



Matt Quinn, President
 Bryan Mayo, Vice President
 Heidi Watson, Exec. Secretary/Treas.
 Dugald Kell Jr, Newsletter Editor

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Letter from the President

Matt Quinn

It's been two years, just like that. This is my last President's Report. You know how I like to prattle on, so I'll put a "TL:DR" (Too Long, Didn't Read) at the bottom if you get bored.

As most of you know, I certainly announce it enough, I was a firefighter and paramedic here in Somerset County until 2023. I loved serving my community in that way and will always be a staunch supporter of the fire service. COVID really got to me though, and I began to struggle mentally with the overwhelming amount of stress that it was causing. My performance at work began to deteriorate, I was angry or sad all the time, and the only place I felt like I was at home was in the fields. On May 7, 2023, after 18 months of dealing, I went on the call that broke this camel's back. My partner was attacked by a man larger than she and I didn't appreciate that. So I got into a little bit of a tussle. I was able to get my partner out of danger, and hold the guy down until the police arrived. When my shift ended the next morning, I walked out and I never went back. A diagnosis of severe PTSD followed and they put me out to pasture, quite literally I suppose. It was one of the best things to happen to me. To say the trees saved my life is an understatement. The work I have done at my farm, with the MCTA and all of the growers who have become my friends, have been integral in my recovery and I will be forever grateful for that. Trees have become my passion, and it is wonderful how our members come together to get Christmas to the people. We truly do bring light to the literal and figurative dark times. But I digress...

Back to the report. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as President of the MCTA over the last two years. We have made a great deal of progress as we enter the middle of the 21st century, and I'm confident that our incoming leadership team will continue those efforts.

We have begun the process of a website update. People use the internet differently these days, and the MCTA is working to stay on top of that ever-changing landscape. I am excited to announce that board members David Karas and Julia Kearns have stepped up and joined the website committee, along with current members Dugald Kell, Gary Fisher, Tom McNeil and led by your President elect Bryan Mayo. Their work will help cement our presence in that big internet cloud, as we work to promote Maine Christmas Trees across the land.

Despite concerns of a few members, our finances are secure. In fact, the MCTA has over \$70,000 total across all accounts. That is the most money the MCTA has had in recent history. We have done this by making responsible financial decisions, charging fair prices for membership and meetings as well as looking at new ways to increase revenue. Personally, I believe the association is in a position to invest in low-risk CDs, stocks or other growth opportunities which will ensure financial security for the future. With interest rates of 3.5% in short term CD accounts, we could add \$500 or more a year. While not a lot of money, it is the equivalent of five memberships. I encourage the Board of Directors to look into this as we move forward.

I would also like to encourage membership and the board to look into updating the bylaws. Our board is large, and it's difficult to find members willing to commit. Reducing the board to 7 or 9 members would help with this. At the same time, encouraging non board members to join committees would be a great way to spread the work across many. Again, my personal belief.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Heidi Watson

Dear Members,

Fall is here, and our days are busy! It's an exciting time of year; many of us have just competed in the State Competition at the Fryeburg Fair! Some are just getting around to finish shearing trees. Maybe this time of year is frantic prep for the harvest ahead; either way, take moments to fill your heart and mind with gratitude for the land you've got and the family, friends, and co-workers around you. I encourage you to do that today!

We have 120 Members paid for the year.

Important Dates to Remember:

Jan. 12th for the Winter Meeting at the August Civic Center
Director's meeting is Jan. 11th at 6 pm, at Burano's in Hallowell
Dues are due January 31st

Respectfully,

Heidi Watson, Secretary/Treasurer
207-576-5076

I wanted to share a story of something that happened to my family/farm last year! We weren't sold out on Christmas; we stayed open on Christmas Eve. My older sons and I loaded up the Jeep with premade Ziploc bags filled with wool socks, Dunkin' gift cards, hand warmers, and some chocolate. We handed out the bags to the unhoused and headed home. As soon as we parked, a woman came in and asked if we were open. She then purchased several wreaths and a few trees. She asked how much, and we stated we would only take a donation. She handed me some cash, and I tucked it into my pocket and helped her load up. I went inside and later realized she had paid us exactly what we had just spent on gift cards for the unhoused as a donation. My heart was overwhelmed; we didn't give to receive, but God blessed us, too. I'm thankful my children got to witness it all.

