

Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

June 2014

Special points of interest:

◆ **NEW PHONE NUMBER**

As of July 1, the NHVTCTA office will have a new phone number: (802) 447-0660. The association mailing address and all other contact information remains the same.

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Summer Meeting Preview

The NHVTCTA's summer meeting will be held Saturday, June 28, at Bryan Blundell's Christmas Farms in East Hardwick, Vt.

The meeting will be a great chance to catch up informally with fellow growers to talk about trees and markets and weather, etc. A "Q and A" session is on the agenda so there will a chance for newer growers to pick the brains of those who have been in the business for a while now, and for experienced growers to learn from what others are doing. Ron Kelley will provide an invaluable update on insects and diseases that have been appearing on farms recently, and there will be a walking tour of the farm to give Bryan a chance to demonstrate how he grows trees. Our gracious host sent along this welcome:

"Has there ever been a more frustrating but finally resplendent spring? Perhaps it is just my age speaking, but I don't remember seeing the tulips bloom so long or the flowering trees ever say 'Here I am' any better. This will be the third tree meeting over the course of 53 years and they always seem to fall on my June 28 birthday. Since I started the farm at the age of 21, the easy calculation leads to my somewhat surprising age of 74.

"We came to Vermont in 1960 at the invitation of John Young, who I worked for at that time in Wilton, Conn. We immediately fell in love with Vermont and bought the 200-acre back farm for what the locals considered the outrageous price of \$9,500. We

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NCTA Update: Check-off In Place

On February 7, President Obama signed a farm bill that contained a mechanism for the creation of a "check-off program" to fund research and promotion of trees. Beginning this year, the program will collect 15 cents



per tree sold from those selling more than 500 trees. (Those selling fewer than 500 trees may contribute voluntarily.)

It is important to note that

Continued on page 7

President's Message

Hi all,

What were you doing on April 7, 2014? Did you notice anything different? The Christmas Tree Research and Promotion Order, more commonly known as the Checkoff program, has begun. I believe it will be beneficial for the Christmas tree industry as a whole by increasing our profile in the marketplace. The first year will be a period of growth and adjustment for sure but that's normal for any new organization.

A very wet spring has put a lot of growers a couple of weeks behind just because you could not get a tractor out in the field without sinking.

Things have dried up recently and the Spring work is getting caught up by working a few extra

hours when we can. Insect damage was light and I haven't heard of any widespread frost damage so the outlook is for a good crop this fall. I hope we can sell them all!

This year the New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association has received a \$1000 grant to help pay for the booth in the New Hampshire Building at the Big E. The fair runs from the 12th through the 28th of September this year and we will be seeking applicants for this paid position. We will announce more information about the role at the Summer meeting in East Hardwick on June 28th.

I hope to see you all there!

Dan Beloin
President

Trading Post

FOR SALE: Wreath shipping boxes, 18" x 18" x 6", white with red bow, \$2.00 each in bundles of 25. Will deliver to Christmas tree meeting on June 28. Call Russell Reay at 802-492-3323 or email russreay@vermontel.net

WANTED: Kelco boxing equipment. Curious if anyone has various size cones/funnels for the Kelco tree boxing (not netting) system they would be interested in selling. Also interested in boxes. Contact Patrick White, (802) 223-4258 or email pwhitevt@aol.com



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association



2014 Officers

President	Dan Beloin	belointreefarm@gmail.com
Vice President	Tom Lang	balsamacres@comcast.net
Recording Secretary	Russell Reay	russreay@vermontel.net
Exec. Sec./Treas.	Jim Horst	mtafarms@comcast.net
Past President	Mary Lou Schmidt	elysianh@sover.net

Contact Information

Jim Horst, Executive Secretary
569 Pleasant Valley Road
Bennington, VT 05201-9637
Phone: (802) 447-0660
E-mail: info@nh-vtchristmastree.org
Association Web site: www.nh-vtchristmastree.org

2014 Directors

(Term Ends)

