

Watershed Observer



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST - VOLUME 29 NO. 1, WINTER 2015

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COMING UP ON THE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 21 **WINTER HIKE AT DOUBLE OAK FARM**
(1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.)

MARCH

- 14 **ACLT ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
(9:30 A.M.-12:00 P.M.)
- 28 **SPRING HIKING TRAIL MAINTENANCE DAY** (9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M., PICNIC LUNCH)

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

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<http://acltweb.org/nl>

Agriculture to Support the Community!

ACLT has been extolling the benefits of sustainable agriculture and the locally grown food movement in the pages of the Watershed Observer for quite a few years. See "Farming for the Health of our Watersheds and our Own Health" (Winter 2006); "Locally Grown" (Spring 2008); and "Local Foods - Sustaining the Chesapeake" (Winter 2009). Our goals were to provide a new way for ACLT to connect people with our preserved properties, to encourage sustainable agriculture in Calvert County by tapping into the growing local food movement and to provide examples of new uses of preserved farm land.

We introduced the idea of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in the Winter 2009 article. In that article, we posted a plea for a volunteer to step forward to help us develop a sustainable agriculture program at Double Oak Farm. Not long after the article was published, ACLT volunteer Jeff Klapper sauntered into my office and asked, "What exactly did I have in mind for this volunteer position that was advertised in the newsletter?" I enthusiastically explained that it was really just a concept at this point and that we were looking for someone who might have an interest in starting a CSA from the ground up. Jeff realistically suggested starting a "test garden" that year to see what the soils were like and what we could produce. Much to my amazement, Jeff and a small band of volunteers installed an electric fence, tilled the compacted soils, developed and implemented an organic fertilization method, grew seedlings for transplant, conducted organic weed and insect control throughout the hot summer months, and produced 17 different crops on 1/3 of an acre. When the window in the front office of ACLT headquarters proved inadequate space to start seedlings, Jeff enlisted help from the Calverton School, and the middle school students there grew tomato and pepper seedlings in their greenhouse, helped plant the seedlings and later helped harvest them.

We declared the test garden a resounding success and opened our doors for a full-fledged Double Oak Farm CSA season in 2010. *Watershed Observer*, "Putting the 'Farm' back in Double Oak Farm" (Winter 2010). Three successful CSA seasons flew by. We hosted two Chesapeake Conservation Corps volunteers, Taren Evans and Philip Gross, who spent much of their time helping in the field and expanding educational programming associated with the farm. In 2012, ACLT erected a new timber-frame barn at Double Oak Farm built of solid oak timbers hand-cut and erected by Susquehanna Timber Frames, LLC. The barn siding was made of locally-sourced tulip poplar hung by ACLT volunteers. *Watershed Observer*, "Big Things are Happening at Double Oak" (Fall 2012).

At the end of the 2013 season, with the "retirement" of ACLT Volunteer Farm Manager Jeff Klapper, our farm intern Kaitlyn Grenier, who at that point had three years' experience under Jeff's tutelage, offered to coordinate a



A bountiful harvest. ACLT staff photo.

(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 3,000 acres. We own 958 acres, manage 1,910 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

A New Chapter for Our Community Supported Agriculture Program (CSA)!

"For it is in giving that we do receive..." Prayer of St Francis

This season, our CSA will be using our volunteers and agricultural resources to assist in providing fresh vegetables to the estimated 10,000 families that rely on food banks here in Calvert County. This is a remarkable statistic that would likely go unseen by most of us if not deliberately brought to our attention. We will be partnering with some of those organizations to ensure fresh produce is on as many tables as possible.

This is a real first for ACLT. Our resources have always been available to the community for research, hiking, environmental education, etc. Additionally, since we began the CSA, we have provided at least two shares of produce to local shelters in Prince Frederick; however, we have never made a sustained commitment to bring the fruits our labor and our land directly to those that may have limited access to nutritional fresh vegetables.

As Karen insightfully points out in her article, our CSA, Community Supported Agriculture project, is evolving into ACLT's ASC, Agriculture to Support the Community!

