

Watershed Observer



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST - VOLUME 32 NO. 2 SPRING 2018

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Preserving Holly Hill's Agricultural History

The 405-acre property known as Holly Hill is near and dear to the ACLT community for many reasons. First and foremost, it creates the unique gateway to ACLT's Northside Trailhead and office. If you've ever traveled on Double Oak Road, you've experienced one of the most beautiful and historic roadways Calvert County has to offer. Until ACLT's tireless efforts paid off with the permanent protection of Holly Hill in late October 2017, this breathtaking property was in danger of being lost forever. Not only would a potential development have demolished the nostalgia associated with Double Oak Road, but it would have also posed serious erosional issues because of Holly Hill's steep topography and highly erodible soil types. Additionally, some of Calvert County's oldest cultural and historical artifacts would have been destroyed. The 60-acre farm on Holly Hill has been dated to the 18th century and two tobacco barns remain at the southern border of the easternmost farm field in the same spot almost 300 years later!



Tobacco Barns 18th century (right) and 19th century (left) on Holly Hill

COMING UP ON THE CALENDAR

APRIL

21 SAT – EARTH DAY 5K TRAIL RUN
(CHECK IN: 8:00AM; RUN START: 9:00AM, HIKERS TO FOLLOW)

22 SUN – EARTH DAY CLEAN UP
(12:00PM–3:00PM)

28 SAT. – CANOE GUIDE TRAINING
(12:30PM–4:30PM)

29 SUN – SPRING GUIDED FAMILY HIKE
(1:00PM–2:30PM, 3:30 FOR OLDER KIDS)

SEE MORE OF THE 2018 CALENDAR ON PAGE 6 OR ONLINE AT [HTTP://ACLTWEB.ORG](http://acltweb.org).

ACLT was able to preserve this property and save it from irreversible environmental damage; however, conventional agriculture and previous logging efforts have had some impacts on the property. One impact, compacted soil, poses a threat to the health of the agricultural fields and the ecosystem which surrounds them. When water cannot properly drain through soil, it moves across the surface of the soil and converges in the lowest spot possible. Already, the highly erodible soils on the fringes of the fields have washed away due to an increase in the volume of water being funneled from large sections of the fields into a few low spots. This has created large, dangerous gullies as soils have been washed away down the Horse Swamp tributary into Parkers Creek. With each weather event, Holly Hill sees additional inches of precious agricultural land lost into these gullies. Not only does this decrease the amount of productive, historic farmland, but it also degrades stream health.

Erosion around stream beds is a natural process; however, over time each erosional event is typically stabilized by vegetation as its roots hold the soils and nutrients in the ground, allowing the ecosystem to become balanced. But, when stream beds receive frequent influxes of high velocity storm water, the stabilization process is harder and sometimes does not happen at all. This is the case with Holly Hill. Storm-water, which cannot drain through the fields, pools up and creates gushing water on a destructive pathway unrooting vegetation and carrying away sediment and nutrients into Parkers Creek and eventually the bay. Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous which are usually added to agricultural fields can be dangerous for streams when leached from soils. One consequence is intense algal blooms. These thick algal mats are problematic for macroinvertebrates,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

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Published quarterly by the American Chestnut Land Trust. The ACLT is dedicated to the preservation of Calvert County, Maryland's Natural and Historical Resources. Since it was established in 1986, ACLT has preserved over 3,200 acres. We own 1390 acres, manage 1,819 acres owned by the State of Maryland, and hold conservation easements on 374 privately-owned acres.

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From the President's Desk

Mary Dwan: ACLT's Champion and Friend

The clouds got a little darker and it rained a bit harder when we got the unexpected sad news of the passing of a dear friend to ACLT and many of its members, Mary Dwan.

Mary has been a quiet and strong force in the spirit and reality of ACLT. She and her husband, Ralph, worked tirelessly and gave generously to launch ACLT and get it on its path to success. They, along with a few committed neighbors and friends, struggled hard to make the idea of how best to preserve land in the Parkers Creek watershed a full-blown reality.

In subsequent years, Ralph had a more visible role in ACLT; however, Mary remained fully engaged and committed to its mission, activities, and financial viability. Since Ralph's passing, Mary continued her interest and support. And as always, she maintained a hallmark of the Dwan family's community engagement by offering assistance quietly and generously.

As her next-door neighbor, there was rarely a weekend in which our paths didn't cross. She often raised a question or had a suggestion for the ACLT Board or staff. Her comments were always constructive and helpful. Her continued contribution was recognized by the Board, so much so that we asked her to be a founding member of the newly formed Advisory Committee.

