

Watershed Observer



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST - VOLUME 20 NO. 3, SUMMER 2006

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AUCTION

SEE [HTTP://ACLTWEB.ORG](http://acltweb.org) OR PAGE 10
FOR FULL CALENDAR AND
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

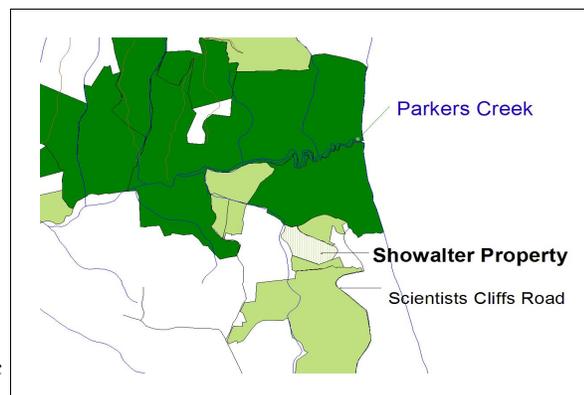
Giving Back to the Community is a Way of Life for the Showalters

On a fine day in May, Joe Showalter, age 91, took Land Manager Liz Stofel and me on a brisk two-hour hike through forty acres of woods he knows intimately. In fact, Joe and his wife Ruth have owned these woods for just shy of fifty years. The occasion for this hike was to explore the ACLT's newest land acquisition and the *first ever* outright donation of land to the ACLT. Thanks to the Showalters' generous gift, their stewardship of this piece of the Parkers Creek watershed has now passed to the ACLT. On June 15, 2006, the deed was signed conveying the property to ACLT. It rejoins the Cephas Wallace tract, of which it was originally a part, and completes the preservation of a contiguous swath of almost 500 wooded acres owned by the ACLT running from the Gravatt East property northward to the Warrior's Rest property.

Originally trained as a plant pathologist at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Joe Showalter was hired in 1948 by Flippo Gravatt "to start a nursery, manage plantings and to develop the agricultural interests of the [Scientists' Cliffs] community." Mr. Showalter also built many of the homes in the Scientists' Cliffs community where he and Ruth have lived since 1946. He continues to operate a plant nursery known as *Bending Bough Nursery* on the opposite side of Scientists' Cliffs Road from the forty acres he and Ruth donated to the ACLT. When I called the house recently to speak to Joe, his wife Ruth reported that he was out scouting out the neighborhood for some noxious plant that he was determined to eradicate. He was on a mission!

Mrs. Showalter taught the first grade for twenty years and later returned to the George Washington University to obtain a masters' degree in elementary administration. She was an elementary school principal and assistant principal for 18 years thereafter. She served for many years as a member and as chairman of the Calvert County Library Board. She continues to add to her 8500 service hours with the Calvert Memorial Hospital Auxiliary with weekly trips to distribute magazines and books to patients and their families and does ongoing "development" volunteer work for the Calvert Marine Museum.

The Showalters have given generously of their time over the years, volunteering with many local organizations including the Calvert Memorial Hospital,



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)



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From the President's Desk ...

ACLT Changes its Office Location

As most ACLT members probably know by now, ACLT is moving its office. Thanks to the generosity of the Scientists' Cliffs community, we've been headquartered at the log cabin at the Cliffs' Gate A entrance since November 1992. We've done our best to be good tenants by providing repairs, maintenance, and new equipment and by enclosing the porch adding to the year-round living space. However, at 625 square feet of office space, the cabin is too small to meet the needs of three staff and our many volunteers. So when, Peg Niland accepted a new job in Harford County and moved out of the house at Double Oak, the Board considered various options and decided to move the office there.

The decision to move was not taken lightly. Fourteen years at the Gate A location have produced a strong sense of familiarity, convenience and continuity for many of ACLT's members, volunteers and committee members. A number of people have expressed concern about the effects of moving from that location.

However, the cabin is too small for a well-run office. The demands of volunteers, meetings and storage exceed the capacity of the cabin. Our volunteer membership coordinator, volunteer Treasurer, bookkeeper and all other volunteers must share the main office with our Community Relations Coordinator. There's only room enough for one volunteer at a time. Meetings must take place in the Land Manager's office, which is cramped, and such meetings tend to be disruptive. In any case there's not room for more than five or six people to meet at one time. Storage needs for files, event material, retail items and reference are very limited and there is little space for layouts and printing preparation.