MCTA hats, t-shirts, and signs available for sale!

Short Sleeve T's	\$20	Hats	\$30
Long Sleeve T's	\$30	Member Signs	\$100



Walter Gooley – MCTA Member Profile

Ryan Liberty and Jennifer Hicks

Walter Gooley is the owner of Gooleys Confers Unlimited Christmas Tree Farm in Farmington. In late summer, Ryan Liberty interviewed Walter to learn a bit more about him and his tree farm.

In 1959, Walter started working as a Maine Forest Service District Forester. “That’s how we found our tree farm, and we’ve been here 60 years now,” explained Walter. At first, the Gooleys didn’t plant any trees. They instead cut hay. In the 1980s they started planting trees on 30 acres of open fields--a thousand trees a year until they had 20 acres filled. Over time things slowed down and today, Gooley’s Conifers have about 15 acres. “I kept records from when I first started selling trees ...right up to this past year,” Walter proudly shared.

Walter’s interest in starting a Christmas tree farm came from friends that he met along the way during a few years as the Christmas tree specialist for the Maine Forest Service. This provided an opportunity to visit operations across the state. “One thing led to another, and here we are with this!”

One friend in particular was Jim LaCasce, the late owner of Finestkind Tree Farm in Dover-Foxcroft. “Jim was a good buddy and very smart too, as far as Christmas trees go, and with everything else,” said Walter. He also credits forestry professor Max McCormack, who was the originator of the MCTA seed orchard, for helping him get started and really understand how to grow trees, as well as Dugald Kell, Sr, whose operation on the Allagash River was an inspiration.



He is also close with owners of Boiling Spring in Dayton, Clem and Merri Meserve, who provided good advice to Walter over the many decades of ownership. He learned that location matters when it comes to the Christmas tree market. In southern Maine, a farm can get almost a hundred dollars for a tree and sell out in one day, whereas, in Walter’s area, he explained, a U-cut tree is basically sixty dollars and has been for four or five years. “This area, Franklin County, is a tough area.” He pointed to what’s going on right now with politics and the gas and food increase. According to the United Way, 47 percent of people in Franklin County are financially stressed, so growers like Walter are thinking about that when pricing their trees.

When asked what changes he has seen, Walter explained that he now has fewer acres and it seems like more people are using artificial trees. But he hasn’t really seen a shift to fake trees in his area saying it is still pretty good for natural trees. Gooleys Conifers is one of the bigger operations in his area with the nearest tree farm located in Kingfield, a half hour from his operation. Knowing that there still is a demand for real Christmas trees Walter is still planting trees.

But even with multiple acres of Christmas trees on his land, Walter still plants his trees by hand with a spade. “I dig so that when you pull back on the spade it pulls back the sod. They say that’s the old European method.” And when he first started growing in his big field he planted about four acres of Scotch pine. However, he quickly learned that Scotch pine must be sheared by the 15th of July in order to set the bud. And with the change in the market favoring balsam fir, that has become the primary species except for some white pine. “I could grow a mean white pine!” announced Walter. And grow he does--many of his pines are 10 to 12 foot trees, however very few people want to shear above nine feet. And while he enjoys growing pine he found the pests and disease that have emerged recently, such as blister rust and pine weevil, make it hard to maintain.



Greetings from our President (continued from page 1)

Matt Quinn

Our fall meetings have become large events, crossing the border last year to visit Fox Brand Inc. in New Brunswick, and this year to the other part of Maine with a wonderful event at Boiling Spring in Dayton. Bryan will certainly have a lot to share with you about that. Both events had the two things needed to make a great meeting. Trees and Tree Farmers. The networking alone is worth the trip for many. More to come on the future of the tree meetings, as we take the feedback of members into account. Full disclosure however, I made a command decision and authorized the purchase of a big screen TV to replace the old projector and screen method which really hasn't been working as well as we would have liked. Members seemed to be happy with the decision and we will have it for future events.

