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MAY

16 CANOE GUIDE TRAINING (11:30 A.M. –
3:30 P.M.) (SUNDAY RAIN DATE)

30 GUIDED CANOE TRIP (12:00 P.M. – 3:00
P.M.) (SUNDAY RAIN DATE)

31 FAMILY DAY OPEN HOUSE AT DOUBLE
OAK (1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.)

SEE MORE OF THE 2015 CALENDAR ON PAGE
6 OR ON THE WEB.

Science in the Watershed

Forests of the Parkers Creek Preserve

By Peter Vogt

Part II—The forests of the Chesapeake region as they once were—in the words of Thomas Hariot and Captain John Smith

What were the "Old Growth" forests of the Chesapeake region really like before European colonists replaced them with farms? We will never know in detail: no paintings of forests are known, and of course cameras had not been invented. The early English explorers (notably Thomas Hariot (1588) and John Smith (1612)) described some of the many kinds of trees (and other plants) they had seen in the Chesapeake Bay region, in the context of what might be merchantable for export or at least useful to the settlers they expected to attract. The only native tree already being harvested and sold in Europe for reputed medicinal properties was the sassafras. Hariot and Smith are 'primary sources' who left clues about what did once grow in the Parkers Creek Preserve (PCP), and, for us restoration ecologists, what could grow there again someday to the extent that's feasible.

England and early colonial Virginia and Maryland (our state did not yet exist at the time of Smith and Hariot) lacked SPECIES in common but shared many genera and families (e.g., American pines, oaks, elms, chestnuts, ashes, cherries, crabapples and beeches were easily recognized by European explorers long before Linnaean taxonomy (1753)). However, our native eastern forests are more biodiverse than Europe's; Hariot and Smith saw many unfamiliar kinds of trees. To some they gave misleading English names, to many others local Indian names, only a few of which have survived as cognates (e.g., persimmon, hickory, and chinquapin).

The lands seen by Capt. John Smith on his 1608 explorations were almost totally forested. Hariot contrasted the "infinite store of wood" he saw here with "The want of wood and deerensse thereof in England". Only the flat marshes were naturally treeless and grassy, as the Parkers Creek marsh still is today.

The "natural inhabitants" (speaking various languages—Piscataway in our region—of the Algonquian family) lived in small hamlets along tidewater shores of the Chesapeake's tributary estuaries, including the Patuxent and Potomac. Hariot and Smith understandably devote far more words to the native people than to native trees. Various crops were grown by the Indians in 'small plots of ground', with their dwellings in the middle. To admit sunshine, trees had been killed by girdling. "Near their habitations is little small wood, or old wood on the ground, by reason of their burning of them for fire. So that a man may gallop a horse amongst these woods any waie, but where creekes or Rivers shall hinder" (Smith, 1612). Father Andrew White, the Jesuit who accompanied the Maryland settlers in 1634, similarly noted (translated from Latin) that "Fine groves of trees appear, not choked with briars or bushes and undergrowth, but growing as if planted by the hand of man, so that you can drive a four-horse carriage, wherever you choose, through the midst of the trees." White was probably also describing



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Editors: Ellen and David Farr

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Around ACLT

The 28th Annual Meeting of the Membership of the American Chestnut Land Trust

A great crowd was on hand for ACLT's Annual Meeting of the Membership on March 14, 2015. Board President Pat Griffin welcomed everyone and noted that the meeting was somewhat bittersweet because the Board would be closing the meeting with a farewell tribute to Executive Director Karen Edgecombe who had announced her retirement as of June 30, 2015.

He then introduced past ACLT Board President Ted Graham who has been leading ACLT's effort to re-invigorate its planned giving program. Ted set the stage by sharing with the membership that his father had donated funds at the start of ACLT to include his three sons as charter members of the land trust and then Ted said, "Now that I have reached a certain age, I have thought about my own legacy and I have provided for ACLT in my estate plans." He explained that ACLT has revised its gift acceptance policy and created an "ACLT Friends Forever" legacy society. Next steps include additions to the website to highlight planned giving and plans to recognize members of ACLT Friends Forever who have made provisions for ACLT in their estate plans. He closed by stating that the planned giving program will play a key role in building ACLT's endowment to help ensure the organization's long-term strength as well as the permanence of ACLT's preservation efforts.