Andy Aldrich	aaldrich@pshift.com	(2016)
Dan Beloin	belointreefarm@gmail.com	(2015)
Mike Godzyk	sibgotree@gmail.com	(2016)
Ben Hoyt	b.hoyt@roadrunner.com	(2016)
Tom Lang	balsamacres@comcast.net	(2015)
Paul Lemire	mrrplemire@msn.com	(2015)
Nigel Manley	info@therocks.org	(2014)
Carl Szych	breezyhillacresszych@yahoo.com	(2014)
Jeff Taylor	taylortreepeople@aol.com	(2014)
Bill Tester	bill_tester@hotmail.com	(2015)
Bob White	whitechristmasvt@googlemail.com	(2014)
Patrick White	pwhitevt@aol.com	(2016)

For matters related to Tree Line only:

Patrick White, Editor
NHVTCTA Tree Line
18 Merritt Road
Middlesex, VT 05602
Phone: (802) 223-3880
E-mail: pwhitevt@aol.com

Copies of the Association bylaws and policies are available to members at any time by contacting the Executive Secretary.

2014 Tree Line Publication Schedule	
Issue	Ad/Submission Deadline
January	—
June	—
September	Sept. 5



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Ticks and Lyme

Editor's Note: For many Christmas tree growers, and others working outdoors, ticks are becoming an unfortunate part of life these days. They are spreading geographically, and some are carrying Lyme disease with them. While Lyme is a complex disease and the experts still don't have all the answers, this primer from the Vermont Department of Health should help verse you in the basics of tick protection and Lyme detection.

What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is caused by infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi*, a type of bacteria called a spirochete. In the eastern U.S., the infection is transmitted by the bite of a black-legged tick, *Ixodes scapularis*, commonly known as the deer tick. Lyme disease, which can affect the skin, heart, nerves, or joints, can be effectively treated with antibiotic therapy.

Do we have Lyme disease in Vermont?

We do have Lyme disease in

Vermont. For many years, only a few cases of Lyme disease were reported to the Vermont Department of Health each year. However, starting in 2005, that number started to increase steadily. The increase in reported cases has more or less continued each year. In recent years there have been several hundred reports of people with Lyme disease who were likely exposed in Vermont. Most of the reported cases have occurred in people who live in the southern half of our state, but illness has been reported from all areas of Vermont.

What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

The symptoms of Lyme disease can vary because different parts of the body may be affected. The skin, joints, nerves or heart may be involved. Early symptoms of Lyme disease typically appear within 3 to 30 days after a tick bite and include one or more of the following:

- Fatigue
- Chills and fever

- Muscle and joint pain
- Headache
- Swollen lymph nodes

Erythema migrans (EM)

EM is a characteristic skin rash associated with Lyme disease. It occurs in up to 80% of people. The EM rash usually appears as an expanding rash at or near the site of the tick bite. On occasion, the rash can appear on a different part the body than where the tick bite occurred and also in multiple places at the same time. The rash usually appears within seven to 14 days. The center of the rash may clear as it spreads, giving it the appearance of a bull's-eye. The rash may be warm, but it is usually not painful or itchy. Infections that are not recognized and treated in the early phase may spread to other parts of the body, a condition called disseminated Lyme disease.

Symptoms of disseminated disease can occur days to months after the initial infection. Some of the symptoms associated with disseminated disease include:

- numbness and pain in the arms or legs
 - paralysis of facial muscles, usually on one side of the face (also known as Bell's palsy)
 - fever, stiff neck, and severe headaches if meningitis occurs
 - abnormal heart beat (rare)
- Up to 60% of people who do not receive treatment develop intermittent bouts of arthritis several months after infection. The arthritis is characterized by severe joint pain and swelling usually of large joints, most commonly

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Ticks and Lyme (continued)

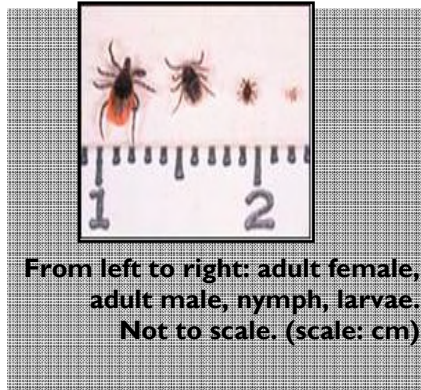
Continued from page 4

the knee. In addition, a small percentage of untreated people develop chronic nervous system problems months to years after infection. Such problems include shooting pains, numbness or tingling in the hands and feet, and problems with concentration and short term memory.

