in North Berwick, Maine, which is owned and run by MCTA member John Archambault. This year, our organization will be teaming up with the NH/VT Christmas Tree Association to host this event. This will allow us to offer robust programming for a wide range of interests.

Because of the collaborative nature of the event there will be several opportunities to network with growers from multiple states. The committee is also working to confirm vendors. Morning coffee and donuts and lunch for both days is included with ticket prices. Lunch will be catered by NoBo from North Berwick. There may be a Saturday night cookout - stay tuned!

Plans are still being finalized but here are what we know:

Dr. Richard Cowles from Valley Laboratory at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station has been confirmed to speak. Dr. Cowles is an expert in the area of biology and management of spotted wing drosophila, hemlock woolly adelgids, armored scales, white grubs (Japanese beetle, oriental beetle, European chafer, Asiatic garden beetle and black turfgrass ataenius), black vine weevil, and spider mites. He offers expertise in the uses of conventional and new insecticides for the management of nursery, turf, landscape, and small fruit pests.

Brett Johnson from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension has also been confirmed and will speak about Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and weed control. Other workshops will include topics about irrigation, drainage and equipment, and a shearing demonstration. Additionally, attendees will have opportunities to attend tours of the tree farm on both days. Pesticide credits will be available.

More information and registration will be located on the NH/VT Christmas Tree Association website by July: www.nh-vtchristmastree.org/. To learn about Great Works Tree Farm visit: www.archambaulttreefarm.com/great-works-tree-farm.html.



Minutes of the April 3rd, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

Heidi Watson

Present - Heidi Watson, Matt Quinn, Matt Lacasce, Gary Fisher, Lee Skillin, Lowel Freiman, Tom McNeil

Absent - Calvin Luther, Jim Corliss

Guests - Dugald Kell, Joanne Bond, Jenn Hicks

A motion was made by Tom to accept the minutes from January 8th Directors Meeting. It passed unanimously.

Ryan expressed the Board's appreciation for Joanne's time and work for the organization over the years. He welcomed Heidi Watson as the new Secretary and Treasurer.

Secretary's Report – Changeover has occurred—a desire to create an officers and directors membership list available on a Google doc.

Treasurer's Report – MCTA's treasury has an current balance \$58,826.80 (update).

Banking – Ryan has reached out to the bank and he just needs to make an appointment and sign papers. Joanne stated that Ryan can pick up archives of banking and treasury records from her.

Nominating Committee – Matt Quinn would like to address the written or unwritten rules of the officers' roles. We are looking for a vice president nomination for next year.

Meetings Committee – Email to schedule a Zoom meeting to plan the combined meeting event. We are leaning towards a two-day event, with the same classes on both days. We are looking to actively get vendors there. This will be a combined event with NH/VT Christmas Tree Growers Association.

Budget Committee – The last meeting was on 2/28/24. The projected budget for 2024 shows a net shortfall of \$2,315.00. We discussed ways to address the shortfall, including exhibitor fees for the meetings, an increase in dues, and an increase in our kickback from MCTA seedlings.

Discussion – One person suggested they didn't want to increase dues where we currently try to increase membership. Another member stated that the value of the membership was greater than it had been previously, especially with the hiring of an administrative secretary. Dugald stated that the dues have been \$75.00 since 2014. We haven't raised dues in at least 10 years. The budget committee had suggested raising it, varying suggestions amongst the committee. Ryan suggested that Jenn to get the data and report back to us in the next month. Gary suggested that Jenn look into grant writing to help our budget. Matt commented that grant writing is value-added to members, not an offset.

Matt made a motion to increase dues starting in 2025 to \$85 and \$115.

Discussion – Jenn Hicks joined the meeting, giving her a chance to hear her thoughts on an increase in dues. Maine Woodland Owners hasn't increased dues since 2016, but they recently raised them and changed their newsletter to full color to increase the membership's value. It's important to make sure everyone is feeling good about the organization to become a member. Tom suggests we do more first and then discuss raising the dues. Ryan agreed with Tom. Lee stated that we are already doing the part that adds value: we have hired a paid staff member. If we wait too long, the dues increase will be too substantial when we do raise them. Jenn said there are things we can do now to add benefit.

The motion passed on a vote of 6 to 1.

Matt Quinn made a motion to increase the seeding surcharge to \$0.15/tree (from \$0.10).

Discussion – Matt Lacasce commented that income from seedlings doesn't seem sustainable, in his opinion, for future upkeep and harvest. The motion passed with all in favor.

Matt Quinn made a motion for the meetings committee to determine vendor/exhibitor fees.

