

American Chestnut Land Trust



Photograph by Emma Dodsworth

2013 Annual Report



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**American Chestnut
Land Trust, Inc.**

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2013 Board of Directors

Patrick J. Griffin, President
David F. Farr, Vice President
Peter N. Stathis, Treasurer *pro tem*
Gary A. Loew, Secretary
Greg A. Bowen
Denise Breitburg
Scott Galczynski
Elizabeth L. Johnston
Steve Kullen
John Little
Wilson Parran
Suzanne Shelden
Guy Tomassoni
Randi Vogt

2013 ACLT Staff

Karen H. Edgecombe,
Executive Director
Tricia Realbuto,
Community Relations Coordinator
Steven M. Gaines,
Land Manager

Volunteer Office Staff

Paul Berry,
Treasurer (1996-2013)
Philip Gross,
Chesapeake Conservation Corps
Jeff Klapper,
Farm Manager
Ginny Murphy,
Membership Coordinator

ACLT Mission Statement

“We promote land conservation throughout Calvert County, Maryland. We provide environmentally sustainable public access to preserved properties for educational, scientific, recreational and cultural purposes. We protect the natural and cultural resources of the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds for the benefit of this and future generations.”

Preservation, Planning & Permanence

The year 2013 was characterized by three keys to success — preservation, planning and permanence:

1. We picked up the pace on land preservation with the acquisition of the 36-acre Harrod property;
2. The Board of Directors continued to play to its strength in long-range strategic planning with the adoption of a new five-year plan, the fifth such planning document in the organization’s 28-year history; and
3. The land trust dedicated itself to the permanence of our conservation efforts by submitting a successful application for national accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and was awarded the accreditation seal which “recognizes organizations for meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent.”



Karen H. Edgecombe,
Executive Director



The Harrod Property, a 36-acre wooded property

Land Acquisition and Preservation:

ACLT's Board of Directors has had an interest in acquiring the Harrod property since at least 1992. Over the years, we sought to initiate negotiations with the landowners on several occasions. Our persistence finally paid off on August 22, 2013 when ACLT acquired this strategically located property for preservation.

The property is located at the corner of Parkers Creek Road and Scientists Cliffs Road. It adjoins ACLT's Gravatt West property as well as the Jewell Glass property originally donated to The Nature

Conservancy and now owned by the Scientists Cliffs Association.

The property adds to the large unbroken quality of the watershed by connecting with already preserved woodlands (Gravatt West and Jewell Glass) and contributes to water quality protection in Parkers Creek and its marshes. The property contains the headwaters of the Jett Stream, a major tributary of Parkers Creek. The entire length of the Jett Stream — from Harrod, through Gravatt West, Wallace, Showalter, Commodore, Russell, and Warrior's Rest to its confluence with Parkers Creek is now preserved.



Official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the Prince Frederick to Bay Overlook Trail.

Land Management:

ACLT completed the Prince Frederick to the Bay Overlook Trail (PF2BAY), a 4.5 mile addition to ACLT's trail network, in 2013. There are many people to thank for the successful completion of this project.

The vision for the trail began in 1994 when Calvert County planning staff member and charter ACLT member Randi Vogt first proposed the idea of a greenway from the Patuxent River to the Chesapeake Bay across the middle of Calvert County using the Parkers Creek and Battle Creek watersheds.

Land preservation efforts stretching from the mid-1990s through 2012 set the stage for the new trail. They began with ACLT's purchase of Double Oak Farm, quickly followed by the purchase of several properties on the north side of Parkers Creek by The Nature Conservancy and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. In 2004, Calvert County purchased a property essential to the greenway with funds provided by the Maryland Rural Legacy Program. In 2012, ACLT purchased the final property necessary to connect to the town center of Prince Frederick with funds provided by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