Her discussion of the CSA's history is an interesting account of a good idea that was successfully developed and executed by ACLT's volunteers. During the life of our CSA, it has provided hundreds and hundreds of pounds of fresh vegetables to folks that bought or worked for a seasonal share. While this successful effort allowed us to farm our preserved land ourselves, the reality was that it touched a rather narrow slice of the community.

This new program will allow us to continue to smartly work our land, while potentially expanding our impact on the families of Calvert County. We also believe this new effort is a powerful opportunity, for all those that can help, to touch the lives of their neighbors in very concrete ways.

There are two ways you can be part of this effort. First, you can commit a handful of hours a week toiling in the soil, planting, weeding and harvesting crops. We have a corps of faithful volunteers already lined up but could use several more.

The second is by donating directly to ACLT for the specific purpose of supporting this endeavor. We don't expect to need a great deal of money but we will need some for seeds and other larger infrastructure investments and repairs. You might consider, instead of purchasing a CSA share for your family, making a tax-deductible donation for the value of that share to provide fresh produce to a family in need. A CSA share, which serves a family of four on a weekly basis from May through October, has typically cost between \$500 and \$600 each. Tax-deductible contributions of all sizes are welcomed.

I am excited for us to have found another way to connect folks to the land. We hope you will share in our enthusiasm for this endeavor and support it anyway you can. It is a simple and tangible way to share our good fortunes and expand ACLT's connection to our community. We look forward to speaking further with you about this at our annual membership meeting in March.

Sincerely,
Pat Griffin
pgriffin@griffinhome.com

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

team of volunteers to allow us to continue to operate the CSA in 2014. That spring, ACLT volunteers completed the construction of the Hoop House, or High Tunnel, purchased by Calvert County using grant funds from the Southern Maryland Development Commission of the Tri County Council for Southern Maryland. The Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County and ACLT agreed to install the high tunnel at Double Oak Farm to be used to provide agriculture education to youth and farm community support to extend the growing season for fruits and vegetables.

When Kaitlyn moved away from Calvert County in May 2014, she introduced us to her neighbor RT West who has over 30 years of vegetable gardening experience, has maintained a no-till garden for the past 11 years, and has been an active member of the Calvert Master Gardeners since 2004. RT possesses an impressive understanding of the requirements for plant growth and is a strong proponent of sustainable farming. It is under his leadership, with the able assistance of our work shareholders—Michele Hawley, Elizabeth (BL) Johnston, Ed & Joan Kobrinski, Sam & Brenna Prestidge, and Mary Jo Scherer that we concluded another successful season last fall.

ACLT has decided to take a slightly new direction with our sustainable agriculture program for 2015 in connection with our larger goal to listen to the needs of the community. We have decided not to offer purchased CSA shares this year in order to be able to shift our focus to providing fresh produce to the local food pantries and to building the educational components of the farm. Instead of a Community Supported Agriculture



RT West, 2014 Farm Manager. ACLT staff photo.

(CSA) program, perhaps we should call it Agriculture to Support the Community (ASC)!

A core group of volunteers composed of the 2014 work shareholders, led by RT West, will continue to share their knowledge, labor and creativity in exchange for a share of the crops for their families. They will form the all-volunteer management team for the farm in 2015. We are seeking five or six additional work shareholders willing to contribute 5 hours per week throughout the spring,

summer and fall growing season. The vast majority of the produce will be distributed to local food pantries to reduce hunger in Calvert County. We will utilize no-till, organic farming methods to continue to restore the soil's biodiversity and fertility. We will continue to re-introduce native plants around the farm to maintain the diversity of pollinators and beneficial organisms.

Ed Kobrinski, one of the original Double Oak Farm volunteers since 2009, has been hard at work this winter designing an Edible Ornamental Garden. The aim of the Edible Ornamental (EO) Garden is to provide a visually appealing educational arena for visitors to learn how personal gardeners can adopt methods of organic farming that we use in our farm field. The EO will take the visitor back in time from a modern-day kitchen garden through age-old European techniques (e.g., hugul mounds), to indigenous peoples gathering native edible plants and even a Native American medicine/culinary wheel.