Discussion – A question was asked about whether the meeting committee sets the fees for the meeting. The answer given was yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes of the April 3rd, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting (cont'd.)

Heidi Watson

Scholarship Committee – no report

Seed Orchard Committee – no report

Marketing Committee – We are preparing to work with Jenn Hicks, and communicating with the Governor's office to present the Fryeburg fair trees again this year. The committee suggest that the Association consider a re-brand (change of logo, develop a tagline). Heidi gathered some quotes for rebranding from three different companies. One gave an estimate of \$2,000 to \$3,000, while the other two were \$899 and \$699. Ryan suggested that Jenn and Heidi could work on developing some tighter branding ideas.

Fryburg Fair Committee – Plans are in great shape, but we are looking for trees and wreaths. Volunteers and judges are all signed up! Everybody participating makes it a great success!

AGCOM – They have been very busy, and working on a lot of legislation on the floor.

Trees for Troops – The plan to provide seedlings for ME Dept. of Corrections is moving forward. Ryan and Rob will teach them how to plant them.

Website – There are a few issues, and we are working with the developer to fix them.

NCTA – There will be an NCTA Board Meeting on August 1st in West Shore, Nova Scotia at the 3rd International Christmas Tree Conference. This conference will be held Aug 1st - 3rd at the Oak Island Resort & Conference Centre.

New Business –

Ornamental Horticulture Counsel (OHC) – Lee has been keeping tabs on this. There is a lot of legislation coming regarding pesticides. OHC is getting rolling again and building a backup. MCTA should allocate some funds to keep up our OHC membership. A summary of the costs and benefits should be written up and brought to the Board.

Great Lakes Tree Growers Magazine – Matt Quinn brought up this topic. They do state-sponsored subscriptions.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dugald. It passed unanimously.

AGCOM

Gary Fisher

The AGCOM Committee works quite hard throughout the year to watch the actions at the state capitol and to take any appropriate action to investigate the intentions of bills affecting agriculture directly or indirectly. PFAFS have been a problem affecting AG in many ways. The University of Maine works close with members of AGCOM and AGCOM as a committee. The University is very involved in helping when AG problems arise!

Current activity will be the legislative bus tour that takes place every two years. The tour takes many legislative members on a pre-planned guided tour of farms, agricultural sites and projects. Two years ago one of our member Christmas tree farms was on the tour and the attendees were very impressed with the Christmas tree farm concept. This year, as the pre-planned tour unfolds, MCTA will again be a part of it by donating \$250 to help make it a success.

Check the MCTA web site (mainechristmastree.com) for frequent AG updates and industry news & updates.

Gary Fisher

Fryeburg Fair

Gary & Melba Fisher

Fair Dates to Remember: Opens: Sun Sept. 29 / Closes: Sun Oct. 6

This will be the 174th Year of the Fryeburg Fair. It is on track for another great year, and the MCTA and New England tree growers are part of the success of the Fair. Last year the Christmas tree growers of Maine and New Hampshire provided 29 beautiful trees for the competition along with 35 decorated and undecorated wreaths. The tree competition has had a People's Choice class for years. Last year we instituted a People's Choice class for the wreaths, which was an instant success. The People's Choice class along with a very special ribbon puts the winner of each into the very distinct and honorary position of putting their tree or wreath into the Governors Mansion at Christmas time for the current year.

It is our hope that as many entries as last year participate this year. The public just loves the trees and wreaths on display. Along with the trees and wreaths entered, there are two wreath demonstrations each day (one only on Sunday). The demo's create great desire in the public to have wreaths and trees during the Christmas season. The wreath demo's create an instant desire to make a wreath, which helps sell the wreath supplies. Those sales, along with the sales from seedlings we offer, provide the funds for our MCTA Scholarships. Recently, these scholarship funds benefited three young folks heading for college.

Keep in mind that all entries must be delivered and ready for the competition between 8 AM and 12:45 PM on Saturday the day before the the fair opens. Entries after 12:45 PM will not be accepted. This deadline Is to keep the judging on schedule.

As always we encourage helpers/volunteers to fill open slots at the booth. Call for information. It is fun and entertaining along with meeting new people interested in trees and wreaths. There are quarters for workers to stay overnight for afternoon to morning shifts.

For info give us a call or send an email for all the details.

Email: alonghere492@gmail.com and/or Phone: (207) 322-8716.