The pending availability of Double Oak triggered a serious consideration of that and other options. We considered sharing office space with other land trusts, the use of Warriors Rest, the rental or purchase of office space in the Prince Frederick Town Center and building a new building tailored to our office, volunteer and education needs. A factor in the deliberations is the perceived remoteness of Double Oak. In the end, it was felt that it's critical that the office be on ACLT property to best "promote sustainable public use of preserved properties" in accordance with ACLT's mission statement.

The Board agreed to move the office to Double Oak for an anticipated period of five years, while studying a longer-term decision on the location and specific building needs. Looking ahead, are ACLT's needs best served by an office location north or south of Parkers Creek? Is there merit in a new building (green, of course) or renovation of Double Oak? How serious a concern is Double Oak's perceived remoteness? If you have a perspective on any aspect of this, please share it with the staff or a member of the Board.

In the meantime, preparatory work, from paint to computers, for the pending move is underway. Staff expects to be fully relocated by mid September. They are excited about the new location and look forward to a greatly improved office environment. Please plan on visiting the staff in its new location and perhaps combine it with a hike on the great trails that begin at Double Oak.

Ted Graham
President, ACLT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp, the Calvert County Historic District Commission, the Scientists' Cliffs Association, the Calvert Marine Museum, and as Charter Members of the American Chestnut Land Trust and the Calvert Historical Society. As Peter Vogt said, Joe recently retired from many years as Chairman of the Historic District Commission where "his interest and accomplishments in saving historic structures throughout Calvert County are appreciated far beyond his own community." Both Joe and Ruth stay 91 years young by continuing many of their volunteer activities, traveling the world, and working at the nursery. Long-time friend Ed Hackaylo who now spends most of his time in Arizona reported to me, "It is nice when I visit the Cliffs to see them looking as they did 45 years ago and just as active."

The first hint that the ACLT had that the Showalters wished to eventually transfer the care of their woods to the ACLT was when Mr. Showalter invited a number of ACLT members to walk the property after it had been commercially harvested in 1993. Former Executive Director Peg Niland recalls Joe saying that, "someday ACLT will probably own this and it will be a whole new forest." And, of course, he was right—the forest has regenerated. As is typical of ACLT lands, this is not the first time that the forest has regenerated itself. Earlier in this century, the land was farmed—only a few bricks remain to attest to the location of the home of Johnny Parker who once owned the land.

ACLT's plans for the Showalter property are to establish a new forest management plan with an emphasis on maintaining a closed canopy to discourage the growth of exotic, invasive species and to encourage forest interior dwelling (FID) bird habitat. We also plan to expand the ACLT's Double Oak Hunt Club deer herd management program to include the Showalter property. This will serve to prevent loss of understory plants due to deer browse and further improve FID habitat.

The ACLT is very grateful to the Showalters for their generous gift of land, their fifty years' stewardship of it, and their many other contributions to the community and to ACLT.

Karen Edgecombe
Executive Director

Come Visit Us at Our New Location at Double Oak Farm!

Directions to Double Oak Farm: From Route 2/4, go east on Dares Beach Road in Prince Frederick. Follow Dares Beach Road for 2.5 miles. After going under the large power lines, turn right onto Double Oak Road. Follow Double Oak Road until you reach a sign reading "Double Oak Farm". Veer to the left at this sign and follow the gravel lane. Office will be located on your left.

New mailing address:

P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

New phone number: 410-414-3400

New fax: 410-414-3402

New physical address: 676 Double Oak Road, Prince Frederick, MD 20678



Family Day Presentation

Dr. David Curson, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon MD-DC, presided at a sign dedication, designating Parkers Creek as an Important Bird Area (IBA). This honor is due to the research and time of ACLT member Leslie Starr, who began her bird research more than a decade ago.

Around ACLT

Family Day: Celebrating the Birds, Bees, Trees & Beetles of Calvert County

Summertime. It's the time of the year when school is out, the sun is shining, birds are chirping, bees are buzzing, trees boast their regal foliage, and our prized tiger beetles are nesting in the sandy beach. June 10th this year embodied all of this and more, honoring the ACLT's 20th anniversary, celebrating the birds, bees, trees and beetles of Calvert County, and providing an afternoon of free, outdoor fun for local children and families at Double Oak Farm in Prince Frederick.

To begin the day's activities, Dr. David Curson, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon MD-DC led a guided bird hike on Parkers Creek Trail. After returning from the hike, Dr. Curson led a sign dedication, designating Parkers Creek as an Important Bird Area (IBA). This honor is due to the research and time of ACLT member Leslie Starr, who began her bird research more than a decade ago. The ACLT is grateful to her for her dedicated work and proud to have Parkers Creek recognized for its outstanding value in bird conservation.