We have increased production in recent years of the MCTA seed orchard. In doing so, we have updated the contract with Downey Tree Farm through 2032, increasing the royalty to MCTA to 15 cents, and allowing Downey to sell surplus to out of state growers. This too has increased revenue, as we are receiving a royalty from those growers as well (the royalty is prorated, and larger orders have a discounted rate). This will ensure the orchard projects will have funding for years to come. It is especially important as we are working on the Hartland expansion.

There is a lot of uncertainty right now in the world. The economy is day to day; tariffs imposed on Canadian products have made products like wreath rings much more expensive. It feels like there are a lot more advertisements for wholesale trees than there are requests. Gas and oil commodities are putting pressure on all of us right now, both in our inputs and our sales, and the long-term effects of a warming planet have led to years of both drought and deluge, increasing the need for irrigation and methods to keep our trees in "dry feet" conditions. Throughout it all, the MCTA will be here with tools to help you navigate.

I want to thank those committee members and board members who have worked hard to make the MCTA thrive. Without them, there would be no seed orchard, or marketing committee or scholarship fund. It's also very important to me to acknowledge my executive committee. Bryan as VP has done a wonderful job keeping me on the straight and narrow. Our working relationship has evolved into a true friendship. I appreciate his candor and I look forward to watching him lead the group over the next two years. Heidi is a wonderful secretary and treasurer. She is the glue that has kept the MCTA together over the last few years. Thank you for your hard work, you made my role much, much easier. Oh, by the way, did she tell you that she's going to part of the decoration crew at the White House this year? That's a pretty big deal. Last but not least, Jen Hicks has been very important in getting things done for us. As the executive consultant, we are able to utilize her skill set to better serve our membership. Thank you to all of you. It's been a pleasure working with you.

Lastly, I want to remind you all that it is your journey. Talking with growers across the state, seeing their platforms and how they do things has reinforced my belief that there are 1000 ways to do one thing. Keep doing you, and enjoy the time you spend caring for your trees that will put joy into the hearts of your friends and neighbors.

And with that, let me just say "I'd rather feel bad in Maine than anywhere else" and Dirigo my friends, I will see you soon.

TL:DR

Trees helped save my life after my PTSD diagnosis.

The MCTA is in strong shape financially and I think it is time to invest in low-risk opportunities.

I think we should look at updating the bylaws and reducing the number of board members.

Our fall meetings are great and will continue to be great.

Special thanks to Bryan, Heidi and Jen along with committee members and our board members.

At the end of the day, enjoy your journey and experience. After all it is yours and no one else's.



MCTA 2027 WINTER MEETING

Registration Form

Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2027
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Location: Augusta Civic Center
76 Community Dr, Augusta, ME

Farm Name / Business _____

Your Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

List Additional Names
for Tickets: _____

Registration Type	Quantity	Pre-Registration (Deadline Jan. 5th)	On-Site Registration	Extended Amount
MCTA Member	_____	\$ 25.00	\$ 30.00	= _____
Non-Member	_____	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	= _____
			Subtotal	\$ _____

Pre-register for the Commissioners' Luncheon:

Contact Heidi Watson (207-576-5076) for ticket price (estimated to be \$25)

Lunch _____ @ \$ _____ = _____

Total

Enclosed: \$ _____

Register Online

using this QR code



or visit the
MCTA website and choose
Member Area / Events

Payment Details

Make Check payable to MCTA

Check# _____

Mail Completed form and payment to:

*Heidi Watson
918 Richville Rd
Standish, ME 04084*

REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY January 5th for Pre-Registration Rates



From the Wreath Workshop to the WHITE HOUSE!!!

What began as a love for Christmas trees and creating beautiful things with fresh Maine Balsam has grown into opportunities I never could have imagined. God has been so good, opening doors, placing wonderful people in my path, and blessing me with opportunities to use the gifts He has given me.

I am reminded that sometimes the smallest beginnings can lead to the most unexpected blessings.

I'm deeply thankful for the friendships, encouragement, and support I have received through the Maine Christmas Tree Association over the years! I feel so blessed by this organization and the opportunities to grow, learn, and share my love for Christmas trees and wreath making. Never would I ever imagine that it would lead me to the People's House in Washington D.C.!

Above all, I give God the glory. I am simply thankful to serve, to learn, and to share a little piece of Maine at The People's House in Washington, D.C.