Some people will have lingering symptoms even after being appropriately treated. It is not clear why this happens but it does not appear to be due to ongoing infections. Find more information from CDC on the Post-treatment Lyme disease page (<http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/postLDS>).

How is Lyme disease spread?

The spirochetes enter the body when an infected tick attaches to the skin to take a blood meal. In most cases, an infected tick must be attached for at least 36 hours in order to transmit Lyme disease. Prompt removal of ticks can prevent infection. Not all types of ticks carry Lyme disease. In the eastern United



From left to right: adult female, adult male, nymph, larvae. Not to scale. (scale: cm)

States, the black-legged tick, commonly known as the deer tick, is mainly responsible for transmitting the disease. Deer ticks are common in Vermont, but not all of them are infected with the bacteria. Most cases of Lyme disease occur in a few highly affected areas of Vermont.

Types of Ticks Found in Vermont

A history of a known tick bite will help the doctor to know if Lyme disease is the cause of an illness. However, many people with Lyme disease do not remember being bitten by a tick. Deer ticks are tiny and often go unnoticed. For example, nym-

phal deer ticks, the most common transmitters of Lyme disease, are quite small, usually about 2mm in size (see photo at left).

Who is at risk of getting Lyme disease?

Deer ticks live in wooded, brushy and grassy places, including gardens. Individuals at greatest risk are those who spend time outside in areas that have a lot of ticks that are infected with the spirochete. In the Northeast, most illness occurs during the spring when the nymphal ticks are most active and people spend a lot of time outside, often with large amounts of skin exposed.

What to do if you have a tick bite

Remove the tick. Try to remove the tick as soon as you discover it because prompt removal can prevent Lyme disease. It can take 36 hours for a tick to transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme disease to you.

To safely remove ticks:

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers and firmly grasp the tick close to the skin. Avoid touching the tick with your bare hands.
2. With a steady motion, pull straight up until all parts of the tick are removed. Do not twist or jerk the tick. Do not be alarmed if the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin. Once the mouthparts are removed from the rest of the tick, it can no longer transmit the Lyme disease bacteria.

DO NOT use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or other products to remove a tick. These methods are not effective. Thoroughly wash your hands and the bite area. After removing the tick, wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Clean the tick bite with soap and water or use an antiseptic such as iodine scrub or rubbing alcohol.

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NCTA (continued)

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while the checkoff is not administered or managed by NCTA, or formally related in any way, the national association is working to keep its members and TIP members (including the NHVTCTA) informed of the latest developments. The NCTA issued this statement on the creation of the check-off program:

The National Christmas Tree Association is pleased that the USDA has announced a final rule on the creation of a Christmas Tree Promotion, Research and Information Order, commonly known as a "Checkoff."

This program was requested by the industry in 2009 and has gone through two industry-wide comment periods during which 565 comments were submitted from interested parties. More than 70% of the growers posting comments, and nearly 90% of the state and multi-state associations that posted comments indicated that they were in favor of the program.

A group of Christmas Tree farmers and retailers spent nearly three years studying the potential positives and negatives of a checkoff promotion and research program, including looking at other commodities that have similar programs.

The program is designed to benefit the industry and will be funded by the growers at a rate of 15 cents per tree sold. The program will be administered by an independent 12-member board of small business owners



who grow and sell farm-grown Christmas trees and they will be responsible for developing and approving promotional and research efforts to benefit the entire industry. The program is not expected to have any impact on the final price consumers pay for their Christmas tree.