David Farr, Chair of ACLT's Land Preservation Committee summarized the status of fundraising to finance the 2013 acquisition of the Harrod Property. The total cost to acquire and maintain the property is \$360,325. Of this amount, approximately \$320,000 is for land acquisition costs and the balance for stewardship costs. Dave reported that 100% of monies pledged by donors in 2013 and 2014 for acquisition of the property have been collected. Approximately \$50,000 remains to be collected to replenish ACLT's Land Acquisition Fund, but the majority of these funds (more than \$45,000) have already been pledged over the coming three years. Due to a generous private donation and board-designated carryover funds from 2014, 100% of the funds needed for long-term stewardship of the property have now been contributed to the Land Management Endowment Fund.

ACLT Land Manager Autumn Phillips presented the report of the Land Management Committee. She noted that the Harrod Property is in need of more land stewardship than perhaps any other ACLT-owned property. Last summer, Weed Whacking Wednesday volunteers and ACLT hunters started the process by removing an old house trailer on the property. Efforts to improve the Harrod Property continue as Wednesday Weed Whackers are now working to remove invasives. An Earth Day trash clean-up event is planned and the Calvert County Forestry Board is working with ACLT to plant 50 hybrid American Chestnut seedlings donated by the American Chestnut Foundation on the Harrod property.

Autumn also reported that for the third year in a row, ACLT is a host site for the Maryland Master Naturalist program—an adult education program that teaches participants about Maryland's natural history and requires them to complete volunteer projects. At the completion of the 2015 class in May, ACLT will have had 48 students complete the 15-week course and active volunteers among the 33 graduates of the 2013 and 2014 programs completed 1,058 volunteer hours in 2014 alone.

The robust Outreach and Membership Committee had reports from Greg Bowen concerning the formation of the new Sustainable Calvert Network and noted that, in addition to ACLT, the following organizations have joined: Calvert County Farm Bureau, Calvert County Historical Society, Calvert Eats Local, Calvert Farmland Trust, Calvert Nature Society (formerly Battle Creek Nature Education Society), Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust, and the League of Women Voters. Guy Tomassoni was excited to report progress on a collaboration with the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) to create a trail app that would allow for trail sign ins, the hiker's current location on the trail, and would also include a feature allowing hikers to join or donate to ACLT. He introduced Joel McGee and his father Chris McGee. Joel will be working as part of the CSM team to help ACLT create the app. Guy also introduced ACLT's new membership information cards designed by ACLT's Community Relations Coordinator Pam Shilling that members can hand out to prospective new members. Several hundred of these cards were distributed to the people who attended the meeting. Pam also reported on the growth of ACLT's social media presence, new events planned for 2015, and ACLT's newly named "force of nature" volunteer program. At the end of the Outreach & Membership report, Pat Griffin invited members to share their stories about ACLT with us in celebration of the 2015 "year of storytelling".

In her Executive Director report, Karen Edgecombe reported that, since ACLT's founding, providing public access to our preserved properties has always been an important element of our mission. Our 19 miles of hiking trails that are open from "dawn to dusk" and free to the public will probably always continue to be the most important public benefit that ACLT provides to the community. She noted that although Calvert County is among the top tier of the wealthiest counties in the United States, there are still thousands of people in our area that

are "food insecure". She said, ACLT has a productive farm and willing volunteers that have an interest in turning ACLT's fields into a source of fresh, local fruits and vegetables to reduce hunger in our community. In weighing the benefits of ACLT's previous Community Supported Agriculture program against this need, the board has opted to change to a program that we are calling "Agriculture to Support the Community". The majority of the food we produce will be delivered to local food pantries in 2015.

The highlight of the meeting was the inspirational presentation by keynote speaker Bernie Fowler, Jr., the founder of Farming4Hunger. Bernie relayed his personal experience in 2008 of having to let all of the employees of his construction business go due to the economic recession and then seeing some of those same individuals at a food pantry event that he was attending. This experience led him to found Farming4Hunger and to lease Serenity Farm in Charles County to grow potatoes, sweet corn and green beans to supply local food pantries in 2012. The organization has grown exponentially and has delivered over 2.5 million pounds of food, primarily in the five-county Southern Maryland region.

Pat Griffin gave a very moving tribute on behalf of the ACLT Board of Directors to Executive Director Karen Edgecombe who will be retiring effective June 30, 2015. Karen was overwhelmed by the board's recognition and said that although she is looking forward to retirement, as Pat said at the top of the meeting, it is bittersweet because she will greatly miss the daily exchanges with ACLT members, board, and staff.



