

Watershed Observer



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST - VOLUME 34 No. 2 SPRING 2020

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SEE OUR 2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
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BE SURE TO CHECK OUR WEB SITE,
[HTTP://ACLTEWEB.ORG](http://acltweb.org), TO VERIFY THE
CURRENT STATUS OF OUR EVENTS.

PLEASE VISIT OUR TRAILS! ALL TRAILS
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HAS SHOWN THAT COMMUNING WITH
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AND MENTAL HEALTH! PLUS, THE
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THAT IS THOUGHT TO BOOST THE IM-
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IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARD-
ING THESE MATTERS, PLEASE CALL US
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Prince Frederick – Can It Expand Without Damaging Our Watershed?

Parkers Creek has been called “the most pristine watershed on Maryland’s western shore” of the Chesapeake Bay. Will it remain so after Prince Frederick is expanded? That all depends on the new Prince Frederick Plan, which is now under development.

Credit for the Creek’s “pristine” status is due to the American Chestnut Land Trust which has preserved 1,400 acres, the State which became our partner and preserved 1,800 acres, the private land owners who joined in and preserved nearly 1,000 acres of lands, and the County which protected over 200 acres and adopted plans and zoning ordinances that discouraged development of most of the middle and lower sections of the Parkers Creek watershed.

Its status as a “pristine” watershed is more surprising when one considers that half of the Prince Frederick Town Center drains into the Parkers Creek Watershed, and many of the older commercial projects were developed before stormwater management was required by law. However, thus far, nature has absorbed most of the impacts.

ACLT has been vigilant in its protection of this treasure. It has been monitoring water quality for twenty-two years. I am pleased to report that nitrogen and phosphorus levels remain low in the main stem and the feeder streams. Sediment though has been an unfortunate product of town center development. Parkers Creek has been adversely impacted during many storm events when projects were underway, particularly when sediment control devices were not properly installed or maintained.

There have been two memorable storm events. The first was when Prince Frederick Woods (Now Prince Frederick Crossing) violated the terms of Planning Commission approval and cleared all of the development phases rather than clearing and stabilizing them one section at a time. A small Cyprus Swamp in Sullivan Branch (west of MD 4) was also bulldozed down.

A winter rain storm blew out sediment control devices and sediment flowed freely into the creek. That resulted in the Planning Commission withdrawing its approval of the subdivision, but the damage had been done. ACLT was an active participant in objecting to the violation and asking for tougher conditions. Then in 2017, Oak Tree Landing’s silt fences were topped in a storm event and the Parkers Creek branch to the East of Prince Frederick turned orange from the tons of sediment that entered the main stem. It deposited sediment along the Prince Frederick to Bay Trail. In that case too, ACLT sounded the alarm and sought regulatory enforcement.



Parkers Creek Watershed forest.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



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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 ...

Earth Day 2020

Earth Day celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The first celebration by ACLT was probably around 1990. For many of us in the early years, the primary objective was to have a fun day extracting debris from ACLT properties, of which there was no lack of. Many dumpsters have been filled over the years. We had a visitor from the west coast on Earth Day many years ago. He was a big enthusiastic participant. Sleeves up let's get with it. The only problem—nobody told him about poison ivy. His remembrance of Earth Day has always been clouded with the discomfort from the poison ivy rash.

While I tended to view Earth Day as a specific day of each year the national organizers had a much more ambitious goal—to get water and air pollution into the national political agenda. About 20 million Americans participated in the first Earth Day. Demonstrating for a healthy, sustainable environment in rallies across the nation. The various groups fighting environmental degradation found common ground in Earth Day as did the political establishment. This alignment led to the Clean Air, Clear Water, and Endangered Species Acts and the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. The United States demonstrated that a healthy environment was not an impediment to economic progress.

But recent events clearly show that these advancements can be easily subverted. While direct participation in Earth Day this year will be difficult let's take the time to let our representatives at all levels know how much we value a healthy environment.

Don't we want future generations to derive the same joy from the environment that we do today?