The funds collected after this season will be used to develop promotion and research programs for the 2012 season. This program was developed under the Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996.

There are at least 18 other similar programs already in effect for various agricultural commodities. Although smaller in scope, the Christmas tree program will be similar to recognizable programs for milk,

cotton and beef that have brought consumers commodity-oriented messages such as "Got Milk?" and "Beef, It's what's for dinner."

The NCTA Mission

Last Christmas season, NCTA staff and leaders responded to hundreds of media questions and request for interviews, plus consumer concerns on topics including "root rot", drought, sales, bugs, fire safety and more. But what if NCTA didn't exist?

The need for a recognized, nationwide Real Christmas Tree community - with the desire to have its voice heard - has never been stronger. NCTA's leadership will be continuing its focus on protection, advocacy, communication and collaboration. Show your support by making a contribution to the Real Tree Advocacy Fund or Legislative Action Fund. Visit www.realchristmastrees.org to download an investment form or call 636/449-5070.



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Elysian Hills Tree Farm Has a Buyer

Mary Lou and Bill Schmidt's Elysian Hills Tree Farm in Dummerston, VT is being sold to Jack and Karen Manix, owners of the nearby Walker Farm.

The Walker Farm, which has family roots that go back to 1770, is a diversified Garden Center/Farmstand that sells a wide selection of horticultural plants and certified organic produce. The farm consists of 92 acres 26 of which are organic cropland. The Walker Farm is widely publicized and was selected by Yankee Magazine as one of the top 5 garden centers in New England. Thirty to 35 local workers are seasonally employed and almost all crops

are marketed directly through the farmstand and three-season-CSA programs.

Christmas trees will be added to the mix of produce offered Walker Farm's CSA members and other customers. Walker Farm will also sell Elysian Hills' organic rhubarb and grow additional crops on the farm's 4-5 acres of certifiable organic cropland. Rare and unusual conifers may also be grown for sale in Walker Farm's Garden Center.

The Christmas tree operation will be headed by Aaron McFarland who is currently Walker Farm's nursery foreman. He and his partner Justine are now living in the

manufactured home at Elysian Hills.

Bill and Mary Lou will continue living in their house on the farm and are assisting in the transition of the farm operation to Aaron and the Walker Farm staff. They will participate in other ways too in the development of the Walker Farm/Elysian Hills relationship. The Manix's and Walker Farm are ideal owners for Elysian Hills given their family's deep roots in Dummerston, their appreciation of Elysian Hills as a historic farm, the stability and success of Walker Farm, and their plans for further diversification of Elysian Hills.

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Exotic Conifer Gathering

The Exotic Conifer Association's Annual Field Day will be held Friday, July 18, at Mahantongo Farms in Leck Kill, Pennsylvania.

Hosts Larry and Joanne Snyder established the farm in the early 1980s with 12 acres of woodland purchased from Larry's parents, and have since expanded the family-operated farm. They started mostly with Douglas fir and Fraser fir, but caught exotic fir fever in 2005 and planted 15 varieties of exotics and crosses. Today, over 25 varieties of conifers are grown on 75 acres.

In addition to a tour of the farm, the Field Day will include a business meeting of the Exotic Conifer Association, as well as technical presentations given by Larry Downey (Korean fir and hybrids) and Ricky M. Bates (Turkish and Nordmann fir).

A registration form for the meeting is included at right. For more information, email



Ricky M. Bates (top) and Larry Downey

downey.mp@sympatico.ca

This meeting will be in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association's summer meeting on the 19th of July. A copy of that registration form will be emailed to those attending the Exotic meeting and you are welcome to participate.

The contact person for the PCTGA is Jennifer Cramer (717-238-9765) or events@christmastrees.org

Registration & Meals Form

Sign up for:

- Name: _____
- Name: _____
- Name: _____
- Name: _____

Number of attendees	Price	Total
_____ X	\$40.00 members	_____
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Respond before July 15th
 Please make check payable to the
Exotic Conifer Association
 Mail to:
 8 Wild Berry Lane
 Underhill, Vt 05489



NCTA Tree and Wreath Contest

In 2014, NCTA will not hold a national convention or conference, returning to the biennial format traditionally used.