With a larger area now committed to the EO garden, leaves, composted manure and mulch are being used to amend the soil and define the paths. Volunteers will be needed in the coming year to continue the soil preparation and path layout, locate sources of seeds and plants, and develop lesson plans to engage and educate visitors to the farm.

We invite you to attend the Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, March 14th to learn more about our farm plans for 2015 and the related and inspiring work of keynote speaker Bernie Fowler, Jr., founder of Farming4Hunger. We also look forward to sharing some of the bounty of the farm at our new "Second Sunday in Summer" farmers' market events

Karen H. Edgecombe
Executive Director
kedgecombe@acltweb.org



Pulling the cover on the High Tunnel. ACLT staff photo.

Around ACLT

ACLT Kicked off the Season with the Annual Holiday Wreath and Greens Sale

Everyone was in the spirit as ACLT launched its annual Holiday Wreath and Greens Sale. Each year, volunteers trim the trees at the Warrior's Rest Arboretum and craft the cut greens into beautiful wreaths, garlands and bundles. The final products are then sold on the first Saturday of December with proceeds supporting the Warrior's Rest Sanctuary.

This year, ACLT tried to make each step of the process its own little holiday celebration. On Wednesday, December 3rd, ten volunteers and staff met at the arboretum for the "Greens Gathering". With holiday music and warm refreshments, they trimmed a wide variety of greens, including white pine, red and yellow holly, juniper, magnolia, boxwood and atlas blue cedar. The morning ended with more cuttings and a wider variety of greens than anyone had seen in years.

The additional cuttings came in handy at our "Wreath Making Workshop" on Friday, December 5th. The twenty workshop attendees created dozens of beautiful wreaths and garlands while humming along to holiday tunes. Despite the damp and chilly weather, the workshop's holiday spirit was warm and cheerful.

The weather proved more of a challenge on the day of the "Greens Sale" itself. With low temperatures and a high threat of heavy downpours, the hayride and scavenger hunt were cancelled and the fifteen volunteers and staff predicted a slow day. But all were pleasantly surprised that the new greens sale location at the South Side Trailhead Barn provided a surprisingly busy turn out. In addition, the weather didn't stop our most loyal customers from coming to visit and purchase their decorations.

We'd like to thank all of our volunteers, workshop participants and customers for helping to make this year's "Holiday Wreath and Greens Sale" a lot of fun and a great success.



ACLT's 19th Annual Dinner and Auction

On November 1, 2014 ACLT members, friends, board, and staff gathered for the "19th Annual ACLT Dinner and Auction." Once again held in the St. John Vianney Catholic Church's Vianney Room, the evening was filled with lively music, outstanding food, and enticing auction items.

This year, ACLT was able to gather more than one hundred items to be auctioned. From delectable gourmet desserts to artwork by some of the most respected artists in Southern Maryland, guests bid on a wide variety of fun and useful entries. Silent auction items included gift certificates, special experience events, autographed memorabilia, elegant jewelry, themed baskets, and sports tickets. However, the stand out category of the evening was "Vacations" as a remarkable seven "one week stays", from Michigan to the Bahamas, were donated by our dedicated members.

The live auction didn't disappoint as bidders challenged each other for the most popular and most valuable items. Long-time member Joe Turner's well-loved Snowy Owl photograph was a crowd favorite. The auction ended with the grandest vacation—a trip for five to a stunning all-inclusive resort in Costa Rica. All told, the result was a tremendously enjoyable evening that surpassed our fundraising goal.

Many, many thanks to those who donated, asked for donations on our behalf and bid on items! A list of our very generous "Auction Angels" can be found on page 11. It was a tremendous event. Very special thanks to our 2014 sponsors: **Southwest Airlines, SMECO and Jeffrey Lewis, a realtor with the McNelis Group Real Estate Services.**

We would also like to thank our auction committee: Steve Kullen, Chair; Anna Marie Tomassoni, table decorations; Joy Bartholomew, auction item display; Cheryl Place, auction monitors and Penny Moran, solicitation of auction sponsors and all-around super volunteer. They and the many other volunteers were outstanding.