Above right: Keynote speaker, Bernie Fowler, Jr. Below left: Members gathered for lunch following the annual meeting. Below right: Suzanne Shelden presents her painting to Karen Edgecombe as part of the board's farewell tribute. Photos by Carl Fleischhauer.

Recent Happenings

From Pam Shilling
Community Relations Coordinator

ACLT Creates A New Path in Honor of Our Own “Trailblazer”

At this year’s ACLT Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors and staff took the opportunity to begin showing our gratitude to ACLT Executive Director, Karen Edgecombe, who will be retiring in the coming months.

Karen was honored with several gifts, including a beautiful oil painting by Suzanne Shelden and an ACLT Presidents’ Award. In addition, the Board of Directors announced that in recognition of her more than fifteen years of service and leadership, ACLT would be creating a new trail in her honor—Karen’s Trail.

The new trail, located on the Harrod property, will connect to the Laurel Loop and the Gravatt East Loop trails. This path is made even more significant as it was designed to guide visitors past a new copse of 50 chestnut trees that will be planted this spring.

Again, and not for the last time, thank you Karen.



Harrod Property, Winter 2013. Photo by David Farr.



Karen Edgecombe with painting by Suzanne Shelden.

Hiking Trail Maintenance Day

On Saturday March 28th, dedicated volunteers and staff met to clear winter away from the ACLT trails. More than 40 people tackled projects that ranged from installing water bars on the Blood-root Trail to finishing the bridge on the Horse Swamp Trail. Working from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., the group cleared vines and fallen branches from trails, refreshed trailhead signs, and even helped prevent further damage to the Double Oak driveway by filling potholes! As a small way of showing our gratitude, the event was wrapped up with hotdogs and hamburgers on the grill and plenty of socializing over a picnic lunch.

The staff of the American Chestnut Land Trust would like to share their most sincere thanks to everyone who helped at the Spring Hiking Trail Maintenance Day. Your efforts will make hiking on ACLT trails this season safer and even more enjoyable for everyone.



ACLT Volunteers make improvements to the Swamp Trail.

Check us out on Facebook. Become a fan of the American Chestnut Land Trust today!



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Chestnut-Land-Trust/250928382473?ref=ts>

Water Quality Monitoring - 2015

For more than 15 years, the American Chestnut Land Trust has been gathering samples of the waters of Parkers Creek in order to conduct monthly “Water Quality Monitoring”. Monitoring can be conducted for many purposes. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, some of the main reasons we monitor water quality are to characterize waters and identify changes or trends in water quality over time, identify specific existing or emerging water quality problems, and to gather information to design specific pollution prevention or remediation program (<http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/monitoring/monintr.cfm>).

On March 29th, Land Manager Autumn Phillips and Volunteer Bob Field, led the training of ACLT’s latest class of Water Quality Monitors. Using updated guidelines from the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (CBL), the group spent four hours hiking to the creek to practice gathering water samples and learning the proper scientific procedures for preparing the samples. Once prepared, the samples are taken to CBL to be analyzed.

ACLT monitors nitrogen, phosphorus, total suspended solids, Chlorophyll-A (an indication of the presence of algae), fecal coliform, and pH. According to the draft Parkers Creek Watershed Implementation Plan prepared by Calvert County in 2011, concentrations of nitrogen have stayed below county thresholds and pH has remained within safe levels. However, concentrations of phosphorus, total suspended solids (TSS), Chlorophyll-A, and fecal coliform have exceeded the county threshold levels on occasion. It is suspected that excess phosphorus is linked to high documented Chlorophyll-A and TSS levels. According to the county report, a disproportionate amount of phosphorus originates from the Prince Frederick Town Center portion of the watershed. Since phosphorus is bound in sediment, the high total suspended solids readings indicate that stream bank erosion is also an important contributor.

Even though Parkers Creek contains the highest percentage of forest cover and the lowest percentage of impervious surface—two benchmarks for superior water quality—of all the Calvert County creeks, it is clear that it has not totally escaped the fate of other parts of the Chesapeake Bay. See “Calvert County must go on a ‘Pollution Diet’ to Restore Health to our Waterways”, *Watershed Observer*, Summer 2010 (<http://acltweb.org/newsletters/pdf/Summer2010.pdf>).



Water Quality Monitoring training class, March 29, 2015.