Gary & Melba Fisher



"Irish-born Canadian botanist and chemist Diana Beresford-Kroeger has written extensively about the boreal forest. She said the color of pine needles is of critical importance to their resilience and ability to adapt. Needles that are bluey-green have a cuticular surface that is two or three microns thicker... This extra thickness protects against extreme heat or extreme cold... Diana advises one should seek the bluest conifers from the highest elevations as the seed source for the future. These will be the hardiest."

From: "The Treeline" by Ben Rawlence

Seed Orchard Committee

Calvin Luther

We have 29 potted trees grafted in spring 2024 that appear to be in pretty good shape, out of the 70 grafted trees attempted.

The Huff Hill site was mowed late summer 2023.

We need to plan to graft more trees in the next year and to arrive at a proper layout of the grafted trees in this small seed orchard (~2 acres).

Lessons Learned:

- The biggest mistake we made in 2023 was to not have enough potted seedlings with sufficient leader caliper diameter for grafting selected scion.
- The scion may have been collected too early and stored improperly, resulting in 41 failed grafts.
- It has been suggested that we could leave the 29 potted grafted plants in the #1000 size 2.5 gallon pots for this year 2024 and put them out next year in the field.

2024 Proposed Plan:

1. Continue site prep for the out-planting of the grafted trees.
 - a) Mark out the rows for the trees using a 25' spacing between rows, to allow for easy access in the future for cone collection.
 - b) Determine the best herbicide/mowing regimen for this site for the next few years.
 - c) Perform that plan this year.
2. We need to solidify a spacing plan.
 - The site is about 300' x 300', and the "Manual for Managing Conifer Seed Orchards In Eastern Canada" by Smith and Adams from 2003 recommends 400 final seed trees per hectare, or 160 per acre.
 - Rows 25' apart to make space for cone collecting. 11 rows possible.
 - Trees 15 feet apart in the rows.
- 3) This would provide for about 190 trees in this orchard.
 - We have 29 trees that are grafted, so we have a lot of work to do if we want to fully occupy the site with grafted seed trees.
 - In the next month or so, pot up as many as 100 balsam transplants into #1000 pots and overwinter these for possible grafting next spring 2025.
 - I potted 10 of our 2-2 MCTA transplants received from Downey this year, Len potted 40 of his transplants for root stock, 50 total to date, we still need about 50 more.
 - How will we get the rest of these? Where will we overwinter them? Currently they are at Len's farm.

Seed Orchard Committee (cont'd.)

Calvin Luther

4) Make plans for collecting scion next winter for grafting.

a) Recommend we obtain 41 (the rest of the 70) scion originally attempted from the best 7 needle retention study trees which are located on Len Price farm.

b) The MCTA should consider doing a cost sharing project (I suggest 50/50 cost sharing) with Len Price to dig and move the 7 best needle retention tested trees from which we collected scion into a specific seed tree site on Len’s farm, to provide future scion for grafting seed trees.

c) Obtain more scion for grafting from the 7 needle retention superior trees. The chart at the right shows this:

Needle Retention Clone Number	Quantity Successful	Quantity Needed
1.3	3	7
1.9	3	7
4.1	6	4
14.1	1	9
14.5	5	5
15.3	3	7
15.6	8	2
Total	29	41

Also Max McCormack recommends we should plan to include grafted seed trees using scion from the original 13 superior clones from our seed orchards in either Norridgewock or Ashland. We will use these to fill this seed orchard site.

d) Stake out the locations of the proposed seed trees on the orchard.

e) Herbicide a 4’ circle around the stake in mid-summer using Ron Lemin as our herbicide contractor at a cost of about \$500.

f) Apply pelletized mag lime to the site per recommendations based on the soil test results.

g) Mow the site at least once, preferably twice, at a cost of about \$350 per mowing.

2025 Proposed Plan:

1. In Spring 2025 plan to perform or hire the grafting of the scion to the rootstock.
2. Work with UMaine personnel on the layout of the seed orchard trees.
3. Outplant in May the 29 grafted seed trees per the plan from UMaine.
4. Continue to monitor the newly grafted trees in a controlled environment at one of our farms, and plan to outplant to Huff Hill site in the spring of 2026.
5. Continue to monitor the Huff Hill site and mow at least twice.

Respectfully submitted,

Calvin Luther

Trees for Troops Ornaments

Melba & Gary Fisher

On June 12th at the Fishers in Belmont we had a good turnout of volunteers for getting the job done of packing the Trees for Troops ornaments. We started at 9 AM and finished up about noon, having filled 6 large boxes with approximately 5,000 to 6,000 handmade ornaments. The ornaments were supplied to the MCTA by the ladies of the Burlington VFW Post #1605.