The "Dinner and Auction" is a fundraising event held annually to provide support for the critical work of the American Chestnut Land Trust. The proceeds ensure the continuance of

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

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ACLT's mission to promote land conservation in Calvert County, provide sustainable access to protected lands, and protect the resources of the Parkers Creek Watershed and its surrounding area. Work is already beginning for the 20th Annual ACLT Dinner and Auction to be held on November 7th. We invite you to join in the fun again in 2015!

Our Remarkable Members

What could be better than sharing the story of this great organization and its members? That's exactly what we plan to do during our "2015 Membership Campaign" this spring. But this campaign is not only about engaging new members. It's a time when we all can reconsider our relationship with ACLT. What does the Parkers Creek Preserve mean to you? How might you get more enjoyment out of your membership? Maybe it's time to get to know other members, to help care for the trails and creek and to feel the satisfaction of being a part of this community. Or, if you've been with ACLT for many years, can you share your experience and knowledge? How can you make sure your investment of time and effort is not lost as the years move on?

This is the most dedicated membership I have ever experienced in a non-profit. It's thanks to you that ACLT is the strong and successful organization it is today. So why is engaging new members such a priority? First of all, the wider community deserves to know this tremendous group of nature enthusiasts exists and that they are welcome to participate. Secondly, there is a shift happening—not away from the high level of dedication, but simply a natural progression.

ACLT has a core of individuals that have been devoted members since the early years. They have spent decades honing the voice and influence that ACLT now commands in the county regarding land conservation. They have spent hundreds of hours maintaining trails, monitoring properties and introducing the land to new people. They did the work that was required for ACLT to become a respected pillar of this community. And while I know they will remain our friends forever, many are ready to shift into the role of advisor rather than to lead the charge. We're looking to expand the next generation of leaders and enthusiastic volunteers. Could that be you?

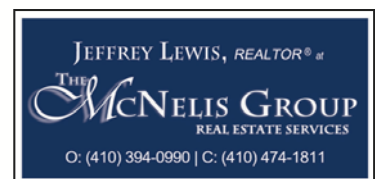
The Annual Membership Meeting on March 14th will be very important, and I hope you plan to attend. There, we will have a chance to explore these questions and offer some answers. For instance, we are expanding our volunteer program and will have a wide variety of opportunities from diving in head first to just getting involved for an hour here and there. We will also discuss a new program that will allow us all to have confidence that, no matter what, ACLT will continue and Parkers Creek will remain protected and cared for in perpetuity. I hope to see you there and that you truly take advantage of your ACLT membership in 2015! We are happy and proud to have you as a member.

Pam Shilling, Community Relations Coordinator
volunteer@acltweb.org, 410-414-3400



Scenes from ACLT's 19th Annual Dinner and Auction

Special Thank You to Our 2014 Sponsors



ACLT Executive Director to Retire after Nine Great Years

It is with deep regret that I tell you that Karen Edgecombe will be retiring as of June 30, 2015. While we had hoped we would have her at the helm of the organization a while longer, we knew the day of her departure was coming soon.

Karen's contribution to ACLT both as former President of the Board and as Executive Director for the last nine years has been transformative to this organization in so many ways. All of us owe Karen a great deal of gratitude for her enormous contribution. The Board will formally recognize Karen's legacy at our annual meeting in March. We also invite you to bring and share your good wishes at that time.

In the meantime, we have established a search committee chaired by Denise Breitburg and Paul Dennett. Please feel free to contact Pam Shilling at the ACLT office, volunteer@acltweb.org or (410)414-3400, if you would like to be involved in this process. Visit our home page to view the announcement and job description.