ACLT’s Agriculture to Support the Community Program

A Community Concern:

“Many Maryland families and individuals have insufficient access to food, especially fresh, nutritious food.”

Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission

ACLT has a productive farm and willing volunteers:



Ways You Can Help:

- A donation of \$125 will provide fresh produce for a family of 4 for the 2015 growing season.
- Become a Double Oak Farm Volunteer.
- Participate in our Second Sundays in Summer farmer’s market days (June 14, July 12, August 9) – proceeds to benefit the Agriculture to Support the Community Program.

ACLT Welcomes Janel Young

ACLT would like to welcome its newest employee, Janel Young. Joining us in the newly established Office Coordinator position, Janel is working two afternoons a week at the ACLT Office. She is responsible for maintaining the office's financial files and eTapestry membership database. Her past work experience as a community outreach coordinator with Calvert Hospice means that she is always eager to pitch in with event planning and other outreach activities, as well. Janel will be taking the lead on coordinating ACLT's Instagram social media presence. In particular, she will be coordinating our monthly "#HikeACLT Photo Contest" which is also discussed in this publication. We're glad you're here Janel!



American Chestnut Land Trust 2015 Calendar of Events

May

- 16 Canoe Guide Training (11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)
- 30 Guided Canoe Trip (12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)
- 31 Family Day Open House at Double Oak (1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

June

- 13 Guided Canoe Trip (11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)
- 14 Second Sunday in Summer Farmers' Market (11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.)
- 27 Guided Canoe Trip (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)

July

- 12 Second Sunday in Summer Farmers' Market (11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.)
- 25 Guided Canoe Trip (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)

August

- 8 Guided Canoe Trip (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)
- 9 Second Sunday in Summer Farmers' Market (11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.)

September

- 12 Walk Along the Bay Membership Event (12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., picnic lunch)
- 12 Guided Canoe Trip Membership Event (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)
- 26 Guided Canoe Trip (12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)

October

- 3 Fall Hiking Trail Maintenance Day (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., picnic lunch)
- 10 Patuxent River Appreciation Days (10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)
- 23 Member Appreciation Night – Pumpkin Contest, Campfire & Storytelling (6:00 – 9:00 p.m.)
- 24 Guided Canoe Trip (11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.) (Sunday Rain Date)

November

- 1 Fall Guided Hike, location to be determined (1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)
- 7 20th Annual Auction & Dinner (6:00 – 9:30 p.m.)

December

- 4 Wreath-Making Workshop at Warrior's Rest (10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
- 5 Holiday Wreath & Greens Sale at ACLT South Side Barn (11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.)



Instagram

New! ACLT Monthly Photo Contest

Do you enjoy taking pictures while on the trails, the creek, or the farm? Already this year our members and guests have taken many wonderful pictures of landscapes, birds, sunsets, trees, and plants! We want to see them and show off your talents. Share your favorite photos on Instagram with the hashtag #HikeACLT. Your photo could be selected as the "Featured Photo of the Month." One featured photo will be chosen at the end of the year to win a grand prize.

For more photo fun, follow ACLT on Instagram (HikeACLT).



ACLTweb.org



Supporting Conservation through Planned Giving: An Interview with Jim Greene

ACLT encourages its members and friends to consider ACLT in their estate plans. "Planned giving" includes such actions as making a bequest in a fixed sum or percentage, designating ACLT as a beneficiary of an IRA, or setting up a trust to benefit ACLT. Planned giving offers a way for donors to make a long-term commitment to support ACLT's mission and help ensure continued land conservation in and near the Parkers Creek watershed. ACLT recommends that anyone considering ACLT as a part of their estate plans consult their attorney and discuss options with ACLT's Executive Director.

A number of individuals have made ACLT a part of their estate plans and several articles about planned giving have appeared in the newsletter. Jim Greene is a charter member and former board member of ACLT. He has included ACLT in his estate plan. He wrote an article in the Spring 2006 newsletter and recently shared his planned giving experience with former ACLT President Ted Graham.

TG: What led you to include ACLT in your estate plan?

JG: Susan and I have always appreciated the work that ACLT is doing to preserve land in Calvert County and make that land available for the enjoyment of the public.

TG: What lay behind that decision?

JG: Stable funding is key to ACLT continuing its efforts at land conservation, preservation and management. We felt that helping fund an endowment would go a long way to creating this stability as a supplement to annual donor funding and grants. We felt this would be helpful in assuring the continued financial health of ACLT and enable continued mission success.