The White House received over 15,000 applications and selected around 150 volunteers, at least one from each state. I'm humbled and honored to represent Maine!

Recently, I sent an email from Brett and Manjot asking when Maine would once again be represented in D.C., though it's for a different opportunity than they had in mind. Still a Maine tree farmer and wreath maker from the MCTA, I will be sharing an experience with several others, using our skills and talent to decorate the People's House for Christmas!

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey. I am truly blessed!

TREASURY REPORT**Heidi Watson**

We have over \$65,000 in our account as of 10/18/26. I just submitted our payment to the National Advocacy Partnership Program (NAPP). The Directors voted to support Trees for Troops with up to \$2,000 this season to meet the remaining tree-balance commitment.

Account	General	Marketing	Website	Seed Orchard	Meetings	Scholarship	Totals
Beginning Balance	\$18,719.83	\$1,429.99	\$9,030.50	\$17,960.09	\$1,880.22	\$7,461.82	\$56,482.45
Income	\$10,066.36	\$0.00	\$1,707.68	\$7,444.92	\$6,380.69	\$5,168.75	\$30,768.4
Expenses	\$10,527.29	\$260.00	\$580.00	\$505.68	\$7,270.04	\$2,468.50	\$21,611.51
Net Balance	\$18,258.90	\$1,169.99	\$10,158.18	\$24,899.33	\$990.87	\$10,162.07	\$65,639.34
Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Ending Balance	\$18,258.90	\$1,169.99	\$10,158.18	\$24,899.33	\$990.87	\$10,162.07	\$65,639.34

From the MCTA Vice President**Bryan Mayo**

We had another wonderful meeting at the Boiling Spring Farm in Dayton Maine. The gracious hosts shared their space with us while we listened to multiple speakers from around the state. Clem Meserve started us off with a history of the farm and how the future looks as his granddaughter, Arianna, and son-in-law, Charles, begin taking over. It was a great way to celebrate the hard work Clem and Merrilee put into the farm. The rain and technical difficulties couldn't stop us from enjoying each others company and learning about all aspects of tree farming. We had speakers from UMaine as well as the National Christmas Tree Board, and even a Maine state biologist to share details on a fencing program for deer management.

Looking forward, we are in a search for the host farm for next year's fall meeting. We are considering pivoting to a one-day event. Hosting offers unique opportunities. You can be as involved in the planning process as you want, from planning out the logistical details to helping shape the conference agenda. Host farms are, of course, reimbursed for all conference expenses. If anyone is interested, please reach out to me. It is a very rewarding experience and a great way to learn more about your own farm.

We are in the process of our leadership transition. Matt Quinn will complete his term as president as we enter the new year. I want to thank Matt for his hard work and leadership during his presidential tenure. I have appreciated all his guidance and help over these past two years, and I have learned a lot about the process of leading our association. I look forward to continue working with him as he moves on from his presidential duties. I know he will continue to be a great asset for the MCTA.

As Matt becomes Past-President, I will move into the role of President. I am proud of our association and I am excited for the opportunity to represent the MCTA and share more about our field with others. I am particularly excited to continue to grow our programming and learning opportunities for seasoned and new growers alike. If anyone is interested in joining me on this journey, we are searching for a Vice President. Any questions about this role can be sent to me directly or to current and past board members. I look forward to the future and I wish all of our Christmas tree growers a great selling seasons.

Bryan Mayo
MCTA Vice President

Seed Orchard Committee

Lee Skillin spoke with Jimmy Downey in August and had this information to share: Downey still has 70k MCTA seedlings available for spring 27 as 3-2 transplants (as of 8/18/26). MCTA members should contact Downey if they want to order some transplants as the window for ordering may still be open.

Ornaments for Troops

Melba Fisher

Melba is asking for toilet paper rolls and yarn for the ornament makers. Please collect those items and give them to Melba or Gary at your next opportunity.

Fryeburg Fair

Gary Fisher

Fryeburg Fair this year started out very good and great weather. The amount of trees submitted was much less than most years. I'm not sure of the reasons but only 17 were brought in. The trees were all of great quality and appearance. The wreaths really helped to showcase the display and expertise of the creators of 23 beautiful wreaths. Peoples Choice has really become the activity of choice at the exhibit with 700-800 ballots cast for favorite tree and wreath. The two day event brings so many people to the exhibit end of the fair.