Pat Griffin
President



American Chestnut Land Trust Calendar of Events February–July 2015

March

- 14 Annual Membership Meeting (9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)
- 28 Spring Hiking Trail Maintenance Day (9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., picnic lunch)
- 29 Water Quality Monitoring Training (9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.) tentative date

April

- 25 Earth Day ACLT Trail Run (9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)

May

- 2 Calvert Green Expo (10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.)
- 3 Spring Guided Hike (9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)
- 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)
- 30 Family Day Open House at Double Oak (time to be determined)

June

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

28th Annual Membership Meeting of the American Chestnut Land Trust Saturday, March 14, 2015

St. John Vianney Family Life Center
470 Main Street
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

9:30 a.m. Registration & Refreshments
10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Meeting & Presentations
Lunch will follow

Please RSVP online at www.acltweb.org by March 4th

Keynote speaker: Bernie Fowler, Jr.
Founder, Farming 4 Hunger
"Building Community from the Ground Up"

Sustainable Calvert Network Hosts Land Preservation Forum

As reported in the Fall 2014 newsletter, "Community Conservation and the Importance of Listening," ACLT extended invitations to resource-based industries as well as traditional cultural and land conservation organizations to explore the idea of developing a network. The Sustainable Calvert Network officially introduced itself to the community at a Land Preservation Forum held at the Calvert County Library on January 13, 2015, with approximately 50 people in attendance.

The following organizations had officially joined the Network at the time of this writing (in alphabetical order):

1. American Chestnut Land Trust
2. Calvert County Citizens' Green Team
3. Calvert County Farm Bureau
4. Calvert County Historical Society
5. Calvert Eats Local
6. Calvert Farmland Trust
7. Calvert Nature Society (*formerly* BCNES)
8. Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust
9. League of Women Voters

The member organizations have all helped shaped Calvert County; preserved agricultural, natural and cultural resources and provided opportunities for education and recreation. We expect several other prominent local organizations to join the Network in the next few weeks.

The purpose of the forum was to address the question: "Is the Future of Land Preservation in Calvert County at Risk?" Greg Bowen provided the audience with a history of the county's awarding-winning agricultural preservation program and an introduction to the wide variety of county and state programs available for voluntary land preservation by landowners. He noted that Calvert County has been very successful, preserving almost 29,000 acres, an impressive acreage given the fact that we are the smallest county in the state of Maryland. Unfortunately, these programs have lost some steam in recent years primarily due to the stalled economy. The number of acres preserved annually has been in decline. Despite the fact that Calvert County's Comprehensive Plans over the past four decades have strongly supported land preservation, the county took several actions in recent years that cause us to question its resolve to continue to support these programs. For several years, the county stopped funding the Purchase and Retirement (PAR) program, which has a dedicated funding stream and which was specifically designed to shore up land preservation during down real estate markets. The county also removed \$1 million from the Revolving Loan Fund for Open Space Acquisition. This fund has been utilized by ACLT



Attendees at Sustainable Calvert Network's Land Preservation Forum. Foreground (L to R): Jamie Tiralla, Benson Tiralla, Susan Hance-Wells, Will Freeland and Walt Wells (back to camera). Photo by Gary Loew.

and the Calvert Farmland Trust to purchase key properties. The funds have always been fully repaid and the program has not cost the county anything; in fact, the county generates a 1% administrative fee for each loan.

Representatives of the various member organizations were invited to attend the forum and we all listened intently to the exchange of ideas and information. Network members pointed out that the county's agricultural preservation program was created with the knowledge that eventually the number of farms interested in participating would diminish, but that there was a need to continue to service the transferable development rights (TDR) program for those properties that are enrolled and that there remain over 6,000 acres in the program that have not been permanently protected. Attendees also raised questions about how much undeveloped land remains that is not part of any program, what can we "do" with preserved land, what are the sustainability goals for the county's natural resources, and how can we live more sustainably on the land to lessen human impact on water quality and fisheries resources.

The Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board has proposed changes to the county's agricultural preservation program and the county's office of Community Planning and Building has also announced plans to begin the process of revising the Comprehensive Plan this year. The Sustainable Calvert Network hopes to play an active and engaged citizen role. Both of these decision-making processes will be critical to a sustainable future for the residents of Calvert County that fully integrates the county's traditional farming and fishing industries and its abundant natural and cultural resources with the community's need for healthy economic growth and a high quality of life for all its citizens.