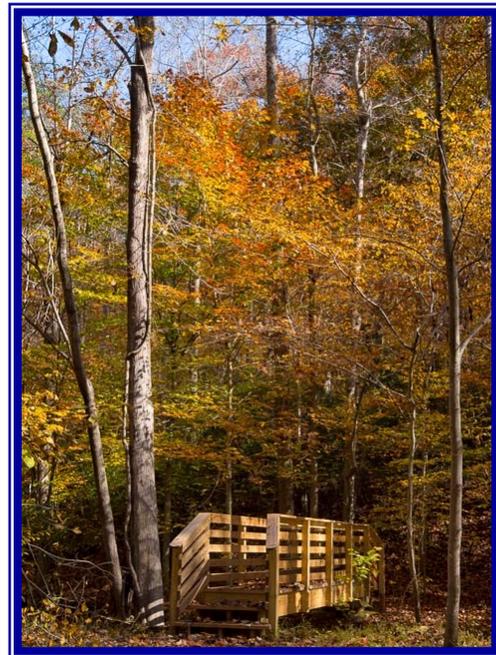
Dominion Resources provided funds to construct the bay overlook that provides seasonal views of the mouth of Parkers Creek and the Chesapeake Bay at the end of the trail. Baltimore Gas & Electric and Calvert County entered agreements with ACLT authorizing the trail to cross their properties.

The trail was planned to minimize the number of stream crossings required, but still there were five streams that required footbridges. ACLT volunteer Art Cochran provided invaluable surveying and wetland delineation support for the necessary permits while ACLT board member Scott Galczynski provided architectural drawings for both the overlook platform and the bridges.

Initially one high school student, Ian McClain, volunteered to construct one of the five bridges as his Eagle Scout project. Ian, his father and brother met with the Western Shore District of the Boy Scouts of America and presented the project. Ian's troop, #903, led by Scoutmaster Chip Zawislak, Venture Crew #903 led by Advisor Bob Simmons and troop #430 led by Scoutmaster Richard Thompson all agreed to help.

Somehow, over the course of six months, working almost every weekend, Ian and his volunteers, with tactical help from ACLT volunteer and engineer Ken Romney delivered

hundreds of pounds of concrete and lumber to the remote bridge sites. They purchased materials at a substantial discount from Sneade's Ace Hardware and developed a three-phase plan for the construction of each bridge. With almost 900 volunteer hours, five beautiful, indestructible bridges were done!



PF2BAY Footbridge. Photograph courtesy Dave Farr.

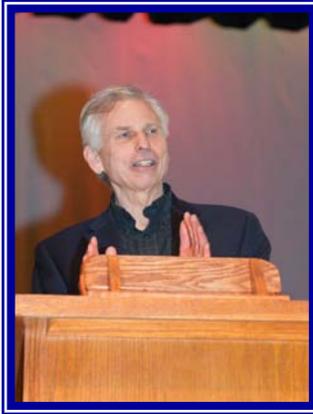
ACLT board member and artist Suzanne Shelden volunteered her considerable graphic talents to the design of trail guides (maps), trail markers, and the trailhead kiosk.

The new PF2BAY trail was truly a community service project built by the ACLT community of volunteers. We are very pleased to provide this amenity to the Calvert County community for their use and enjoyment.

Outreach and Membership:

ACLT's 26th Annual Meeting of the Membership

was held on March 9, 2013. Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) was our keynote speaker. Under his leadership, LTA has built strong bi-partisan relationships with members of Congress and dramatically expanded federal tax incentives for conservation. Mr. Wentworth has also led the Alliance in establishing a national accreditation program for land trusts backed by a strong 16-course curriculum of resource materials available on line. Rand is an avid hiker who enjoys spending time on land trust properties throughout the country. As a resident of Maryland, he has visited ACLT properties on several occasions and was very complimentary of ACLT and its work.



Rand Wentworth, President of LTA. Photograph by Bruce Armstrong.

We had a record number of volunteers join us for **Water Quality Monitoring Training** in March. The training was led by Guy Tomassoni and Lora Harris who gave our volunteers an inside look into watershed ecolo-

gy and taught them the importance of the monitoring program while providing some hands on experience in collecting samples.

The **Double Oak Farm CSA** has now completed four successful seasons with Jeff Klapper serving as its volunteer farm manager. ACLT is very grateful to Jeff for getting the program off to a great start.