She always brought her comments, curiosity, and smiling eyes to our weekend encounters. That is not to say Mary was without some critical observations of, let me say, world affairs. Fortunately, we were of the same political persuasion so I was spared some of her laser wit and characterizations. Nevertheless, no matter how sharp they may have been, they all provoked serious thoughts and smiles.

Mary struck many of us who had a chance to know her as a woman with her feet firmly on the ground. She had an obvious inner strength that was a source of guidance and caring to many. This presence often has many sources but her faith seemed to be an important one. Regardless of one's own orientation to these matters, you could not help but respect the dignity of hers.

All who knew her will certainly feel the loss.

ACLT will embrace her legacy and work to preserve her memory in every action we take to fulfill the mission that she helped create.

Patrick Griffin, President

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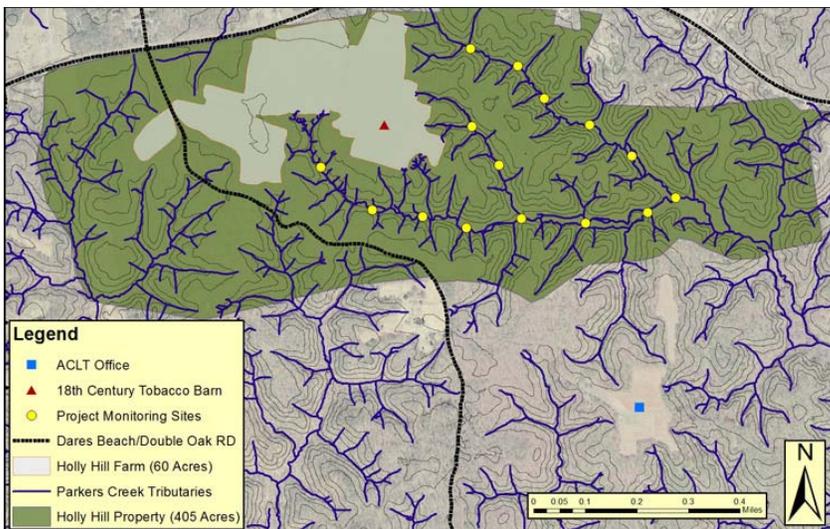
fish, and other life because they deprive the water of dissolved oxygen, increase turbidity, and thwart sunlight penetration.



Holly Hill gullies at the headwaters of the Horse Swamp tributary created by storm runoff and erosion

The good news is that we can regenerate our compacted soils and streams with Best Management Practices (BMP). The current farmer has already implemented BMPs including leaving crop residue and planting cover crops, for the first time ever on Holly Hill, during the winter 2017-2018 season. Other measures such as a vegetative buffer strip and water diversion techniques are being explored. In the meantime, as we work to heal our soils and stabilize the streambanks on the Holly Hill property, it is important to continuously monitor the health of the streams to understand how the environment is responding to these changes.

First, a baseline of ecosystem health needs to be established to serve as a comparison with future years. My project, *Surveying Effects of Agricultural Runoff on Aquatic Ecosystem Health*, is designed to gather a complete baseline assessment of the stream health and understand what is happening during storm events at the headwaters of the Horse Swamp tributary. From March until September 2018, water samples will be taken at 15 locations throughout the headwaters each month and analyzed for total suspended solids, nitrogen, phosphorous, carbon, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and conductivity. During March, macroinvertebrates will be sampled at the same 15 locations and identified to the family



Map of the Holly Hill property, farm and sampling sites

level. Habitat will also be characterized at each site, allowing for a holistic picture of ecosystem health. All sampling will mimic Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS) methods and produce a unique index of biological integrity (IBI) score at each site. These scores will help ACLT understand where in the tributary, if at all, the stream habitat is seriously degraded and needs stewardship. Storm sampling will be conducted at 2 sites during the spring and summer season. One site will be the most severely degraded gully off of Holly Hill Farm and one will be a relatively pristine reference site. Storm sampling will include measuring the concentration of nitrogen and total suspended solids in storm water during four storm events per season to analyze how Holly Hill Farm's runoff is impacting Parkers Creek.

ACLT hopes this study will give insight into the repercussions of the erosion issues on Holly Hill and how to fix them so that we can preserve Calvert County's rich historical and cultural beginnings of 18th century agriculture. If you would like to volunteer on this project or find out more information, please do not hesitate to call or send me an email at ccc@actweb.org.