However, in 2014 the association will hold the annual National Tree and Wreath Contests in conjunction with the Michigan and Mid-America Christmas Tree Summer Meeting in Allegan, Michigan. The regional meeting will be held July 25-26, 2014, and will feature the larg-

est industry trade show in the Midwest as well as a variety of educational sessions, equipment demonstrations and tours. Producers from all states are welcome and encouraged to attend this regional event.

The National Christmas Tree & Wreath contests will coincide with the event. If you are just entering the National Tree or Wreath Contest, you do NOT need to register for the Michi-

gan/Mid-America event. You will still need to submit a contest entry form before the July 10 deadline.

Contest rules and entry forms for both trees and wreaths can be downloaded from the NCTA Web site:
www.realchristmastrees.org/
 Those interested in attending the event in Michigan can get more information at <http://www.mcta.org>.

Cooperative Fir Germplasm Evaluation Project

By Jay Bustard, Bustard's Christmas Trees & Rick Bates, associate professor, Penn State

CoFirGE (Cooperative Fir Germplasm Evaluation project), commonly referred to as the Turkish fir project, began in 2010 with Dr. John Frampton's seed collection trip to Turkey. Almost 100 pounds of Turkish fir seed from three locations and 85 pounds of Trojan fir (*Abies equi-trojani*) seed from two locations were collected. Seed came from approximately 60 cones from each of 100 trees representing a range of elevations within each of the collection locations.

Seedlings were produced as plugs at Kintigh's Mountain Home Ranch in Oregon, and shipped in February, 2013, to Jim Rockis/Reliable Source for freezer storage and spring distri-

bution to cooperating farms.

Trojan and Turkish fir were chosen for evaluation based upon their relative resistance to Phytophthora root rot, as well as their excellent Christmas tree characteristics. Numerous Christmas tree evaluation projects have been conducted in recent years across the U.S., but none have been as extensive as the CoFirGE project-over 30,000 trees will be evaluated on sites in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Connecticut, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Washington and Denmark. Over the 7-9 years of the study, numerous traits will be evaluated such as: growth rate, growth habit, bud development/terminal bud abortion/ bud break timing, needle retention, and tree quality/grade/potential profitability. Ap-

proximately eight years after planting, regions may choose to collect scion material to establish grafted clonal seed orchards from superior families.

How will consumer Christmas tree preferences change in coming years? What will be the next important Christmas tree species in the U.S.? Can an exotic species such as Turkish fir be grown profitably on my farm, and is this how I will stay ahead of the competition? These are important questions which have implications for the Christmas tree industry.

Hopefully, CoFirGE, and other Christmas tree research projects, will help keep the Christmas tree industry competitive. In order to satisfy consumer demand you always need to look to the future.



