



ERIC L. WILLIAMS, NGS STAFF

Citizens Join Together to Save Their Environment

When residents of Scientists Cliffs, Maryland, heard that forests and abandoned farms surrounding their homes were to be sold, possibly to developers, they bought the land. A tract of 436 wooded acres near the Chesapeake Bay became the American Chestnut Land Trust.

Peter Vogt, a government geophysicist who spearheaded the drive, never thought of saving the whole expanse when he started the movement in 1984. "But there was a lot of interest," he says. "Three hundred people have contributed. My share could have bought a new car." So what might have become a housing development or a golf course remains home to Maryland's only known colony of sweet pinesap and a single American chestnut, a species decimated by blight. Buoyed by its success, the trust hopes to help preserve the adjacent estuary of Parker Creek, where bald eagles circle and great blue herons stalk the salt marsh. Inquiries are welcome: ACLT, Box 204, Port Republic, Maryland 20676.