Taylor Roswall
ACLT Chesapeake Conservation
Corps Member



Double Oak Farm
is looking for
VOLUNTEERS!

Help us support our local food pantry
with fresh, naturally grown fruits
and vegetables!

Email us at info@actweb.org
for more info

Around Act

Five Year Plan Process Underway

“Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare.” Japanese Proverb

To achieve its mission, the board takes time out every five years to develop a new strategic plan for the next five years. In addition to covering the three main aspects of ACLT’s mission, the five-year plan also focuses on management of the land trust as a not-for-profit corporation. All three parts of our mission and administration of the land trust are of equal importance in the long-run.

The current plan has helped to set us up for the next. Many management improvements were implemented. Our Membership and Outreach programs have increased membership. Our Land Management programs (the Master Naturalist Program, trail maintenance programs, and Double Oak Farm Program) have built capacity to do more. Our Land Acquisition and Preservation Program has protected key properties.

Both the campaign to buy Holly Hill and the actual purchase of Holly Hill may prove a turning point in our history. We now own the last major parcel, securing the northern boundary of the watershed. A couple of parcels remain on the list for protection in the Parkers Creek and Governor’s Run watersheds, but nothing like Holly Hill in scale.

What should our focus be in the 2019-2023 Plan? Many of us who are participating in the Calvert County comprehensive planning process have been expressing concern about the decline in the rate of land preservation, especially considering the emphasis that the draft plan and all previous comprehensive plans have placed on the importance of protecting Calvert’s rural landscapes. Such advocacy is certainly consistent with the part of our mission, which calls for us “To promote land conservation throughout Calvert County.”

Another item likely to be emphasized will be what to do with our newest acquisition – Holly Hill. In the Holly Hill easement the state required very specific areas of land use designation, lengthy listings of uses allowed (and not allowed), and even specific limits to impervious surfaces. In some ways, the easement writes the Master Plan. However, we have the right to place trails in the forest conservation areas and we are allowed to do agriculture-related activities and build support structures on the 60-acre farm. A master planning process will be underway for Holly in 2018 and it is likely that the 5 Year Planning process will include recommendations that will apply to Holly Hill. Especially when there is a possibility that there might be a pivot in focus, there is a great need for broad engagement with members, funders, and friends.

For these reasons, there is merit in using a wider set of participation tools, such as member surveys, interest/topic group meetings, as well as working with our standing committees. Therefore, when asked to participate, please say yes!!

Greg Bowen, Executive Director

Parkers Creek has benefited, in many ways, from ACLT’s Five Year Plans.



Celebrate Earth Day with ACLT

Together we can preserve, care for & share the land!



5k Run & Hike Fundraiser!

Saturday 4/21

8am Check in

9am Start

Register at ACLWeb.org

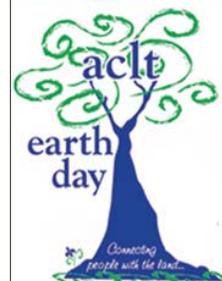


Clean Up Day

Sunday 4/22

12 -3pm

Email to register
info@acltweb.org



Come out, get involved, & show your support!

Land Manager's Corner

Conservation Beyond Our Borders

In 2013, ACLT finished its current 5-year plan which outlined the mission and goals that ACLT would work to achieve over the next 5 years. That plan listed 13 properties that were a priority for preservation. Since that plan was adopted, 4 of those 13 properties have been purchased by either ACLT or DNR, including Holly Hill which was acquired in October of 2017. Six of the remaining properties on the original list of 13 have owners who are not interested in preserving their properties or are not located within a Rural Legacy area, thus we have no options for preserving them at this time. This means that there are just a few key properties remaining in the Parkers Creek watershed for ACLT to aim to preserve.

As the ACLT staff, membership, and Board of Directors look ahead to the next 5-year plan and the future of ACLT beyond the next 5 years, we find ourselves asking “what is ACLT’s next big goal?” ACLT has never been an organization made up of individuals that were content with what had already been accomplished. Our founders had very ambitious ideas from the very start. Will we be content with spurring land preservation, stewardship, and environmental awareness in the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds, or could we have a broader impact?

At ACLT we view many things at the watershed level, but many people don’t know what watershed they live in and have no idea what the health of that watershed is. For many, driving over a bridge or culvert is their only connection to the bodies of water that surround them. People may not have ever considered preserving their property or, if they have, may not know where to start. Some of us at ACLT believe that we may be able to change these things.