David Farr, President



Earth Day 2000. ALCT received cleanup support from members of three local hunt clubs. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

Around ACLT

A Tribute to Jeff Klapper

A few weeks ago, ACLT lost a volunteer who donated many thousands of hours to ACLT's land management efforts over the last 15 years. On February 24th, Jeff Klapper passed away rather suddenly due to complications from cancer. As a dedicated volunteer and a steadfast ACLT supporter, few volunteers can match the impact that Jeff had on the day-to-day operations at ACLT. Jeff had the skill set to complete the most complex tasks and the humility to do the most menial tasks, because he knew how important the small things are. He was a capable carpenter and mechanic and he had a knack for creating beautiful and functional works of art out of metal. Jeff started the CSA at Double Oak Farm and played an integral role in building the barn at Double Oak, which the Board of Directors has decided to name in his honor. In the last few years, Jeff really enjoyed helping with the fish diversity survey in Parkers Creek and spent hours looking at macroinvertebrates under the microscope for Taylor's Holly Hill project. He also played a lead role in stabilizing the historic barn on the Holly Hill property and, of course, many of us know how much he loved our old John Deere tractor.

Everywhere we look we can see Jeff's fingerprints at ACLT. From our farm, meadows, and trails to our equipment, barns, and donation posts, there are few things that Jeff didn't have an impact on at ACLT. Jeff volunteered 350 hours in 2019 and up until just 5 weeks before his passing, he would be found with the Wednesday Woods Workers and the Thursday Trail Adventurers every Wednesday and Thursday morning. Since he's been gone, we've felt the impact of his loss, but the impact of his years of selfless service will live on at ACLT. We are all grateful that ACLT was the benefactor of Jeff's knowledge, thoughtfulness, and compassion. He will be greatly missed.

We have learned that Jeff Klapper's memorial service has been postponed indefinitely due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19.

Autumn Phillips-Lewis
Land Manager



American Chestnut Land Trust Calendar of Events

April 2020

Due to concerns about the spread of the COVID-19 Virus, a decision will be made after April 1st concerning the status of the Earth Day 5K (April 19th), Earth Day Guided Family Hike (April 25th) and the Earth Day Cleanup (April 26th). Check online: <http://acltweb.org>.

May 2020

May 30, 2020 at 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm - Mountain Laurel Guided Hike

Jun 2020

Jun 07, 2020 at 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Bark in the Park: Fundraiser in Support of CAWL!

Aug 2020

Aug 29, 2020 at 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm - Guided Evening Hike - Farewell to Summer

Sep 2020

Sep 12, 2020 at 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm - ACLT Sip & Save

Sep 26, 2020 at 9:00 am - 1:00 pm - ACLT's 2020 Parkers Creek Challenge

Oct 2020

Oct 25, 2020 at 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm - Guided Hike - Fall Foliage

Nov 2020

Nov 07, 2020 at 6:00 pm - 9:30 pm - ACLT Annual Dinner & Auction

Nov 29, 2020 at 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm - Guided Hike - Giving Thanks

Dec 2020

Dec 03, 2020 at 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm - Annual Holiday Wreath-Making Workshop

Dec 05, 2020 at 11:00 am - 1:00 pm - ACLT's Annual Holiday Wreath & Greens Sale

Science Committee Projects in 2020

The Parkers Creek Preserve is an excellent location to conduct scientific research. It is large enough to provide specialized habitats for a great diversity of species. Birds are a good example. The Preserve has plenty of forest interior habitat for ground nesting birds such as Wood Thrushes and Red-eyed Vireo, while it also has marsh habitat for Marsh Wrens and Least Bitterns, pinelands habitat for owls, and so on. That is why the Audubon Society has identified it as an Important Bird Area.

The Preserve is also large enough to measure the impact of a working farm (e.g. Holly Hill) on woodland streams and the attenuating effect of trees and new meadow buffers. Finally, it is large enough to measure the scale and impact of stormwater from urban development on an ecosystem.

At its planning meeting this January, Science Committee participants who were thinking of leading a project were asked to make a proposal and identify staffing/volunteer needs. The following proposals were presented:

- Dr. Walter Boynton (Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (CBL), retired) proposed the continuation of quarterly water quality testing of the main stem of Parkers Creek and the continuation of the water quality blitz covering many of the major feeder streams of the watershed.
- Bob Boxwell (Executive Director of the Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust) was there to represent the team which has been conducting the bird species counts. He said that he expected that the Audubon Society will continue the counts again this year.
- Dr. Chris Rowe (CBL) has revised his work plan for studying the diversity of amphibians and reptiles. He will be checking the traps and cover boards.
- Dr. Melissa McCormick (Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC)) reported that the Center got a grant to replant marsh areas where phragmites has been removed. ACLT has several sites. Autumn expressed interest in assisting with the planting. Melissa added that it would probably happen in April and they may want to build temporary boardwalks on which to conduct inspections.
- Autumn Phillips-Lewis, Land Manager, reported on the status of phragmites removal and her intention to complete the fourth site this year.