Karen H Edgecombe
Executive Director

Land Manager's Corner

Benefits of Hunting for Deer Herd Management

ACLT has recently received questions from a few of our members about why we allow deer hunting on our properties. While it is a complex debate that will likely always have supporters at both ends of the spectrum, the goal of this article is to explain the benefits of using hunting to manage the deer population and why it is supported by ACLT.

To begin, it is important to understand the history of white-tailed deer in America. When Europeans arrived in what is now America, they found Native Americans using venison as a food source and deer hides as clothing (Arkansas Fish and Game Commission). As colonists settled in America, the deer population began to decline due to unregulated hunting by an increased human population (Clemson Cooperative Extension). By the late 1800's, deer populations had declined significantly and focus began to shift towards conserving this important natural resource. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that wild animals were property of the state and began to establish regulations such as requiring licenses and assigning bag limits (the number of deer a hunter can legally harvest in one season) (Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology). White-tailed deer went from an estimated nationwide population of 500,000 in the early 1900's to 15,000,000 in the early 2000's, making the deer conservation effort one of the most successful conservation initiatives in U.S. history (Cornell Cooperative Extension Wildlife Damage Management Fact Sheet Series).

The deer conservation initiative was so successful, in fact, that deer are now considered over-populated throughout most of the U.S. While there is no doubt that these specific conservation efforts played a key role in increasing the white-tailed deer population, several other anthropogenic factors have inadvertently contributed as well. As the deer population increased over the course of the 20th century, the human population was increasing as well. This indirectly helped augment the deer population in two ways. First, the expansion of agriculture and human development led to the fragmentation of large contiguous forested areas into a mosaic of agricultural fields and smaller forest patches between developed areas. These edges between forested areas, residential yards, and agricultural fields are the preferred habitat of deer because they offer a variety of sources of food and cover (Clemson Cooperative Extension). Second, humans eliminated wolves and mountain lions which were the two main predators of deer and played a major role in regulating the deer population. With the extirpation of these predators, humans are now the only predators of the white-tailed deer throughout much of their range.

The current overpopulation of deer caused by conservation efforts, the creation of preferred habitat, and the removal of key predators has resulted in a multitude of negative economic and environmental problems. With no other remaining predators, the responsibility of deer herd management falls to humans.

There are various ways in which humans can work to limit the deer population. Some argue for contraceptives, however, this method would be expensive and impractical because administering contraceptives to enough deer to limit the population each year is not an attainable goal (Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology). Another option is sharpshooters who go to an area and remove enough deer to get the population to a sustainable level. This method is often necessary in areas of dense human populations where deer populations are high but public hunting is not feasible. Much like contraceptives however, using sharpshooters to manage the deer population would be expensive to tax payers and would not be practical on a large scale. Another method is to capture and relocate deer from one area to another. In addition to being expensive, this simply moves a problem from one area to another. Due to this, regulated public hunting throughout ranges experiencing large deer populations is still the most practical and effective method of deer herd management. With this method, each hunter is required to take a hunter safety course and purchase a hunting license that allows them to harvest a certain number of deer within each hunting season. The number of deer that can be harvested each year is determined by wildlife biologists across the state that carefully monitor the state's deer herd to determine where population levels are and where they should be. Unlike contraceptives and sharpshooters, members of the public pay to hunt, therefore, there is no cost to tax payers who still reap the benefits of a controlled deer population.

Economic Benefits

Economic benefits are probably the most common arguments given in support of hunting for deer herd management. Deer cause between \$7-8 million in crop damage per year in Maryland (Capital News Service) and over \$100 million in crop damage nationwide (Cornell Cooperative Extension Wildlife Damage Management Fact Sheet Series). Deer are also responsible for \$250 million in residential garden damage in the U.S. annually (Cornell Cooperative Extension Wildlife Damage Management Fact Sheet Series). Roughly 30,000 deer-vehicle collisions occurred last year in the state of Maryland alone, resulting in both economic and personal injury

losses (Carinsurance.com). In addition to reducing these economic costs of overpopulation, there are some other, lesser-known positive economic outcomes related to the public hunting industry. In 2011, retail sales of hunting equipment generated \$221 million to Maryland's economy and supported over 2,400 jobs. Deer hunting equipment sales also provided \$69 million in salaries and business owner's income, \$17.5 million in state and local tax revenue, and \$19 million in federal tax revenue (Maryland Annual Deer Report 2013-2014). A portion of this tax revenue comes from what is commonly called the Pittman-Robertson Excise Tax. Revenue generated from this 11% tax on hunting arms (including firearms and bows) and ammunition goes towards supporting the Wildlife Restoration Act (Digest of Federal Resource Laws).