ACLT is proposing a “Watershed Awareness Program”; a 4-Phase project that will initially be implemented in two subwatersheds in Calvert County and will aim to increase the watershed awareness of residents within those two subwatersheds. The Watershed Awareness Program is based on the idea that ACLT might not have ever started at all if its founding members hadn’t first paddled Parkers Creek or walked the trails on the Gravatt property. There had to be affection for the land and water to motivate people to protect and steward it.

The first phase of the Program is to determine two subwatersheds in which to initiate the efforts. ACLT will rely heavily on Master Naturalists and other volunteers to carry out this project so the number of interested volunteers residing in each watershed will be taken into account when deciding which of Calvert’s 22 subwatersheds to engage first. Other factors that will be taken into account will



be size and health of the watershed, proximity to Parkers Creek watershed, the availability of access to waterways and forests, and the possibility of land preservation within that watershed. Phase 1 of the project is already underway as ACLT is gathering data to determine the first two watersheds in which to focus our efforts.

Phase 2 of the Program will be to organize interested volunteers into groups that will work within each of the two watersheds. Volunteers will then be informed of the current ecological health of those watersheds and on the basics of land preservation opportunities in Calvert County. Then, volunteers will work with staff to brainstorm activities that can be hosted to engage members of the communities within those watersheds and determine how to get the word out about the activities. The main goal of these activities is for the community members to enjoy the natural resources in their watershed and to initiate the natural progression from awareness to action. If they can explore a creek by kayak or discover the wildlife supported in their watershed by going on a guided bird watching trip, they will become more connected to the environment around them and begin to care about what happens to it.

The third phase will be implementing these various community engagement activities in the two selected watersheds. At these events, ACLT and the Watershed Awareness Program will always be mentioned so that the big picture goals of expanding awareness of ACLT and other subwatershed health are highlighted but this portion of the program will be kept brief so that the focus is on the experience in their watershed. As the Program progresses to Phase 4, community engagement activities will shift from a focus purely on enjoyment to stewardship activities. Such activities might entail water quality monitoring, trash cleanups, riparian plantings, or invasive species removal.

Also during Phase 4, the community members will begin to organize activities on their own, thus increasing environmental awareness and stewardship in Calvert County with less direct involvement from ACLT. As ACLT forms stronger relationships with various property owners in other watersheds, those who wish to preserve their property can look to ACLT for guidance on the best land preservation program for them. ACLT plans to reach out to other land trusts in Calvert and connect them to landowners interested in preserving their property. So, while ACLT may not be purchasing property in other watersheds, the organization will still be able to expand its impact on land preservation and stewardship in a broader area of Calvert County by working with land owners and connecting them to the appropriate land trust or county or state land preservation program.

Autumn Phillips-Lewis
ACLT Land Manager

ACLT Guided Canoe Trips

2018 Schedule

May	12	Guided Canoe Trip (12:30pm – 3:30pm)
	26	Guided Canoe Trip (12:30pm – 3:30pm)
June	16	SUNSET Canoe Trip (5pm - 8pm)
	23	Guided Canoe Trip (11am – 2pm)
July	7	Guided Canoe Trip (9am – 12pm)
Aug.	4	SUNRISE Canoe Trip (7:30am – 10:30am)
Sept	1	SUNRISE Canoe Trip (6:30am – 9:30am)
	22	Guided Canoe Trip (1pm – 4pm)
Oct.	6	Guided Canoe Trip (12:30pm – 3:30pm)
	20	Guided Canoe Trip (12pm - 3pm)

Limited space. Register early!



American Chestnut Land Trust Calendar of Events

April

- 21 Sat – Earth Day 5K Trail Run (Check In: 8:00am; Run Start: 9:00am, hikers to follow)
- 22 Sun – Earth Day Clean Up (12:00pm–3:00pm)
- 28 Sat. – Canoe Guide Training (12:30pm–4:30pm)
- 29 Sun – Spring Guided Family Hike (1:00pm–2:30pm, 3:30 for older kids)

May

- 27 Sun – Mountain Laurel Hike (1:00–3:00pm) (tentative-depending on bloom)

June

- 10 Sun – 2nd Sundays at ACLT: Family Day (1:00pm–4:00pm)

July

- 8 Sun – 2nd Sundays at ACLT: Theme TBD (1:00pm–4:00pm)

August

- 12 Sun – 2nd Sundays at ACLT: The Dog Days of Summer (1:00pm–4:00pm)