- Dr. Ron Kluda (Maryland Department of Natural Resources, retired) spoke about continuation of the Holly Hill stream and benthic macroinvertebrates study for one more

year in order to establish a good baseline before the meadow buffer improvements are completed. That way, we can better ascertain the changes in water quality from the farm management improvements. He will supervise the project and is willing to go to one or more of the Holly Hill sites, spend some time with the sampling crew, and run through the stream width/maximum depth measurements and epifaunal substrate assessment method.

- John Wolf (GIS Team Leader at the Chesapeake Bay Program) was attending for the first time. He had pulled together about 50 GIS layers from a variety of sources and he hopes to model the impacts of the expansion of Prince Frederick on Parkers Creek.
- Dr. John Parker (SERC) has done extensive work on deer monitoring and management. One of the more effective approaches to monitor deer is the use of infrared cameras on helicopters. He presented a video showing a flight with an infrared camera and discussed how we might be able to access one.
- Autumn Phillips-Lewis, Land Manager, reported that staff and volunteers have documented 18 forest stand sites and she is looking for guidance as to how many more should be done. The staff is meeting with Dr. Jess Parker (SERC) to help decide where and how many more new forest stand delineations should be conducted.
- Dr. Denise Breitburg (SERC, retired) noted that the 2019 fish sampling was used to work out some protocol problems and the goal of 2020 will be to establish and implement the protocols (sampling sites, methods, time of year).
- Dr. Lora Harris (CBL) was not present but we understand that she is continuing with her research on the impact of sea level rise on the marsh at Parkers Creek and other marshes throughout the state.
- Birgit Sharp is interested in helping to prepare a report on the science work with the help of project leaders.



Following the meeting, staff indicated that it would try to meet all the staffing and volunteer needs of all of the projects proposed, an ambitious goal.

Two Ways You Can Make Your Property Greener

By Rachel Delbo and Charlie Kreizenbeck, Chesapeake Conservation Corps Interns

Mix it up with a Meadow!

By Rachel Delbo

Do you want to save time and money spent working on your lawn? Would you like to see more wildlife around your home and do something good for the environment? Consider converting your turf lawn into natural meadow habitat!

Let's face it; lawns require a lot of maintenance. Between mowing, fertilizing, watering, raking leaves, and picking up sticks, you've put a lot into upkeep. All of this means time, money, and extra work that you don't actually need to be doing.

Native meadows require very little maintenance after they have been established. There is no need for fertilizer; meadow species thrive in low nutrient conditions and poor quality soil will not be a detriment to native wildflowers and grasses. Similarly, meadows do not need to be watered as they can store moisture, and individual plants are generally very drought resistant. Conversely, popular turf grass varieties have shallow roots and hold very little water. This causes homeowners to invest in significant irrigation trying to keep their lawns green, only to have a large part of it lost to runoff. This use is a major contributor to water supply shortages in many parts of the country. By switching to meadow species that are already adapted to the local climate, we can conserve freshwater resources. Additionally, meadows can even protect water quality by acting as a buffer around waterways to protect against erosion and runoff pollution.

One of the best ways you can attract more wildlife to your yard is to plant native grasses and flowering plants that do not need to be mowed regularly. Meadows attract many species of birds, mammals, butterflies, and other pollinators that can greatly increase the vitality around your home. This will only add to the color and diversity of texture that can be found in a thriving meadow.

Not only would you beautify the neighborhood, but by establishing meadow habitat, you would also be doing a great service to species that rely on this habitat to survive. Around the country, meadows have declined severely. They are often the first to be developed as they are easier to clear and build over than forests. As a result, animals and plants that inhabit meadows are becoming increasingly rare and endangered. Impacts on pollinators have been particularly great due to concurrent widespread use of agricultural pesticides and monocropping.

By converting even a portion of your yard to meadow habitat, you could relieve some of the stress on these vulnerable species



and increase ecosystem diversity in the process. Meadows provide critical food and cover for wildlife that just can't be found in a traditional turf lawn. And unlike the turf that you have to fight with every season just to keep it looking healthy, a meadow will thrive on completely its own and positively contribute to our natural resources all the while.