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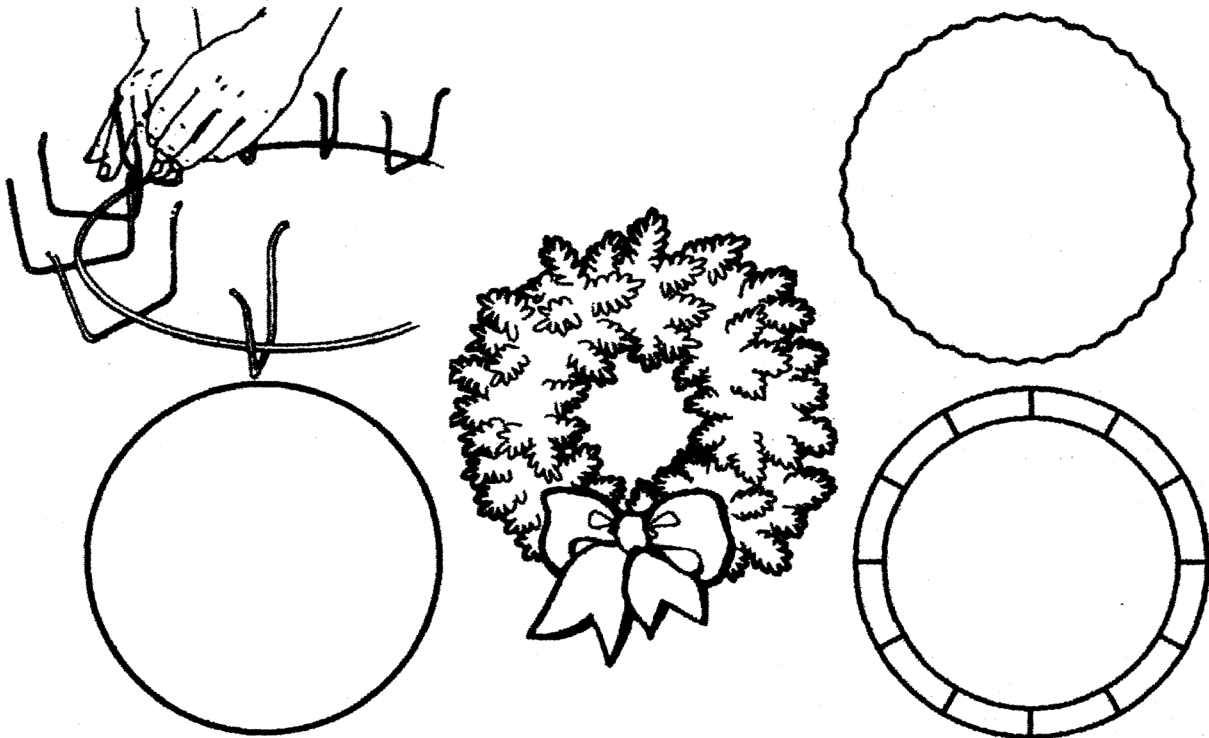
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Balsam-Fraser Hybrids: Vermont Seed Source	Spring 2015	2-2	\$0.90
Fraser Fir: N.C. (Rogers Mtn.) Seed Source	Spring 2015	2-2	\$0.90
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Mystery Tree: Late-Breaking Fraser Fir	Spring 2015	2-2	\$1.05
Canaan Fir: West Virginia Seed Source	SOLD OUT	2-2	\$1.00

Questions?? Contact Bill Asack evenings 6-8 p.m. 1-802-754-6934

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NHVTCTA Summer Meeting (continued)

Continued from page 1

pulled wildlings, put them in a transplant bed, and were in the tree business in a hurry. Once the farm was well established we moved here full-time in 1985.

“The second great example I had was Richard Downey, and it is my hope that he will be able to attend the meeting. Richard was always generous with his invaluable advice on how to go about the business and make it work on a profitable scale—a truly great innovator with machines and methods to produce high quality trees. The late John Ahrens must also be mentioned for his tireless assistance with herbicide research and evaluation. When you come, I will be happy to show you some of my innovations—which will certainly

fall short of ‘shock and awe’ and which will certainly amuse Richard.

“Finally, for the last 15 years my time has been evenly divided between the growing of trees and the building of gardens, which are now complete. My real life’s ambition was to be the world’s greatest tenor, which I worked on relentlessly from age 20 to 45. That never happened, but all the lyricism and passion one finds in music has now ended up in my gardens. It is my hope that you will be able to see that lyricism, refrain and harmony in the landscape. Appreciatively, Bryan.”

If you haven’t already registered for the meeting, you can do so onsite (without a guaranteed meal), or for more information contact Jim Horst at (802) 447-0660.

Help Wanted

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests is seeking a Christmas Tree Farm Manager to join its team at the Rocks Estate in Bethlehem NH. Full Time Position. Successful candidate must have experience in farming activities preferred; Christmas tree farm experience in particular. Full job description available at www.forestsociety.org. Please send resume to Rita Carroll, SPNHF, 54, Portsmouth Street Concord NH 03301 (e-mail rcarroll@forestsociety.org) by June 30. No phone calls.



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