September

- 29 Sat – Parkers Creek Challenge (tentatively 7am)

October

- 6–7 Sat & Sun – Patuxent River Appreciation Days (10:00am–5:00pm)
- 20 Sat – ACLT Sip & Save (Regional Beer Tasting Fundraiser)
- 28 Sun – Fall Colors Guided Hike (1:00–3:00pm)

November

- 3 Sat – 23rd Annual Auction & Dinner
- 10 Sat – Fall Hiking Trail Maintenance Day (9:00am–12:00pm, picnic lunch)
- 29 Thu – Wreath-Making Workshop (6pm–9pm)
- 30 Fri – Wreath-Making Workshops (10am–2pm)

December

- 1 Sat – Holiday Wreath & Greens Sale at ACLT South Side Barn (11:00am–2:00pm)

Fishing for Diversity:

Part 2. Aquatic Community Surveys and Habitat Characterization in Parkers Creek

In the last issue of *The Watershed Observer*, we discussed the importance of biodiversity to ACLT and steps we took to document it in 2017. Part 1 of this article introduced our study to identify various aquatic species in tidal Parkers Creek and this article discusses the results and takeaway messages.

In the months of March, June, August, and October 2017, fish diversity was sampled at 12 different sites within Parkers Creek. From the 12 sites sampled (5 trap and 7 seine), 25 species of fish, shellfish, and jellyfish were found (Table 1).

Parkers Creek	S = 25
Species	N
Atlantic Menhaden (<i>Brevoortia tyrannus</i>)	2
Atlantic Blue Crab <i>Callinectes sapidus</i>)	59
Atlantic Sea Nettle <i>Chrysaora quequincirra</i>)	9
Spotted Sea Trout (<i>Cynoscion nebulosus</i>)	3
Sheepshead Minnow (<i>Cyprinodon variegatus</i>)	1
Chreek Chubsucker (<i>Erimyzon oblongus</i>)	1
Mummichog (<i>Fundulus heteroclitus</i>)	498
Striped Killifish (<i>Fundulus majalis</i>)	42
Naked Goby (<i>Gobiosoma bosc</i>)	8
Spot (<i>Leiostomus xanthurus</i>)	7
Green Sunfish (<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>)	17
Pumpkinseed (<i>Lepomis gibbosus</i>)	24
Inland Silverside (<i>Menidia beryllina</i>)	2
Atlantic Silverside (<i>Menidia menidia</i>)	20
Atlantic Croaker (<i>Micropogonias undulates</i>)	14
White Perch (<i>Morone americana</i>)	15
Striped Bass (<i>Morone saxatilis</i>)	2
Grass Shrimp (<i>Palaemonetes</i>)	302
Atlantic Mud Crab (<i>Panopeus herbstii</i>)	1
Summer Flounder (<i>Paralichthys dentatus</i>)	2
Black Drum (<i>Pogonias cromis</i>)	19
Red Drum (<i>Sciaenops ocellatus</i>)	8
Creek Chub (<i>Semotilus atromaculatus</i>)	4
Atlantic Needlefish (<i>Strongylura marina</i>)	1
Hogchoker (<i>Trinectes maculatus</i>)	4

Table 1. Species caught in Tidal Parkers Creek. N = number of individuals and S = species richness.

The evenness of this community was calculated at 0.53, with 1 being completely even and 0 having no even spread of individuals across species. The vast majority of individuals caught were mummichogs, an important fish species for the Bay's various ecosystems. Mummichogs and other bait fish, such as menhaden, are crucial links in the trophic web. So important, that many fisheries services are protecting forage species in order to maintain a robust commercial fishery (Wheeler, 2016). In addition to this, 5 species of Sciaenid (family of fish commonly known as drums), 2 species of temperate bass (striped bass and white perch), and 1 species of flounder were captured. Most people recognize these fish from their plates or from good times had fishing in the Bay. Five species were sampled at our beach site (Table 2) and 9 species were collected from the two tributaries while electrofishing (Table 3). Unfortunately, the infamous northern snakehead (*Channa argus*) was one of these species. Water quality (Table 4) and vegetation analysis proved to benefit our understanding of the Parkers Creek ecosystem. Near the mouth of the creek, the major flora was consistently that of *Spartina* grasses, high-tide bush, and the occasional patch of *Phragmites*. As you work your way upstream, the flora changes into salt-intolerant cattails (*Typha spp.*), and arrow arum, and eventually progresses into riparian forest of red maple, *Sassafras*, black locust, *Viburnum*, and slightly larger patches of *Phragmites*. Water quality mirrors this change in flora as salinity averages ranged from 8.52 parts per thousand (ppt) at the mouth of the creek to 3.47 ppt at the