I personally want to thank all of the exhibitors that contribute each year and make it a highlight of the fair and in so many peoples lives. A new item we added this year was using the face of old Christmas cards. We had kids and adults write a short note to the troops and families, which will be included with the ornaments. We have about 100 cards for this year and it was well received. We could always use more cards to send.

The wreath demos are a hit at the fair and this year we had many new wreath makers help the fair-goers experience a hit. A huge thank you to these folks that really make our job so much easier. Another success of the wreath demos is how much our sales increase for wreath making supplies--a very good boost this year for our continual contribution to the scholarship program. Speaking of the scholarship program, plug sales were very good. Of about 800 plugs purchased, we sold all but about 50-60, which are now in the planting beds for winter. The 100+ plugs from last year sold quickly due their tall size.

I must say that we have had an excellent showing of volunteers, both new and past helpers from last few years, which again makes this job so much easier. Another group of unsung heroes are the website people that post the results of winners of trees, wreaths and Peoples Choice voting. This helps keep the public interest up in trees and wreaths. An additional huge thank you to Melba, my wife, and Ryan Liberty (assistants).

Gary Fisher "alonghere492@gmail.com"

MCTA exhibit "Superintendent"

Marketing Committee

Ryan Liberty

The Marketing Committee has been busy with many different initiatives over the last few months. Here are a few examples:

- ✓ We worked with Fryeburg Fair superintendents Gary & Melba Fisher during the fair on best ways to promote our brand and industry. We'll be huddling up post fair to discuss things that are working well in the exhibit, as well as things that may need to be tweaked or added.
- ✓ The Blaine House has committed to Dec Nov 29th as the tentative date for the presentation of the Blaine House Christmas trees and wreaths. We'll be organizing that day's events and will keep all parties updated along the way.
- ✓ We'll continue to survey membership on their thoughts regarding our current image, and whether we should consider a brand refresh.
- ✓ We interviewed Walter and Joanne Gooley for our inaugural 'Featured Farmer' piece for our next newsletter.
- ✓ We recently worked with Matt Quinn to produce our latest 'Legacy Member' video. That video celebrates the contributions of Clem and Merri Meserve to our organization and industry.
- ✓ I continue to sort through the MCTA archival material that Joanne gave me so that it can be organized and digitized for future generations. I encourage membership to share anything that they have that helps to tell the story of our organization.

- ✓ We continue to work with the Maine Department of Corrections on the 1,000 seedlings that they've planted for a future donation to Trees For Troops. We ordered 500 more seedlings for them for spring 2027. We expect they'll have trees ready for donations in four years.

I continue to represent the MCTA as a liaison to the Northeastern Christmas Tree Research Alliance. This organization's mission is to ensure the prosperity of our industry through the research and study of the trees that we grow.

As the Maine Christmas Tree Association (MCTA) representative to the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA) board of directors, I attended the board meeting and summer meeting in Wisconsin. I'm currently serving on the NCTA Newsletter Committee.

Regards,
Ryan

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting - August 4th, 2026

Heidi Watson

Call to Order: 6:05 pm Roll Call

Board of Directors: Karen Bragdon, Gary Fisher, Doug Fortier, Jim Hummer, David Karas, Julia Kerns, Dugald Kell, Ryan Liberty, Bryan Mayo, Arrianna Meserve, Matt Quinn, Heidi Watson
Staff: Jennifer Hicks Absent: Tom McNeil, Jeffrey Patterson, Jim Corliss

Reviewed Minutes from Prior Board Meetings:

Motion: Approve the minutes from the March 2026 and May 2026 Board Meetings. - Bryan Mayo. Second by Doug Fortier. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer Report - Heidi Watson:

Current balance over \$67,000; Answered questions about newsletter report stating that the org balance was low - provided most updated info that countered the report; Seedling kickback check deposited later than last year, as she was on vacation; \$5,000 from Dana Graves for the scholarship fund; Provided an overview of how PayPal money is accounted for: breaks down amounts based on purpose and fees; Asked for Board's advice about particular accounting issues; Requests the purchase of QuickBooks software to ensure the proper accounting of income/expenses.