TG: "Planned giving" covers a number of options, from a straightforward bequest to a more complicated trust arrangement. What options did you consider for designating ACLT as a beneficiary? Which did you choose?

JG: When we decided to include ACLT in our estate planning, there were indeed a number of options. There are even more today and the older options have undergone revisions. There are many things to consider including tax benefits, which can be substantial, to ease of originating the gift and annual requirements on maintenance of the gift corpus. This is why it is essential that you discuss your options, goals and needs with a good estate lawyer. At the time, we chose a Charitable Remainder Uni-Trust (CRUT) but today we would probably strongly consider a Donor-Advised Fund.

TG: What process did you follow in making ACLT a beneficiary?

JG: We have a wonderful estate planning lawyer and all we needed to do was make our interests in a planned giving gift to ACLT known to her and she did the rest. It was a very simple process.

TG: Did you encounter any particular impediments in setting up your bequest?

JG: We had no impediments in setting up the bequest.

TG: Would you encourage others to designate ACLT as a beneficiary?

JG: Yes. This is a great way to ensure the future viability of ACLT and the great things that they are accomplishing for the citizens of Calvert County and the public at large. As a donor, one can also gain significant tax benefits as well as the great feeling that comes from supporting such a worthy cause.

TG: What advice do you have for others considering ACLT as a part of their estate plans?

JG: Seek a lawyer who is well versed and current in estate planning and planned giving.

TG: Do you have any other thoughts or recommendations to share?

JG: Planned giving is a great way to leave a legacy with an organization for which you have great respect and passion. It also helps create an environment where future directors of ACLT can concentrate on the issues of the day rather than focusing on day-to-day financial survival.

TG: Thank you for your commitment to ACLT and for sharing your perspective on making ACLT a part of your estate plans.

Land Manager's Corner

“Spring is all about the Birds”

I recently received an email from a volunteer who was helping coordinate the placement of bluebird houses and various owl boxes in their appropriate habitats at ACLT. After a long string of emails, they signed off with the sentiment “spring is all about the birds”. While spring certainly isn't JUST about the birds, their sights and sounds have undoubtedly become indicators of longer days and warmer weather. As thousands of species of birds begin to migrate from their over-wintering grounds to their spring and summer breeding grounds, it is a good time to think about some of the perils facing our feathered friends.

As with many groups of wildlife, many species of birds are facing population declines in the face of habitat loss and degradation. In some ways, the land managed by ACLT can serve as a place that minimizes some of these threats. Perhaps most importantly, we offer a large tract of contiguous forest that is important for species known as Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS). FIDS are some of the species most affected by land use change and the fragmentation of large forested areas into smaller patches of various land use types. As large forested areas become increasingly rare, the habitat at places like ACLT becomes increasingly important to FIDS. ACLT is also working to plant large fields of native grasses in some of our old agricultural fields because this is another habitat in short supply in Southern Maryland and one that is necessary for many ground nesting birds. Yet another way ACLT is working to support various bird species is by establishing nest boxes for bluebirds, barn and screech owls, and wood ducks in the appropriate habitat located around the properties owned or managed by ACLT. Despite the ways that ACLT is working to help bird species that inhabit our properties, there is another, perhaps lesser known threat still residing at ACLT, and they happen to be other birds.

The natural world is full of interesting adaptations and interactions between and among species. The role of parasitic birds is one of these remarkable phenomena. Parasitic birds are those that do not build their own nests but rather lay their eggs in the nests of other birds while they are temporarily unoccupied by the host species. Parasitic birds usually only lay one egg per nest in order to minimize the amount of time spent at the nest and reduce their risk of being caught by the host species returning to its nest (www.mapoflife.org). During their short stop at the host nest, the parasitic birds lay an egg and sometimes “toss” one or more of the host eggs from the nest so that the total number of eggs in the nest stays the same. This may make it less likely that the host parent will recognize the new egg when they return to the nest. (www.mapoflife.org).

Regardless of whether the parasitic bird tosses out a host egg or just lays an additional egg in the nest, most of the time the host bird will not distinguish the parasitic egg from their own eggs and will incubate and feed the young parasitic bird after it hatches. By



Bluebird box with nest. Photo by Sandy Foley.

doing this, the parent parasitic bird does not spend energy building a nest of their own, incubating their eggs, or feeding their young once they hatch. This is detrimental to the host bird not only because they will put in extra energy caring for offspring that isn't theirs, but the young of parasitic birds tend to hatch first and be larger and more aggressive than the young of the host species. This means the parasitic offspring out-compete the host offspring, resulting in lower host species reproductive success (www.fernbank.org).