Beach	S = 5
Species	N
Atlantic Sea Nettle (<i>Chrysaora quequincirra</i>)	16
Striped Killifish (<i>Fundulus majalis</i>)	1
Inland Silverside (<i>Menidia beryllina</i>)	3
Atlantic Silverside (<i>Menidia menidia</i>)	61
Red Drum (<i>Sciaenops ocellatus</i>)	2

Table 2. Species caught during seine haul off of beach near mouth of Parkers Creek. N= # of individuals and S= species richness

PC Tributaries (Horse Swamp and NS Trail)	S = 9
Species	N
Pumpkinseed (<i>Lepomis gibbosus</i>)	15
Eastern Mosquito Fish (<i>Gambusia holbrooki</i>)	123
Eastern Mudminnow (<i>Umbra pygmaea</i>)	356
Golden Shiner (<i>Notemigonus crysoleucas</i>)	6
Northern Snakehead (<i>Channa argus</i>)	3
Green Sunfish (<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>)	43
Creek Chubsucker (<i>Erimyzon oblongus</i>)	5
Brown Bullhead (<i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i>)	1
American Eel (<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>)	50

Table 3. Species caught during tributary electrofishing in July 2017. N= # of individuals and S= species richness

Water Quality Parameters							
Site	Salinity (ppt)	Conductivity (mS)	Saturated DO (%)	DO (mg/L)	pH	Depth (m)	Water Clarity (Kd)
1 (Mouth)	8.52	14.61	107.52	8.79	7.88	0.78	3.08
2	8.08	13.88	106.48	8.74	7.79	0.88	3.87
3	6.12	10.74	82.05	7.00	7.27	1.62	4.33
4	5.46	9.64	81.80	6.97	7.17	0.87	6.22
5	5.09	9.03	82.33	6.90	7.19	1.58	3.50
6	4.28	7.66	86.42	7.35	7.20	1.32	3.60
7	3.46	6.30	96.60	8.09	7.22	0.73	4.26
\bar{x}	5.86	10.26	91.89	7.69	7.39	1.11	4.12
s	1.87	3.07	11.54	0.83	0.31	0.38	1.02

Table 4. Water quality data collected during each of the seine surveys and averaged.

furthest upstream seine net site (roughly halfway upstream). As the salinity in the water decreases the plant communities change, and the fish communities mirror this transition as well. Further upstream, species such as the pumpkinseed (*L. gibbosus*), green sunfish (*L. cyanellus*), creek chubsucker (*E. oblongus*), and creek chub (*S. atromaculatus*) made their presence known. These are all predominately freshwater fish, and this community structure differed greatly from the drums, basses, and killifish observed closer toward the mouth of the creek.

Now, this data raises some questions. What does all of this mean in relation to the health of Parkers Creek? Can we claim Parkers Creek has a strong diversity of fish? I find it is best that we remain conservative in our claims until further analysis is completed. In order to gauge the depth of diversity within Parkers Creek, a comparison with species data collected from other Calvert Creeks (using similar methodology) should be made.

Yet, we have gained much from this project. A robust baseline of fish species has been documented, including all of the protocols utilized, for future reference and surveying. A monitoring program can be established where these surveys are completed in succession in order to gain insight into how these communities are changing, for better or for worse. Additionally, the environmental data collected during this survey creates another type of baseline. If the fish assemblages do change significantly in the years to come, the habitat will provide clues as to why these fish communities might be shifting. And, while we should not make bold claims of what the creek does hold, we can safely assume that many species of fish, whether they are forage species or of commercial and recreational importance, are finding refuge in Parkers Creek. Small bait fish, such as the Atlantic silverside (*M. menidia*) seek shelter in the creek from larger predatory fish. Likewise, the young-of-the-year of recreationally and commercially important species such as the American striped bass, red and black drum, croaker, white perch, etc. are all finding solace in this tidal creek ecosystem until they are large enough to fend for themselves in the vast waters of the Chesapeake Bay.

ACLT would like to thank several organizations in helping to bring this project to fruition: the Lora Harris Lab staff from the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory for their dedication to collecting and processing water quality samples; Robert Aguilar, Dr. Denise Breitburg, and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center for making electrofishing a possibility as well as lending equipment and advice; Dr. Ronald Klau- da for his unconditional advising; and, of course, ACLT's dedicated volunteer force who truly made this an enjoyable and unforgettable experience.