Amazing Agroforestry

By Charlie Kreizenbeck

Another way to take advantage of the empty space in your front lawn is by turning it into an agriculturally productive piece of landscaping. One example of this is already on display here at the American Chestnut Land Trust! The Food Forest, located just north of the Griffin Meadow Trail, shows how an empty field can be turned into an agricultural space that is in harmony with the landscape. Fruiting trees and bushes alongside native pollinator plants turn the once-fallow farm edge into a blossoming environment that, come spring, will be full of buzzing insects and bird life! Fruit and nut trees planted in your front yard will also have the added benefits of a healthy harvest for you and your family!

In order to understand why growing your own food is more environmentally friendly than a lawn, it helps to consider the transportation costs



Forest garden in the front yard of a house

of fruits and vegetables from the grocery store. A fruit as ubiquitous as the banana, of which Americans consumed 6.4 billion pounds of in 2005, travels thousands of miles to get to your local grocery store (*FAOSTAT: ProdSTAT: Crops. UN Food & Agriculture Organisation (2005)*). The fossil fuel costs of shipping and cooling the fruit is enormous, so while you may not be able to grow

bananas in your front yard, decreasing your dependence on them for a fruit that will grow locally can lower your carbon footprint.

Growing fruiting trees can also help attract native pollinators. Bees, for example, enjoy apple, plum, and cherry pollen! Native trees are also helpful in reducing reflected heat in suburban areas and sequestering carbon dioxide in their leaves and roots. A particularly good tree for sequestering carbon is the black walnut tree, which is native to the coastal plains region of Maryland, and provides an edible nut. Take care when planting black walnut however, because the tree releases a chemical (juglone) into the soil which can be toxic to other plants.

With all the time and money it takes to maintain a green turf lawn over the years, you could be planting a relatively self-sustaining food forest that will last for generations. By researching and planting local plants, you can make your lawn a paradise for native species of birds and insects who need a haven from pesticides and habitat destruction now more than ever. Be a friend to your local flora and fauna, and a friend to your waterways, by opting for a pesticide free lawn that embraces the wild and exciting variation that nature has to offer!



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*50-Day Countdown
to Earth Day*

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We now have a live feed on our home page!
www.acltweb.org

ACLT's Annual Meeting Wrap-Up

ACLT held its 2019 Annual Meeting on March 7, 2020 at St. John Vianney's Family Life Center. The meeting was well attended and followed by a delicious luncheon and great fellowship.

President David Farr kicked off the meeting with "The State of the American Chestnut Land Trust", concluding that our land trust is in good shape, thanks to our membership. As a matter of business, six current ACLT Board members were approved for reappointment (Richard Aldrich, Walter Boynton, Stephen Cloak, David Farr, Cheryl Place, and Suzanne Shelden). Mrs. Penny Moran was approved as a new member of the Board of Directors. Penny has been an invaluable volunteer at ACLT since 2013, when she was certified as a Master Naturalist. She is also a Master Gardener, a long-standing member of the Membership & Outreach Committee, and participates in the Thursday Trail Adventures (TTA) weekly, among numerous other projects.

Executive Director Greg Bowen presented "Facing an Environmental Crisis and What ACLT is Doing About it." He cited examples of the effects that climate change is having globally, regionally, and locally and stated, "As land trusts, we can play a major role in maintaining species diversity, in local and regional ecosystem connectivity, and in serving as an example of good stewardship through case studies, tours, etc."

Greg's presentation outlined several initiatives that ACLT has begun and asked for feedback from the audience through a survey. We encourage everyone to review the presentation and to give us your feedback as well (see link at end of article). These initiatives include:

Advocating and taking action by

- actively seeking out lands in our own watershed to preserve
- supporting "friends" groups in neighboring watersheds
- helping to form a regional conservation partnership in Southern Maryland

Combining Science and Stewardship by

- fighting invasive species
- establishing baseline data to measure change
- actively protecting and/or creating habitats

Using Outreach and Education to

- build a large team of volunteers
- connect people to the land so that we will be strong for generations to come
- celebrate our success through events and outreach

Greg also raised many concerns about the proposed expansion of the Prince Frederick Town Center (see Greg Bowen's article page 1). Finally, on behalf of the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee, he presented an evaluation of our future needs for additional facilities. He presented a list of 10 draft recommendations for implementation within the next 10 years. See details in the slideshow here: bit.ly/acltsurvey.