One of the most well-known species of parasitic birds is the Brown-headed Cowbird. If you take a walk around the fields at Double Oak Farm at ACLT, you will undoubtedly see these birds with their shiny black bodies, dark brown heads, and distinctive call. Brown-headed Cowbirds are considered obligate brood parasites, which means that they have completely lost the ability to build their own nests and instead lay their eggs solely in the nests of other species (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). Studies have found that Brown-headed Cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of more than

220 species of birds and recent developments have shown that host species preference differs between individual cowbirds. While many species cannot distinguish between Brown-headed Cowbird eggs and their own, some species, such as the Yellow Warbler, can recognize the intruder's eggs but are too small to push the eggs from their nest. Instead, they build a new nest on top of the nest containing the cowbird eggs. Other host species may push the eggs out of their nest or puncture the eggs, but most host species are not able to recognize parasitic eggs within their nests (Cornell Lab of Ornithology).

While Brown-headed Cowbirds are among the most famous brood parasites, there are other species in Southern Maryland that demonstrate some level of brood parasitism. For example, the Common Goldeneye is a species of waterfowl known to lay its eggs in the nests of other goldeneyes, as well as in the nests of other duck species; particularly when the nests are built in nesting boxes. While this behavior classifies them as brood parasites, other species of ducks, such as Hooded Mergansers and Wood Ducks, have been known to lay their eggs in the nests of Common Goldeneyes (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). These species are all considered non-obligate brood parasites because they will often build their own nests but occasionally parasitize another nest (www.fernbank.org). Another common brood parasite in this region is the European Starling, which is also a non-native invasive species that expanded, interestingly enough, from a small population released in Central Park in New York City by a group of people who wanted America to have all of the birds ever mentioned in any Shakespearean literature (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). European Starlings are non-obligate brood parasites that are thought to lay their eggs in other birds' nests when they are unable to find a mate until late in the breeding season.

Other well-known brood parasites are the members of the cuckoo family. Fifty-nine of the 141 species in the cuckoo family are brood parasites; however the two species of cuckoo found in this region (the Black-billed Cuckoo and the Yellow-billed Cuckoo) are non-obligate parasites that may parasitize the nests of other species but often make their own nests and care for their young (www.mapoflife.org). While not found in this region, the Eurasian Cuckoo is a parasitic bird whose young have a depression in their back that it uses to push host nestlings and eggs out of the nest. In Africa, the nestlings of African Honeyguides take brood parasitism to a new level of brutality and have hooks on their beaks which they use to kill the young of the host species as they hatch from their eggs (www.fernbank.org).

The relationship between host and parasite species has been an evolutionary arms race. As parasitic birds have developed adaptations such as growing quicker than host nestlings, mimicking host egg size and color, and

specialized anatomy such as beak hooks or depressions that help push host eggs and nestling out of the nest, host species have also evolved strategies to combat brood parasitism. Host species have employed methods such as nest concealment, warning calls, shifting their nesting season outside the breeding season of the parasite, removing or killing the parasitic egg or nestling, and attacking the parasitic species (www.fernbank.org).

You can further minimize the impacts of parasitic birds in nests that you may have in nest boxes around your home by learning how to identify the eggs of parasitic species, though this may be very difficult as many parasitic birds are able to make their eggs look identical to those of the host species. If, by observing the parent species visiting your nest and egg identification, you can determine a bird has parasitized your nest box, you can keep the parasitic egg from hatching by using a few different methods. The outside of the egg can be coated in vegetable oil which will prohibit air from moving through the shell of the parasitic egg, or eggs can be added by shaking the egg or keeping it from being incubated for an extended period of time.

Autumn Phillips
ACLT Land Manager

Resources:

- The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, "Bird Guide". <<http://www.allaboutbirds.org>>
- Brood Parasitism. <<http://www.fernbank.edu/Birding/parasitism.htm>>
- Map of Life, Brood Parasitism in Cuckoos and Others Birds. <http://www.mapoflife.org/topics/topic_553_Brood-parasitism-in-cuckoos-and-other-birds/>



ACLT Family Day!
Sunday May 31st, 1-4pm

Join us at
ACLT's North Side Trailhead
for games, geocaching, music,
live animal displays, hayrides & more!
Mrs. Moo's Ice Cream Truck for purchasing refreshments!