Michael Molina
ACLT Assistant Land Manager

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Mary Dwan

I was invited to write about Mary Dwan (Ralph's wife) in the context of the ACLT. Let me begin by saying that the circle of those whom Mary influenced grew even larger as a result of the ACLT. Perhaps her most telling characteristic was empathy and compassion for the problems of others. She really cared about people. Many of us routinely ask how others are, but then forget what they say. Mary remembered and would inquire weeks or months later.

The senior Dwans (Mary's in-laws) had first rented (1942-46), then owned (starting 1946), a weekend/vacation cabin in Scientists Cliffs for many years before we Vogts arrived in 1969. However we did not get to know Ralph and Mary Dwan well until it was revealed (August 1984) that the 580 acres of undeveloped land Mrs. Gravatt (the developer's widow) still owned next to and within Scientists Cliffs was not mentioned in her 1980 will. An informal group of community land preservationists formed, among them Ralph Dwan. Especially after an *ad hoc* "Environmental Preservation Committee" was formed (November, 1985), we explored ways to preserve the 430 acres that would become the original ACLT in late 1986. All this involved countless committee meetings and other discussions, many at the Dwan residence, with Mary present as host. As Randi [Vogt] (now on the ACLT BOD) recalls, she and Mary commiserated on the amount of time their husbands were spending on this formidable land preservation challenge.

However, it was not all work and no play. Peg Niland, ACLT's first employee (1 September, 1991), "fondly recalls the special lunches were she [Mary Dwan] and Ralph invited someone from Calvert County (SC and ACLT) every Sunday after they attended Mass." In sharing her memories of Mary, Peg emphasized that Mary "lived her life as an expression of her spiritual faith. She was always humble, generous, and concerned for others." According to Peg, Ralph "shared everything with Mary and sought and listened to her opinion." Moreover, "she was versed in everything from finances to ... land transactions." Just a few weeks ago Peg got a letter from Mary which said "ACLT is in good hands with Greg. You would love the outreach person, Pam Shilling."

After Ralph died (18 December, 2011), I didn't run into Mary so frequently, but began work on the history of the ACLT. I asked Mary to fill in some blanks. In response, Mary emailed (23 February, 2016) that "This [my draft ACLT history] was such fun for me, remembering how R [Ralph] woke up one night [1986?] and said 'We just can't get the Gravatt property, but I'm going to die trying.' What a wonderful example of talented people learning about land trusts and charging ahead." Ralph lived many more years, and we all just kept 'charging ahead'. In the same email, Mary mentioned 'endless meetings'. These were not just committee or ACLT Board meetings, but included the many times I walked over to the Dwan cabin for strategy discussions with Ralph. Mary was usually there and pitched in her own ideas.

In her 15 February, 2016 email to me, Mary recalled accompanying Ralph to Annapolis on two occasions in the middle or later 90s. The three-member Board of Public Works (including the Comptroller, Louis Goldstein, also major Parkers Creek landowner) had to sign off on the DNR purchase of land, provided ACLT would manage it. Mary recalled one event: "Louis: 'Mr. Dwan, can you assure me that the public will have access to this land?'" answer: "Yes, sir." And that was it.

Mary regularly attended ACLT annual meetings and silent auctions, for which she baked her famous whiskey cake. There was lots of fierce bidding for that cake, about which she said "I bet I've made 100 of them."

If Ralph was the 'father' of the ACLT, maybe Mary was the mother. Certainly the ACLT was born in their cabin—on the evening of 4 October, 1986. At Steve Bunker's (Chesapeake Bay Foundation) suggestion, we had invited a speaker from CBF (Kathy Schwartz) to explain local land trusts, the formation of which CBF was promoting in the Chesapeake Bay area. Within half an hour of Kathy's departure, our committee decided to start a land trust.

Mary has been part of the ACLT story—the organization and the people—since the beginning.

Peter Vogt



Thank you for your support ...