Next, committee representatives discussed their role in implementing the new Five-Year Plan. Peter Stathis, Chair of Budget and Finance, reported that ACLT operated in the black again this year, thanks to the generosity of its membership. Grant money is down, and member donations are up.

Dave Farr, Land Acquisition and Preservation Committee Chair, noted ACLT's latest land purchase near the PF2Bay Trail. Denise Breitburg, Chair of the Science Committee, reviewed the exciting research underway at ACLT, including the 3rd annual water quality blitz, Parkers Creek mainstem monitoring, the effects of agricultural runoff on aquatic ecosystem health, and diversity surveys of birds, fish, trees, and herps. Denise also described the efforts to control phragmites in Parkers Creek, and the sea level rise study that is underway. She concluded by stating that they hope to conduct a study of the deer population in 2021.

Miriam Gholl, Community Relations Manager, highlighted Membership and Outreach's 2019 events and programs. She also described events planned for the upcoming year. The Membership and Outreach Committee has chosen a theme for 2020, to be used for all events throughout the year. The theme is, "Think Globally, Act Locally".



Many people have heard that phrase used in the past. Although its exact origins are unclear, it became widely used in the 1970's, coinciding with the original Earth Day Movement. The 50th Anniversary of Earth Day is April 22nd, so the theme is timely, but the Membership and Outreach Committee primarily chose it because it speaks to the work that ACLT does locally to help address global issues.

Autumn Phillips-Lewis, Land Manager, summarized the extensive list of ongoing land management projects which included the weekly tasks of the Wednesday Woods Warriors and Thursday Trail Adventurers, two Hiking Trail Maintenance Days, and numerous projects by Scout Troops. She discussed the work being done at Holly Hill, including the completion of the water quality and macroinvertebrate studies, the planting of the first of three 45-foot vegetative buffers along the edge of a portion of the farm fields, and work on stabilizing the Holly Hill Barn.

Autumn also reported on the establishment of new meadow habitat, as per the 5-Year Plan. The Land Management Committee established a Meadows Subcommittee, and throughout 2019, the members attended trainings, met with regional experts, and researched the most effective ways to establish diverse native meadow habitats in the open areas at the North and South Side trailheads. The subcommittee is working on plans to begin site preparation for the back field at Double Oak in 2020, with an anticipated planting date in 2021. Additionally, the Meadows Subcommittee plans to maintain the established meadow on the DNR-owned Hance property and augment it by planting an array of native flowers there.

Finally, Autumn presented the volunteer awards for 2019 and paid a special tribute to volunteer Jeff Klapper, who contributed so

much to ACLT and who passed away in February (see Autumn's article on page 3).

The following volunteers were recognized: Sue Carstens, Sabell Carstens, Peggy Cook, Kathy Ellwood, Judy Ferris, Susan Helmrich, Ian Messent, Ginny Murphy, Ken Romney, Birgit Sharp and Chuck Whittington for volunteering over 100 hours in 2019. Kevin Donahue and Cathy Foutz each volunteered more than 200 hours, Dale Hutchins volunteered over 300 hours, Bob Field and Penny Moran each volunteered over 400 hours and RT West volunteered over 500 hours in 2019.

As mentioned above, meeting attendees were asked to complete a survey at the end of the meeting to share their opinions about the information presented. We would also like to hear from you! We have uploaded the slideshow, Annual Report, and the survey on our website here: bit.ly/acltsurvey. Please take a few minutes to review the meeting materials and complete the survey.

Miriam Gholl,
Community Relations Manager



Annual meeting 2020. Photos by Carl Fleischhauer

Land Manager's Corner

A New Invasive Plant Found at ACLT

This past October, while walking through the woods on the Double Oak property to access a plot that was part of the forest diversity survey, I happened upon a small patch of vegetation that fit the description of a highly-invasive plant that I heard of but hadn't yet seen in person. As I investigated the area further, I found additional patches of the vegetation spreading down the side of the ravine. The distinctive "crimped" looking leaves made the ID simple - the infamous wavyleaf basketgrass (*Oplismenus undulatifolius*) that I had heard rumors of for the past few years had found its way to the Double Oak property.