Ecosystem Benefits

While the economic benefits listed above are positive secondary outcomes, as an organization aimed at resource conservation and protecting natural habitats, ACLT's primary reason for managing the deer herd on our properties is the benefits it provides to the ecosystems we work to protect. Perhaps the most important environmental benefit of controlling the deer herd is that it reduces over-browsing of understory vegetation (Figure 1). You can see evidence of understory over-browse when you are walking through a forest and notice that there are no leaves or vegetation until about 5 feet from the ground. This is because there are more deer than there is food to support them and they have eaten all of the vegetation they can reach. This is detrimental to other organisms such as understory dwelling birds that require thick vegetation or other ground-dwelling herbivores that rely on understory vegetation as



Figure 1: Shows over-browse of vegetation by deer on the left side of the fence in comparison to the area on the right where deer are excluded.

a food source. Understory over-browse also limits forest regeneration because small saplings that would someday grow to be a part of the canopy are stripped of their leaves or the branches are eaten entirely resulting in the death of the sapling. With no saplings left, the forest becomes comprised of a single canopy layer of trees and cannot regenerate as these taller, older canopy trees die.

Other ecological benefits of managing the deer herd on ACLT managed properties is that by reducing the population there is more food available for each deer. Thus, there is less starvation among the herd and there is enough food that the deer do not have to over-browse the vegetation in the understory in order to get adequate nutrients. Additionally, a higher density of deer (or any organism) within a given area increases the spread of disease from one animal to another as their chance of coming into contact with a diseased individual is much higher. Lastly, by allowing hunting ACLT is making a more balanced ecosystem by "reintroducing" a predator after extirpating the primary predators of the white-tailed deer in the area.

Hunting at ACLT

ACLT supports a deer herd management program on our property in which members of the program provide 18 volunteer stewardship hours in exchange for the right to hunt deer on ACLT managed properties. Anyone may turn in an application to be a part of the program and new members are added to the program on a first come-first serve basis as new spots become available. At ACLT, our goal is to protect natural areas and maintain healthy ecosystems on our properties that can provide a home for a wide variety of native species. It is for this reason that our volunteers spend countless hours removing invasive species, installing pollinator gardens, planting native flora, and protecting ecosystems from open fields and field edges to closed canopy forests to beaches, wetlands, and streams. The purpose of our hunting program is to manage the deer population so that the ecosystems we protect can support deer as well as a wide variety of other plants and animals. In addition to helping us maintain healthy ecosystems on our properties by deer hunting, the hunters at ACLT provided over 730 volunteer hours in just the last year by doing projects such as trail maintenance, litter cleanup, invasive removal, erosion control, bridge building, helping with events and everything in between. ACLT's hunters are part of the larger volunteer taskforce that does amazing work to protect and maintain a healthy ecosystem at ACLT so that both humans and wildlife can enjoy it for generations to come.

Autumn Phillips
ACLT Land Manager

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Thank you for your support ...

New Members

ACLT would like to welcome the following new members since the Fall 2014 newsletter:

Ms. Penelope Bittinger
Mr. Michael Peter Blanchette
Ms. Margaret Boesz
Ms. Catherine Fox
Mr. Bernard Horak
Ms. April Hille
Mr. & Mrs. Ernie Imooss
Ms. Laurie Ann Irving
Ms. Beverly Izzy
Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Jones
Mr. Sid Jones
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Klausner
Mr. Jeffrey Lewis
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Mazur
Mr. John McDowell
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Prestidge
Ms. Katherine Rubino
Mr. William Roy Rummel
Mr. Alan Sewell
Mr. & Mrs. Ron Sharp
Mr. Mark Sieffert
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Smolinsk
Ms. Erynne vanZee

Gift Memberships

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

Ms. Joy Bartholomew &
Mr. Mark Edmondson
Col. Daniel Boesz, USAF (ret.)
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Griffin
Ms. B.L. Johnston & Mr. Robert Keisling
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Rubino
Mrs. Carol Teich & Mrs. Emily vanZee,
Walden III Heritage
Col. Caroline Van Mason, USA (ret.)