New Members

ACLT would like to welcome the following new members since the Winter 2018 Newsletter:

David Johnson
Steven Kroll
Kevin McGahey
Richard Morin
John O'Rourke
Carrie Pendleton
Steve Perlik
Jenna Prowinski
Patricia Weaver
Mark Woodburn

Gift Memberships

Thank you to the following members who donated gift memberships since our last newsletter:

Daniel Boesz
Abbey & Patrick Griffin
Jane Head
Jason Prowinski

Memorial Contributions

Thank you to the following, who made a memorial contribution since our last newsletter:

In memory of **Frank Caldwell** who was a Charter Member and dedicated supporter throughout the years:
Karen & John Lucas

In memory of **Mary Dwan** who was a Charter Member, one of the founders of the ACLT and a dedicated volunteer and supporter throughout the years:

Joy Bartholomew & Mark Edmondson
Kathleen Burns
Judith & Donald Dahmann
Diana & Paul Dennett
William Dwan
Karen & Glenn Edgecombe
Jane Head
Kathleen McGahey
Kevin McGahey
The National Catholic Reporter
Helen & Norman Prince
Joann & Joseph Steller
Anne Zehner

In memory of **Ralph Dwan** who was a Charter Member and one of the founders of the ACLT. Ralph served as ACLT's first President, and on numerous positions on the Board and committees throughout the years:
Kathleen McGahey

In memory of **Guan Carlo Guarda** who was a Charter Member and long-time supporter:
Loretta Schaffer Guarda

In memory of **Daniel Head** who was a Sustaining Member, a volunteer and dedicated supporter:
J.J. & Daniel Head, Jr.
Linda & Greg Locraft
Louis Tacchetti
Maureen & Robert Yuill

In memory of **Edward Hearle** who was a dedicated supporter:
JoAnn Kennedy
Patrick Kennedy
Aileen Roberts
Mary Betty Winstead

In memory of **Susan Slaughter** who was a Charter Member and dedicated supporter:
Anonymous

In memory of **Col. Carolyn Van Mason**, who was a Charter Member, and served on the Board of Directors as Corporate Secretary, as an Emeritus member, and served on numerous committees:
Randi & Peter Vogt (for land preservation)

Holly Hill Memorial Donations:

In memory of **Col. Carolyn VanMason** who was a Charter Member, and served on the Board of Directors as Corporate Secretary, as an Emeritus member, and served on numerous committees:
William Ashby

In memory of **Frank Caldwell** who was a Charter Member and dedicated supporter:
Carol A. Caldwell

In memory of **Dr. Thomas Turner and in honor of his family**:
Anonymous

In Honor of Contributions

Thank you to the following member who made an "in honor of" contribution since our last newsletter:

In honor of **Ginny Murphy** who is one of the Membership Coordinators, Sustaining Member and dedicated supporter:
Susan and Gerald Helmrich

In honor of **Nancy McK. Smith** who is a Sustaining Member, volunteer and dedicated supporter:
Ruth Mora

Sustaining Membership

Congratulations to the following members who have reached the level of Sustaining Membership:
Keith Matlack
Suzanne & Craig Shelden
Robin Truslow

Matching Gifts

Thank you to the following, who have made a matching contribution:
Susan & Gerald Helmrich & Exelon Corporation

Fall Appeal

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Len Baer
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Joy Bartholomew & Mark Edmondson
Daniel Boesz
Lucille Bowen
Greg & Tamea Bowen
Robert Boxwell
Denise Breitburg & Mark Smith
Sean Buckley & Katherine Fleming
Frederick Bumgarner
Jim & Melissa Burke
William & Cynthia Bushnell
Mary Carr
Jonathan & Sanya Chapman
Jessica & Ty Clark
Robert & Marcia Coker
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 Joseph Turner & Leslie Starr
 Paul Vetterle
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 Prasad Gerard & Ann Oliva
 SMECO Foundation
 Elizabeth Stoffel
 Elaine Strong
 Paul Vetterle

Harrod Property Donations
 Patrick & Abbey Griffin

Holly Hill Donations

Thank you to the following, who made
 donations to the Holly Hill campaign
 since our last newsletter through March 5,
 2018:

Richard & Guenever Aldrich
 Ken & Joan Anderson
 Anonymous
 Anonymous - *In memory of Dr. Thomas
 Turner and in honor of his family*
 Fran Armstrong
 William C. Ashby - *In memory of
 Col. Carolyn Van Mason*
 Charles Bennett, M.D. &
 Gail M. Huerauf-Bennett
 BGE
 Greg & Tamea Bowen
 Denise Breitburg & Mark Smith
 Carol A. Caldwell - *In memory of
 Frank Caldwell*
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 Betsy and John Saunders
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The American Chestnut Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. A copy of the current ACLT financial statement is available on request. Requests should be directed to the American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc, P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 or call (410) 414-3400. For the cost of copies and postage, documents and information submitted under the Business Regulation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland are available from the Secretary of State.