Like many of the Mid-Atlantic's invasive species, wavyleaf basketgrass is native to Asia, where the temperate climate is similar to that of Maryland. It was first found in Patapsco Valley State Park in the late 1990's and has since spread throughout many counties in Maryland and Virginia. According to the Mid-Atlantic Early Detection Network site, there has just been one reported sighting of the invasive grass in Pennsylvania so far in York County, along the southern border of the state. Like its fellow non-native invasive, Japanese stiltgrass, wavyleaf basketgrass is a low-growing herbaceous plant that spreads along the forest floor under the shade of the forest canopy. It is thought that wavyleaf basketgrass will be able to out-compete Japanese stiltgrass and have an even greater negative impact on native ecosystems. While Japanese stiltgrass is an annual plant that spreads by a seed, wavyleaf basketgrass is a perennial plant that spreads both by seeds and by growing long, trailing stems that root along the ground at nodes (Maryland Department of Natural Resources, https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants_wildlife/Invasives/inv_WavyleafBasketgrass.aspx).

Wavyleaf basketgrass can be distinguished from Japanese stiltgrass by its distinctive pleated-looking leaves that are slightly broader than Japanese stiltgrass and lack the thin white line that typically runs along the leaves of Japanese stiltgrass. Wavyleaf basketgrass blooms small purple flowers beginning in mid-July and fruits from September through November. Ecologists do not know how this invasive plant arrived in the United States, but its sticky seeds enable long-distance dispersal (Maryland Department of Natural Resources, https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants_wildlife/Invasives/inv_WavyleafBasketgrass.aspx). The wavyleaf basketgrass infestation that has been discovered on Double Oak is not close to trails so it is likely it was carried there by deer. It is easily spread by dogs, humans, and other mammals as well so it is another good reason to follow ACLT rules to stay on trails and keep your dogs on leash at all times. By adhering to these rules and making sure you and your pets do not walk through any wavyleaf basketgrass, you can help reduce the spread of wavyleaf basketgrass and other invasive plants.

Wavyleaf basketgrass has weak, shallow roots and is easily pulled by hand. As it was late in the season when the original



Distinctive "wavy" leaves and small green seeds of wavyleaf basketgrass.

patches were discovered, the wavyleaf basketgrass was also starting to develop the sticky green seeds that stick to passersby and allow it to transport itself over great distances. If we could remove the plants and carefully bag the plant and seed material, we could prevent many additional seeds from being added to the seed bank that would result in additional plants the following year. Thus, the next few weeks I went out with volunteers to remove as many of the smaller patches on the northwestern side of the infested area as we could. However, because the seeds are extremely sticky, we had to be very cautious and thoroughly check our clothes and shoes to remove any seeds before we left the area so as not to spread the plant elsewhere. We also worked from the outside of the patches inward so that we didn't walk through the infested areas before the plants were removed. Staff and volunteers were only able to pull a small portion of the patch before the seeds matured and dropped off the remaining plants. Control efforts have been paused over the winter and will resume this spring and summer.

Unfortunately, wavyleaf basketgrass is the latest in a long line of invasive species that have impacted ACLT and our region at large. Some, such as Oriental bittersweet, Tree of Heaven, and Japa-

nese stiltgrass, have spread so extensively that their eradication is not feasible. Instead, we resort to trying to limit their spread by removing smaller patches and treating the edges of larger patches to contain the infested area. Some invasive species have not yet managed to spread to a large area within the Parkers Creek Preserve. Before I arrived at ACLT, dedicated Wednesday volunteers worked with former land managers Liz and Steven to remove two dense but relatively “small” (comparatively, though I’m sure it didn’t feel small to those who spent years getting rid of it!) patches of bamboo on the Gravatt West property (where the South Side trailhead is located). Over the last 5 years, we’ve spent a workday or two each year going back to remove a small amount of regrowth, but thanks to their efforts all known patches of bamboo within the land owned or managed by ACLT have been eradicated.

Similarly, over the past 3 years ACLT has been working to remove the smaller patches of phragmites from the marsh surrounding Parkers Creek before they spread and take over so much of the marsh that control is no longer feasible. With a swift response, I hope that we will also be able to stop the spread and eventually completely eradicate the wavyleaf basketgrass population that has become established on the Double Oak property. Unfortunately, the size of the patch indicates that the plant has been present for a least a few years, which means it’s likely that its seeds have been spread by deer and other animals. While time will tell the extent to which the seeds have been spread, an immediate response and diligent monitoring may enable us to eradicate wavyleaf basketgrass before it becomes unmanageable.