In Memory of Contributions

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

In memory of **Dr. Christine Boesz** who was a Charter Member, a longtime supporter and dedicated volunteer:
Ms. Judith Ayres & Mr. Jack Burke
Randy & Marie H. Bundy Estabrook
Ms. Patricia Peak

In memory of **Mr. Paul Berry** who was a Sustaining Member, Treasurer on the

ACLT Board of Directors for many years, and a dedicated volunteer and supporter:

Ms. Marsha Berry

In memory of **Amb. Patricia Lynch Ewell** who was a Charter Member, a previous member of the Board of Directors and longtime supporter:

Ms. Loretta Schaeffer &
Mr. Gian Carlo Guarda

In memory of **Robert Finton**:

Mr. Joe Sugarman

In memory of **Mr. William Gay**, a researcher with the National Institutes of Health who first proposed the preservation of Parkers Creek to The Nature Conservancy in 1975. His leadership, together with the later involvement of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and ACLT, has resulted in the 3,200 acre Parkers Creek Preserve now managed by ACLT. Dr. Gay died on 11 October 2012:

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Vogt

In memory of **Ms. Susan Slaughter** who was the sister of Ralph Dwan, a Charter Member and longtime supporter:

Anonymous

In Honor of Contributions

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

In honor of **Mrs. Mary Dwan**, who is one of the founders of the ACLT as a Charter Member and a dedicated volunteer and supporter:

Ms. Roberta Safer & Mr. Klaus Zwilsky

In honor of **Dr. Steve Peters & Mr. Alan Wilson**, who are Sustaining Members, dedicated volunteers and supporters:

Ms. Harriet Yaffe & Mr. Jerry Adams

General Contributions and Designated Gifts

Thank you to the following for your generous gifts:

Mr. John F. Bruns

Ms. Sandra J. Foley

Through America's Charities:

Mrs. Dorothy Howe

Through the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area:

Ms. Betsy Cuthbertson
Mr. Matt Forsbacka
Mr. Robert Hardies
Mr. Bruce Hudson
Ms. Laurie Leach
Mr. Kirk Martin
Ms. Teresa Mctigue
Mr. Robbie Miller
Ms. Casey Moton
Me. Velazquez Spring
Mr. Joseph Steller
Ms. Jean Stephens

Harrod Property

Donations

Thank you to the following for their 2014 donation to the Harrod Property acquisition:

Mr. & Mrs. Philip A. Fleming
Ms. Denise Breitburg & Mr. Mark G. Smith

Land Management

Endowment Fund

Dr. & Mrs. David F. Farr

Spring Appeal

The Staff and Board of Directors wish to thank the following for their contributions to the 2014 Spring Appeal:

Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Griffin
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Miller

Fall Appeal

The Board of Directors and staff wish to thank the following for their contributions to the 2014 Fall Appeal:

Ms. Christina Van Pelt & Mr. Donn Ahearn
Mr. Louis Amtmann
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Armington
Mr. and Mrs. William Arms
Mr. & Mrs. John Bailey
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Baldo
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Mr. & Mrs. David Williamson
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Yuill
Mr. & Mrs. Albert W. Zahniser
Mrs. Anne C. Zehner
Ms. Roberta Safer & Mr. Klaus Zwilsky

Auction Angel Donations

ACLT would like to thank those who made monetary contributions in support of our annual fundraiser:

Mr. Louis Amtmann
Col. Daniel Boesz
Ms. J. Longhill and Mr. J. Borell, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Frank R. Caldwell, Jr.
Rev. Peter James Daly
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dennett
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