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

wooded land near the shore, where Indians had cleared off small trees and brush by cutting and perhaps setting brush fires to encourage deer (and human) browse below a forest-grown canopy. However, inland from the coastal Indian hamlets, Smith described the land as “all overgrown with trees and weedes (native plants other than grass), **being a plaine wilderness as God first made it**”.

What about around Parkers Creek? First sailing or rowing northwards on the eastern side of the Chesapeake, Smith and his mostly unskilled crew found “*the eastern shore shallow broken iles, and the maine for the most part without fresh water, [so] we [sailed] for the weasterne shore. So broad was the bay here, that we could scarce perceive the great high Cliffes on the other side. By them [off Rocky Point?] wee anchored for the night, and called them Ricards Cliffes. 30 leagues we sailed more Northwards, not finding any inhabitants, yet the coast well watred, the mountains [eroding cliff faces, probably, like today] very barren, the vallies very fertile, but the woods extreame thicke, full of Woolves, Beares, Deare, and other wild beasts.*” Our Parkers Creek Preserve was ‘*plaine wildernes*’ in 1608, and archeological surveys have not turned up any prehistoric remains beyond temporary hunting camps.

Among many other kinds of trees, Hariot elaborated on “**Rakiock**, a kind of trees so called that are sweet wood of which the inhabitants that were neer vnto vs doe commonly make their boats or Canoes in the form of trowes; only with the helpe of fire, hatchets of stones, and shells; we haue known some so great being made in that sort of one tree that they have carried well xx Men at once, besides much baggage; the timber being great, tal, straight, soft, light, & yet tough enough I thinke (besides other vses) to be fit also for masts of ships.” Twenty years later, John Smith reported that “*Their fishing is much in Boats. These they make of one tree by bowing [burning] and scratching away the coles with stone and shells till have made it in the form of a Trough. Some of them are an elne deep, and 40 or 50 feet in length, some will beare 40 men, but the most ordinary are smaller...*” Hariot’s **Rakiock** is likely what later English speakers dubbed ‘tulip poplar’, neither a tulip nor a poplar. My own 15 ½ ft dugout-carved with iron hand-tools from a wind-thrown tulip poplar holds two persons plus baggage. To make a 50 ft dugout the natives first had to find and fell (also by burning) a 7+ ft diameter giant. Long dugouts required forest-grown trees—long straight trunks clear of lower branches. Modern large “field” or yard trees wouldn’t have made good canoes. In Hariot’s England large forest-grown trees would have been very rare since farming had been introduced there 7000 years earlier.

How big were the trees in the ancient ‘Old-Growth’ forest? As far as we know, there must have always been a mix of sizes and ages. The early explorers—as we today—

would have been drawn to the biggest specimens they saw. Describing trees that had commercial value, Hariot first listed ‘**Okes**, there as faire, straight, tall, and as good timber as any can be, and also great store, and in some places very great”. Smith wrote that “*many of their Okes are so tall and straight, that they will beare two foote and a halfe square of good timber for 20 yards long*”.

Next on Hariot’s list are “**Walnut trees**, as I haue saide before very many, some haue bene seen excellent faire timber of foure & five fadome & about fourscore foot straight without bough.” Even at 5 ½ ft to a fathom, 7-8 ft diameters seem exaggerated, although a very few living black walnuts are that big. The largest in the PCP (not quite 4 ft) marks the boundary between ACLT and Scientists Cliffs open space along the Steve Easter trail. Old-growth walnuts clear of branches for 80 ft surely existed. Hariot and Smith were unfamiliar with hickories, so they considered them a kind of walnut (the trees are related). Of these two kinds together Hariot noted an ‘*infinitt store: In many places where very great woods for many miles together the third part of trees are walnut trees*’. Both explorers mentioned the natives pounding nuts into bits with stones, which when thrown into water causes the shell fragments to settle out. Per John Smith, the remaining nutritious and tasty “*water will be coloured as milke; which they cal Pawcohiscora*”, a word which gave us ‘hickory’.