Invasive species are an unfortunate reality that all land stewards will always have to address. The land management volunteers that carry out the invasive plant control programs at ACLT jokingly call them their “job security”. In typical ACLT volunteer fashion, they’ve found a good way to look at the long-term problem that we have to address. It may seem like an insurmountable task, and indeed, complete control is unattainable, but the more acreage we can maintain in native vegetation means more acreage to provide valuable habitat to support our native wildlife. Having a diverse base of the food chain will support diverse and stable ecosystems within the Parkers Creek watershed.

Happy Trails,
Autumn Phillips-Lewis
Land Manager

Save a Tree! Go Paperless!

Email us if you would prefer to receive the *Watershed Observer* electronically. You will receive a notice when the PDF version of each issue is available. Send your request to volunteer@acltweb.org



Thursday Trail Adventurers volunteers removing a patch of wavyleaf basketgrass.

ACLT is the newest member of the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership

The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership was established in 2009 and is a voluntary network of networks whose membership comes from Chesapeake watershed states and the District of Columbia and represents federal and state resource and land management agencies, numerous national, regional and local land trusts and other non-profits. Their mission is to foster collaborative action among our members and with private landowners to conserve culturally and ecologically important landscapes to benefit people, public health, economies, and nature throughout the six-state watershed. It complements our mission, which is: "We promote land conservation and preservation throughout Southern Maryland. We preserve and conserve the natural and cultural resources of the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds for the benefit of this and future generations. We provide environmentally sustainable public access to managed properties for educational, scientific, recreational and cultural purposes.

There is the concern that the phase 1 expansion of the town center includes more development along the steep slopes and highly erodible soils around Sullivan's Branch. The tidal portion of the Creek and the Bay has been somewhat buffered by the long marsh that extends from MD 4 to the raft. The question is how much more development can Parkers Creek accommodate before water quality permanently deteriorates. Maryland Department of Natural Resources describes streams which are not significantly impacted as those where its watersheds are less than 5% impervious surfaces (i.e. roads, sidewalks, buildings, etc. that allow little or no storm water infiltration into the ground). The Parkers Creek watershed currently has 4.2% impervious surfaces. If another 48 acres of impervious surfaces are developed in the watershed, it would exceed 5% impervious surfaces, which is almost certain to happen with the amount of expansion proposed.

In addition to the expansion of the town center, the County is beginning the process of a comprehensive rezoning of Calvert County. In the Prince Frederick area, the Plan calls for adding another 1,000 acres of Residential zoned land from land currently zoned Rural Community District with the base density of 1 house per 20 acres. That action would further increase impervious surfaces in the watershed. For those who say that the lands proposed to be up-zoned to Town Center and residential Districts are too rough to accommodate the 12,425 new dwelling units projected by the County, it would be good to consider the new Beechtree apartments under construction on Prince Frederick Boulevard. The 25.5 acre tract contains a pond, wetlands and great deal of steep slopes. And yet, there was enough room to build 250 apartments.

There appears to be a high level of interest in the Plan. At the first meeting held on January 30, there were over 150 residents in the room at the Prince Frederick Rescue Squad and those wishing to attend were turned away when the parking lot was full.

Good Planning Matters

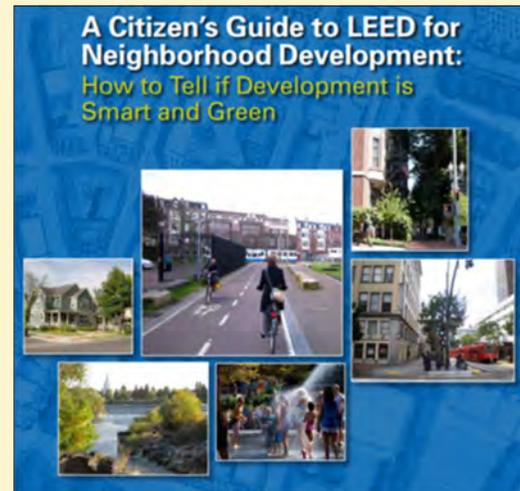
ACLT supports the notion of directing residential growth to town centers, as long as that residential growth is truly directed from our rural areas and not in addition to residential growth in rural areas. We haven't seen any evidence yet that the County is doing anything to slow development in rural areas. We object to the notion that new residential housing could ultimately be housing commuters who move from urban areas just for cheaper housing, as this exacerbates traffic problems and increases the use of fossil fuels.