Jeff Klapper amongst the Double Oak Farm CSA veggies. Photograph by BL Johnston.

ACLT's **guided canoe trips** continued to attract visitors in 2013.



Cub Scout Troop 789 entering the mouth of Parkers Creek.

Administration and Fundraising:

The Board of Directors met in July to hammer out a new **Five-Year Plan for the period 2014-2018**. The plan includes a look back at significant accomplishments of the previous five-year plan, including:

- ◆ Significant improvements to both the north and south side trails;
- ◆ Development of the Double Oak Farm CSA program;
- ◆ Eradication of invasive bamboo at the south side trailhead;
- ◆ Creation of a native plant garden at the south side trailhead;
- ◆ Adoption of a Master Plan for Facilities and Interpretation;
- ◆ Construction of a new barn at the north side trailhead;
- ◆ Creation of the Prince Frederick to the Bay Overlook trail;
- ◆ Reached goal to fund the land management endowment at \$2 million; and
- ◆ Achieved national accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

The introduction to the new plan describes the current state of the land trust: *“ACLT and its partners have preserved 3,116 acres of forest, wetlands and fields to create the largest natural area in Calvert County. The Parkers Creek Preserve is visited by thousands of people annually and the popularity of our hiking trails continues to grow throughout the mid-Atlantic area. Researchers utilize the Preserve to determine baseline conditions given that it is the most undeveloped watershed on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland.”*

The Board’s new plan is based on the premise that the Parkers Creek Preserve will continue to grow in size, possibly by as much as 20% by the end of the planning period. This will inevitably increase ACLT’s land management responsibilities.

The plan also calls for significant expansion of the land trust’s outreach programs to engage and educate members of the community including the following specific plans: 1) ACLT will take a leadership role in developing a new network of conservation-oriented organizations to work together towards a sustainable future for Calvert County; 2) the board has identified a list of initiatives to be taken in the short term to grow the membership; and 3) a longer-term development and engagement plan will be adopted to broaden the community’s participation as members and volunteers in ACLT’s mission.

The plan anticipates a need to grow the land trust’s human resources and financial capacity in order to accomplish these land management and outreach goals. The board will develop a strategic plan for future fundraising and determine specifically what additional demands on human resources, both volunteer and staff, will be required to accomplish the plan’s goals.

Budget and Finance:

Operating income and expenditures in 2013 compared favorably with 2012. Once again, we are happy to report that ACLT received a clean, unqualified opinion on our 2012 audit from our auditors, Mullen, Sondberg, Wimbish & Stone, CPA. ACLT continues to work with our investment advisor, Brown Investment Advisory & Trust Company of Baltimore, Maryland, on the management of the Land Management Endowment.

American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Summary of Financial Status for Calendar Years 2012 and 2013
(Unaudited)

Income:	2012	2013
Memberships	15,815	18,010
Contributions and Memorials	94,362	91,861
Grants, General	112,868	102,612
Grants, Restricted	24,750	20,000
Program Income	36,573	37,864
Land Management Endowment Support	67,450	72,400
Double Oak Farm CSA	15,652	15,635
All Other Income	<u>5,130</u>	<u>4,686</u>
Total Income	372,600	363,068
Expenditures:		
Land Acquisition and Preservation	35,585	40,155
Land Management	108,757	103,269
Outreach and Member Services	85,312	87,952
Administration and Fundraising	51,402	59,409
Restricted Grants	49,117	12,074
Double Oak Farm CSA	22,771	14,182
All Other Expenditures	<u>17,522</u>	<u>6,904</u>
Total Expenditures	323,021	323,945

Year-End Special Fund Balances

Land Management Endowment Fund	2,063,784	2,030,310
Land Acquisition Fund	267,078	190,662
Land Preservation Fund (Harrod)	75,000	0
Legal Defense Fund	50,000	50,000
Building Fund	76,974	76,974
Easement Monitoring Fund	14,921	14,921
Repair and Replacement Fund	16,418	24,908
State Land Management Fund	23,489	22,892
Double Oak Farm CSA	4,095	4,423
Restricted Gifts Carryover	13,396	18,339