Motion: Accept the Treasurer's Report - Doug Fortier, Second by Julia Kerns. Passed unanimously.

Secretary's Report - Heidi Watson:

104 paid members 29 members who have not paid dues; Provided information for the newsletter (Trees for Troops, Dana Graves memorial); Discussed her concerns about financial status without being consulted; Matt Quinn has been providing use of his Zoom account for board meetings--MCTA should set up their own account after he finishes.

Motion: Accept the Secretary's Report - Bryan Mayo. Second by David Karas. Passed unanimously.

New Business:

Finance Committee:

Heidi Watson presented information about the need to establish a Finance Committee; Serves as a sounding board to help the Treasurer with property management of finances; Would have a 3-person membership; Provides multiple people to weigh in on accounting and develop financial reports; Would also develop budgets and budget goals to present.

Gary Fisher would like to find ways to make cuts and save money; consider staffing; reduce Fryeburg Fair seedling costs.

78% of MCTA membership has paid dues.

Matt Quinn asked how this committee would be formed and run, and Heidi suggested that the President or VP choose members and that it could be anyone.

Motion: Create a MCTA Finance Committee: Bryan Mayo. Seconded by Arrianna Meserve. Passed with one against and two abstain.

Proposal of Online Financial Records Management Software:

Heidi Watson presented online software options that Dugald sent her. She recommends that MCTA choose a QuickBooks subscription through TechSoup at \$80/year.

Motion: Authorize to spend \$120/year for online accounting software - Dugald Kell. Seconded by Doug Fortier. Passed unanimously.

Proposal for Membership to Video Conferencing:

Heidi Watson has researched video conferencing software and found the following: Zoom Workplace Pro costs \$14.16/month 30-hour meeting; Google Workspace costs \$7.00/month 24-hour meeting. Once funds are approved for this expense, the board can recommend which software to sign up for at the September 21 Fall Board Meeting.

Motion: Authorizing \$200 annually for video conferencing subscription - Dugald Kell. Seconded by Bryan Mayo.

Fall Board Meeting:

Motion: Set September 21, 2026 to be the date of the Fall Board Meeting - Gary Fisher. Seconded by Dugald Kell.

Other Business:

Discussion: Presenting thoughts about MCTA operation challenges

Matt Quinn: MCTA has faced challenges with the website and there is an impasse on introducing new ways of developing and managing the website.

Dugald Kell: Believes that there is no impasse. Agreement on the website update and moving ahead with developing an RFP.

Jim Hummer: Agrees that things are moving along with website redevelopment and that it is the website committee's purview to proceed.

Bryan Mayo: There are concerns among Executive Committee members about how much goes through Dugald and how much he has a final say about things that go into a newsletter and the website.

Heidi Watson: Most concerned by the Budget report Dugald wrote in the June newsletter that provided his individual opinion about the organizational budget using incomplete information. Creates a contentious environment. Regarding the website: believe that we need to consider working with a third-party vendor to manage the website.

Motion: Dugald Kell to step down as website administrator as of August 2026. - Dugald Kell, Seconded by Bryan Mayo. Dugald Kell withdrew the motion. Seconded by Bryan Mayo.

Motion: Dugald Kell to step down as website administrator once a succession plan for the website management has been put in place. - Dugald Kell. Seconded by Bryan Mayo.

Discussion: - Losing Dugald as website administrator because he has done so much work and he is consistent.

- Julia asked if he felt forced to step down and Dugald mentioned it would be a relief.

Rollcall vote: Six in favor (Heidi, Bryan, Matt, David, Karen, Julia); Four Against (Jim, Gary, Ryan, Doug); Two abstain (Dugald, Arianna)

Motion to adjourn: Doug, seconded by Jim Hummer Meeting adjourned - 8:21 PM

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting – September 21st, 2026 Heidi Watson

Call to Order: 6:03 pm Declaration of Quorum

Board of Directors: Gary Fisher, Julia Kerns, Karen Bragdon, Ryan Liberty, Jim Corliss, Dugald Kell, Matt Quinn, Bryan Mayo, Heidi Watson, Doug Fortier, Arrianna Meserve Absent: Tom McNeil, Jeffrey Patterson, Jim Hummer, David Karas

Reviewed Minutes from August Board Meeting:

Motion: To remove the word criticism and add the word discussion. - Bryan Mayo. Seconded by Doug Fortier. Approved with one abstain.