Another concern is expanding the town center before expansion is needed. There are still many acres of undeveloped land in the town center. Everyone wants walkable towns but that won't happen if town center properties are bypassed for cheaper land outside the town center that were purchased in anticipation of the expansion.

Finally, the town center was expanded without considering the slope and highly erodible soils in areas such as the ones near Sullivan's Branch.



Sediment from Oak Tree Landing subdivision. (see page 1).



What Should ACLT Be Asking for During the Planning Process?

We want to hear from our membership and we have some suggestions too. For example,

- Has there been a cost-benefit analysis to determine if there is a real benefit to the public?
- What public facility improvements will be needed, such as new schools, upgraded roads, upgraded sewer treatment plants, public sidewalks?
- Already, traffic four intersections in Prince Frederick are failing, according to State Highway. How many more will fail as thousands more houses are built and will the Plan address failures and develop solutions?
- How will the County prevent the deterioration of our watersheds as properties develop?

What do you think? Please be engaged in this important planning process.

Greg Bowen
Executive Director

Thank you for your support ...

New Members

ACLT would like to welcome the following new members since the Winter 2020 Newsletter:

Cynthia Bravo
Darlene Harrod
Didier Marchal
Lindsay & Brennan McMeeken & Family
Sherry Morrissette
Dan Small

Memorial Donations

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

In memory of **Paul, Doris & Don Berry**, who were Sustaining Members and dedicated supporters; Paul served as Treasurer on the ACLT Board of Directors for many years:
Marsha Berry

In memory of **Caleb Clark**, who was a strong supporter of the ACLT and its mission of land preservation:
Mark Brennan

In memory of **Marcy Damon**, who was a member of the ACLT Board of Directors and a dedicated volunteer and supporter:
Mary Hollinger

In memory of **Steve Dean**, who was a dedicated member and supporter:
Judith & David Bonior

In memory of **Sally Douglas**, who was a Sustaining Member, a dedicated volunteer and longtime supporter:
Jody Longhill & James Borell
Dagmar & Glynn Frank

In memory of **Mary & Ralph Dwan**, who were Charter Members, founders of the ACLT and dedicated supporters. Ralph served as ACLT's first President, and served on the Board of Directors as Secretary, Treasurer, and again as President and on numerous committees throughout the years:
Kathleen McGahey
Eileen Kennelly Sorabella

In memory of **Phillip Fleming**, who was a Charter Member and one of the founders of the ACLT, a dedicated volunteer and supporter:
Marion Ballard
Suellen Keiner

In memory of **Dan Head**, who was a Sustaining Member, a dedicated volunteer and longtime supporter:
J.J. & Daniel Head
Linda & Gregory Locraft

In memory of **Nancy Tacchetti**, who was a Charter Member and one of the founders of the ACLT, a dedicated volunteer and supporter:
Louis Tacchetti

In Honor of Donations

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

In honor of **Jobe Axley**, who is a longtime member:
Mauro Lanzisera

In honor of **Dan Boesz**, who is a Charter Member, one of the founders of the ACLT, a longtime supporter, and dedicated volunteer:
Diana & Paul Dennett

In honor of **Walter Boynton**, who is a Sustaining Member, a dedicated volunteer and supporter:
Michele Lyons

In honor of **J. Ferris**:
Hollyberry Garden Club c/o Kathleen Wilson

In honor of **John C. McDowell**:
John McDowell

General Contributions and Designated Gifts

Gerald Adams
William & Caroline Arms
Denise Breitburg & Mark Smith
Chesapeake Garden Club of Calvert Co
Kathy Daniel
Samuel & Barbara Dyer
John Fox
Carl Fleischhauer

Miriam & Robert Gholl
Peter Green
Sandra Jarrett
Eleanor Rickel
Margarita Roldos
Elaine Strong
Paul Vetterle
David & Jean Williamson

Holly Hill Donations

Thank you to the following members who made a donation to the Holly Hill campaign since our last newsletter:

Anonymous
Fran Armstrong
Dawn & Steve Balinski

Meadow & Phragmites Donation

Dale Hutchins

Gift Memberships

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

Matching Gift:

Davey Tree Expert Company
matching gift from Samuel Prestidge
Linda & Gregory Locraft



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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.