The ornaments will go with the 300+/- trees that MCTA members donate at Christmas time to show our appreciation of the military families who are stationed at bases around the country, protecting our freedom and way of life in the USA.

The operation of packing was followed up by a fantastic potluck lunch and, as always, super camaraderie among the volunteers. Thank you so much to our fantastic helpers.

Melba & Gary Fisher



JUNE IPM CLASS A HIT AT QUINN'S TREE FARM

Matthew Quinn

We had to keep our eyes on the sky. Friday, June 14th. A strong cold front was on tap to rain out the class that I was hosting on IPM, Fungal diseases and backpack calibration. My friend, Brett Johnson, had approached me about hosting a class at the farm and I readily agreed. Brett is what I like to call a tree guru. An assistant professor with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Brett works with farms in a multitude of areas, and is the Extension's Christmas Tree contact. Brett wanted to talk about fungal issues that have popped up on my farm, *Lirula* and *Rhizophora* in particular; how to calibrate a backpack sprayer and some application techniques; and lastly, an introduction to Integrated Pest Management or IPM. Brett got two other professionals from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Dr. Alicyn Smart, Plant Pathologist, and Kerry Bernard, Pesticide Public Safety Coordinator, to talk about these topics as well.

It started to sprinkle a bit, and then a steady rain. But it only lasted for a few minutes, and the 18 farmers who came to the farm were ready to get out of the messy garage and out into the field. Questions abounded as we walked through the fields, and it became apparent that Quinn's Tree Farm had its share of problems. "I'm glad we're not the only ones!", one farmer proclaimed. "I'm so glad I came; I already have things I need to fix", another said. In that, it was apparent that the event was a success.

JUNE IPM CLASS A HIT AT QUINN'S TREE FARM (cont'd.)

Matthew Quinn

One of our veteran farmers mentioned that other state associations regularly host these types of summer get-togethers at different farms. Short, 3-hour weeknight, classes, tours or demonstrations designed to get growers together without the big rollout and agenda of a formal meeting. These could be held at farms across the state, with minimal work. If this is something that is appealing, reach out to a board member and let them know. In the meantime, Brett has already started talking about putting together another event. Stay Tuned.

Matt Quinn

**3rd International
Christmas Tree Conference
August 1-3, 2024**

hosted by



**Oak Island Resort & Conference Centre
Western Shore, Nova Scotia**

Aug 1st: NCTA Board Meeting / Welcome Reception & Dinner

Aug 2nd: Speakers & Presentations / Vendor Exhibits

Aug 3rd: Farm Tours through Lunenburg County

for more info visit <https://christmastreeconference.com>

Trees for Troops

Rob & Tammie Mulvey

Thank you to all that supported Trees for Troops in the past. We are taking names for donations for this year. Please call or text Rob at 207-592-0593

We had a great year last year, over 315 trees sent to the very deserving and appreciative families!! But it was an initial struggle, so if you can help a Vet out (Rob) and donate early that would help ease the stress later on.

Thank you,

Rob and Tammie Mulvey

Trees For Troops 2023 Donations

Pleasant View Tree Farm (25)	Skillins Greenhouse (15)	Sam Henderson (25)
Mark Vannah (5)	Trees To Please (12)	Len Price Nutkin Knoll Farm (10)
Joe Young Moose Hill Farm (25)	Finest Kind Tree Farms (20)	Mike Pomroy Christmas Tree Ranch (10)
Roger Callnan Callnan Family Christmas Trees (15)	Piper Mountain Tree Farm (10)	Desiree Bailey Reed's Trees (5)
Tom McNeil Bay Meadows Tree Farm (10)	Calvin Luther Penobscot Evergreens (5)	Jeff Pinkham Pinkham's Tree Farm (20)
John Wagner (30)	G & S Tree Farms (20)	Joanne Bond Bond Mountain Acres (2)
The Dyers (2)	Bob Bradgon Bragdon Tree Farm (2)	Ginger Pryor (1**)
Clem Meserve Boiling Spring Tree Farm (10**)	Ed Buschmann Dun Roamin Tree Farm (8**)	Ryan Liberty Crooked Brook Farm (2**)
Heidi Watson Watson Farm Christmas Trees (10**)	Gary and Melba Fisher (2**)	Fryeburg Fair Donations (11**)
Becky and Gerry (1**)	Nicki Casella (2**)	Charles Dorr (1**)
The Howe Family (1**)	Suzanne King (1**)	Cindy (1**)
Sally Graham (2**)	Lori Mayer (1**)	Laurie Bartlett Bartlett Farms (3**)

(** indicates trees purchased from Pleasant View Tree Farm and donated to Trees for Troops)



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