Both Hariot and Smith described the tree we call persimmon—because of its fruit. Hariot mistakenly considered it a kind of **medlar** (the fruit of a SW Asian bush or small tree in the rose family, once widely cultivated in western Europe). He noted that these ‘*verie good fruit*’... “*are not good vntil they be rotten*”. Although similar in size and color to the medlars he knew from England, “*otherwise in taste and colour they are farre different; for they are red as cherries and very sweet, but whereas the cherie is sharpe sweet, they are lushious sweet*”. John Smith thought it was a kind of plum, which the natives ‘*call Putchamins.....The fruit is like a meddler; it is first greene, then yellow and red when it is ripe: if it be not ripe it will draw a mans mouth awrie with much torment; but when it is ripe, it is as delicious as an Apricock*.” Although Persimmons are not closely related to medlars, cherries, plums, or apricots, anyone who has tried one can relate to Smith’s description.

Even well into winter, there might still be a few ripe but shriveled **Putchamins** in the Parkers Creek Preserve. When you savor a ripe one, imagine Smith enjoying them—mostly dried, as we do raisins and prunes—and as does the “**Opassum** [which] hath a head like a Swine and a taile like a Rat, and is of the bigness of a Cat. Under her belly shee hath a bagge, wherein shee lodgeth, carrieth, and sucketh her young”.

Thank you for your support ...

New Members

ACLT would like to welcome the following new members since the Winter 2015 newsletter:

Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Cook
Mr. Miles Diller
Ms. Peggy Eskow
Mr. John E. Jensen
Mr. Christopher James Ledwich
Ms. Gay Ludington & Mr. Bill Seabrook
Ms. Jody Miller
Ms. Wanda Miller
Dr. Jacob Stampen
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Williams

Sustaining Membership

Congratulations to the following members who have reached the level of Sustaining Membership:

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Burton
Ms. Kelley Ellsworth
Ms. Penelope Firth &
Mr. D. Knapp
Mr. Peter Johnson

Gift Memberships

Thank you to the following who gave a gift membership since the last newsletter:

Ms. Joy Bartholomew &
Mr. Mark Edmondson
Col. Caroline VanMason, USA (Ret.)
Dr. & Mrs. Peter Vogt

In Memory of Contributions

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

In memory of **Mr. Ralph Dwan** who was a Charter Member and one of the founders of the ACLT. Ralph served as ACLT's first President, and over the years served on the Board of Directors as Secretary, Treasurer, and again as President and on numerous committees throughout the years:
Anonymous

Fall Appeal

The Board of Directors and staff wish to thank the following for their contributions to the 2014 Fall Appeal:
Mr. & Mrs. William Cooper

Ms. Joy Bartholomew &
Mr. Mark Edmondson
Mr. Richard Walsh

In Honor of Contributions

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

In recognition of Mrs. Suzanne Shelden's gift of her original painting to **Mrs. Karen Edgecombe**, our retiring Executive Director. Karen is a Sustaining Member, past President of ACLT's Board of Directors, a member of numerous committees throughout the years and a devoted volunteer.

These contributions to ACLT were made in appreciation of Karen's many years of dedicated service to the ACLT:

Ms. Denise Breitburg
Mr. Steve Cloak
Mr. Patrick Griffin
Ms. Lora Harris & Mr. Scott Galczynski
Ms. B.L. Johnston
Dr. Kathy Ellwood
Mr. John Little
Mr. Gary Loew
Ms. Cheryl Place
Dr. Peter Vogt

General Contributions and Designated Gifts

Thank you to the following for your generous gifts:

Mr. & Mrs. Tomothy Cook

Drs. Judith and Donald Dahmann
Dr. Michael Dalgetty
Dr. and Mrs. Glenn R. Edgecombe
Ms. Paula Johnson &
Mr. Carl Fleischhauer
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Gates
Mr. and Mrs. J. Russell Horton
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Howe
Dr. Robert Keisling & Ms. Johnston
Ms. Penny Firth and Mr. David Knapp
Mr. & Mrs. Steven T. Kullen
Ms. Mary McGahey and Mr. Todd Sheldon
Ms. Anji Parreco
Mr. Noah Stone

Through IBM Workplace Giving:
Ms. Lisa Manning

Through Workplace Matching:
Mr. Greg Locraft/Macy's Foundation

Double Oak Farm Program Donations

Thank you to the following for their donation to the farm program, providing agriculture to support the community:
Drs. Judith and Don Dahmann
Dr. and Mrs. Glenn R. Edgecombe
Flag Harbor Marine Service
Mrs. and Mrs. Patrick Griffin
Ms. BL Johnston
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Kullen
Mr. Alan E. Wilson





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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.