Motion: To approve the Minutes as amended. - Bryan Mayo. Seconded by Julia Kearns. Passed unanimously.

Secretary/Treasurer Reports - Heidi Watson:

Motion: To accept the report. - Bryan Mayo. Seconded by Gary Fisher.

Committee Reports:

Fryeburg Fair: On point, bring trees to stand on Thursday or Friday, 8 am to 5 pm. Saturday deadline is 10:30 am.

Marketing: Blaine House - November 30th. 3 trees (top 3 trees), 4 wreaths (top 4 points scoring craftspeople places in wreaths).

Featured Farmer: Walter Gooley. Boiling Spring Tree Farm - Video.

Trees 4 Troops: need 69 trees to reach our goal of 300.

National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA): Ryan went to a meeting, lobbying for agriculture; they are doing things on a higher level on our behalf. Maine hosted this international group this year.

September Meeting Recap – Bryan: Great meeting. We honored Clem Meserve and took a look at things. Potential change in cost for next fall meeting. Potential to move towards a one-day event on a Saturday. Friday night event and a full day on Saturday. We don't have a host farm for next year yet.

Julia suggested a feedback forum. Bryan suggested a meetings committee. Jim suggested we are supposed to have one according to the bylaws. Heidi or Jenn can put together a survey.

Old Business - New Business:

Trees for Troops:

Motion: To spend up to \$2,000 to buy trees to help meet MCTA's goal of 300 trees to the T4T program. - Bryan Mayo. Seconded by Ryan Liberty

Discussion: Jim opposes this. Many farms waiting until the last minute. Matt also opposes this. Ryan and Bryan voiced their support for this.

Roll call vote: Seven in favor (Ryan, Heidi, Karen, Bryan, Julia, Doug ,Arianna); Three opposed (Jim, Gary, Dugald)

Board of Directors: We need directors to replace those whose terms are expiring. We also need to nominate a new VP.

Motion to Adjourn: 7:29 PM



National Advocacy Partnership Program (NAPP)

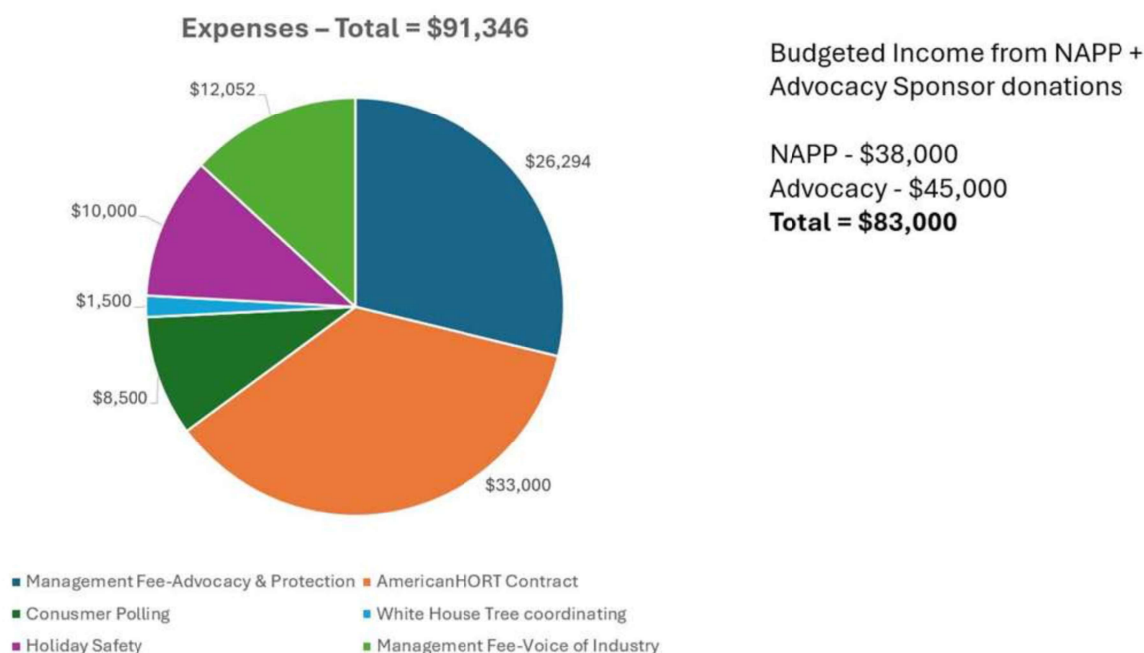
The following is a letter from the President of NCTA, Scott Powell, describing the NAPP program in which MCTA has long been participating:

Thank you for your association's continued commitment to NCTA through the National Advocacy Partnership Program (NAPP), formerly called the TIP program.

The program's purpose is to use combined funds in efforts to protect and advocate for everyone in the Christmas tree industry, when speaking with one voice and working on issues as an industry is more effective than doing so in small groups.

What does it cost? It's \$25 per state/regional association member. That's it: \$25. Less than the cost of one tree per year.

It's a common and fair question when someone asks, "What does NCTA spend that money on?" Protection and Advocacy work areas in the 2026 NCTA operating budget:



The NAPP program is essential to NCTA's mission to protect and advocate for the farm-grown Christmas tree industry. The funds collected through the program, added to those directly from NCTA members paid as an addition to annual dues, are vital in supporting NCTA's legislative and regulatory initiatives, holiday safety, research, national media advocacy and other protection-focused programs.

These programs allow the NCTA (on behalf of the industry) to:

- Sign on to legislative and regulatory communications
- Speak to the general public and media about the benefits of farm-grown Christmas trees and the awfulness of fake plastic trees
- Promote proper care for the safe use of real Christmas trees

What are some of the issues NCTA advocates for everyone? Here is a list of just the first 6 months of issues for 2026:

- \$1 billion USDA Bridge Money to Administration
- Farmers Bridge Assistance letter to Congressional leaders
- Letter to EPA supporting Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA)
- Farm Credit Council letter to Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries, encouraging them to schedule floor time for HR 7567, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026
- Ag Wage Reform Coalition (including NCTA) supporting Securing Agriculture's Workforce Act (SAWA)
- Letter to Secretary of State supporting the Department of Labor's Interim Final Rule (IFR) on the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) to restore economic rationality to H 2A wage requirements
- Letter to Congressional leaders asking to codify the longstanding co-regulatory partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state regulatory agencies, which provides the regulatory certainty that applicators depend on
- Grower coalition letter to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Zeldin regarding the importance of safe and effective pesticide products in feeding, fueling, and clothing the world

Main legislative / policy focus areas:

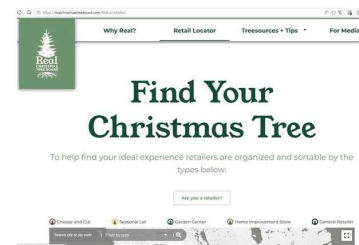
- [Labor](#) Trying to get adverse effect wage rate fixed for H2A users through a bill rather than just through department secretaries.
- [Fake China tree tariff](#) call to action to all industry growers and retailers to submit comments directly to the U.S Trade Rep discouraging an exemption to tariffs be granted to fake tree importers, as they requested. THEIR REQUEST WAS DENIED.
- [Farm Bill](#) We applaud the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry for their progress in moving towards a markup of the Farm Bill.

Is everyone impacted by all these issues? No, of course not. But by having NCTA funded to be the advocate and voice whether the issue is labor, pesticide labeling, specialty crop funds or telling the truth about imported plastic fake trees, the whole industry benefits. While the NAPP program is designed for the greater good of the industry, [your individual association members also receive:](#)

- Free subscription to monthly E-newsletter
- The opportunity to purchase a discounted subscription to the *National Christmas Tree Journal* for \$37, a savings of more than \$20 off the regular price

We are working on a collaboration with RCTB for the Retail Locator; possibly merging to reduce redundancy and maximize exposure.

Please send a basic Excel or CSV data file of your members contact info (name, company, address, phone, email) by **October 15**.



A NAPP invoice has been included with this letter for your convenience, NAPP dues are \$25 per member. Thank you for being a valuable industry partner.

Sincerely,


Scott Powell, NCTA President



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