At different times throughout the afternoon, one could find ACLT board member, Marcy Damon hosting an outdoor scavenger hunt, inspiring children of all ages to locate, identify, and collect a variety of items found in nature, such as "a tree leaf that is shaped like a mitten". Local quartet "Fair Warning" played festive Celtic music in the shade of an enormous tulip poplar tree, while Calvert Optimists provided food and drinks to participants. Later in the day, Anne Brown, of *Little Brown Bees*, made her observation beehive known to all, with a beekeepers hat, and delicious samples of locally produced honey.

One could let their creative juices flow by making a butterfly craft with volunteer Sandy Burton, a nature stamp bookmark with volunteer Paula Bohaska, or a pinecone creature with volunteer Janice Rodgers. For those seeking education, Shirley Steffey from Calvert County Recycling had information and activities on recycling nearly everything



Attendees enjoying a tractor-pulled hayride through the fields at Double Oak Farm.

in your household trash can. Chesapeake Beach middle school student, Kassidy Kennedy offered her research on local tiger beetles and perspective on how students are involved in local ecology. Naturalist Tania Gale of Battle Creek Cypress Swamp brought a live turtle and snake, as well as natural artifacts to delight the senses. And let us not forget the all-important tractor-pulled hayride through the farm fields courtesy of volunteers Ken and Mary Ellen Romney. It certainly wouldn't have been Family Day on Double Oak Farm without a hayride!

Seaona deGennaro
Community Relations Coordinator



Left: Anne Brown displays her observation beehive. Right: Battle Creek naturalist, Tania Gale and her corn snake.

You are cordially invited to the ACLT's

20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & AUCTION

Saturday October 7, 2006, 6 to 10 pm.
Scientists' Cliffs Community House, Port Republic, MD

AUCTION ITEMS are donated by ACLT members and supporters. In the past, auction items have included vacation house stays at exotic destinations, delicious gourmet meals, and exquisite art and jewelry.

A GOURMET MEAL, featuring Maryland-grown foods, will be provided by **Blue Wind Gourmet**, (<http://www.BlueWindGourmet.com>). Rob Plant, the owner and chef of Blue Wind Gourmet in California, Maryland, is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America. He believes in supporting local farmers and preserving the environment. He buys from Maryland farmers that raise organic or sustainably grown products and uses recycled products to serve his delicious beverages and food. Appetizers, main course and desserts will all be thoughtfully paired with ...

DELICIOUS WINES provided by **Basignani Vineyard** (<http://www.Basignani.com>). Bertero and Lynne Basignani, owners of the Basignani Winery, celebrate their 15th anniversary this year of producing world-class, award winning wines from their 18-acre vineyard located just north of Butler, Maryland. Bertero believes that 80 to 90 percent of a wine's quality comes from the vineyard and uses little intervention. Fall harvest of their grapes is a festive occasion involving lots of family and friends and is genuinely a labor of love.



MUSIC features the local band, **Rockfish** (<http://www.rockfishmusic.info>). Rockfish is well known to Southern Maryland and ACLT audiences for their lively and eclectic bluegrass flavored music.

ADVANCE RESERVATIONS are required and are \$35 per person. We had such an overwhelmingly successful event last year that we are being required to limit seating for this year's 20th Anniversary Celebration & Auction. Invitations will be mailed in early September. You don't want to miss it, so send in your **RSVP card** early in order to reserve your bidder number at the door!

Volunteer Spotlight – Jeff Crespi & Kathy Stafford

With six beautiful acres, numerous gardens, a pond, tobacco barn, corn crib, and an old farmhouse, it is hard to believe that Jeff Crespi and Kathy Stafford have time to do much else besides maintain their historic homestead. Thankfully they make time for the ACLT, not only by way of numerous volunteer activities, but also by hiking the trails nearly everyday. They consider the ACLT a hidden treasure, smiling as they comment that “the more you visit the land, the more you discover.”

On a gorgeous summer afternoon I had the pleasure of meeting Jeff and Kathy on their home turf. I made my way to the Hardesty House, a 160-plus-year-old farmhouse in Huntingtown, which happens to be on Calvert County’s historic homes registry and which boasts the largest American Holly tree in the county. They had prepared a Mediterranean meal with vegetables fresh from their own garden. We sat on their outdoor terrace covered in Wisteria, beside their pond with bellowing resident bullfrogs. I was already cognizant that these two are particularly thoughtful, creative, and clever, so I wasn’t surprised when Kathy mentioned, “This area used to be an asphalt driveway. On a hot day, we literally rolled up the asphalt and created the pond and surrounding gardens.”

I wondered how Jeff and Kathy initially came to find out about the ACLT. “I believe from one of my yoga students,” Jeff says. Jeff has a seemingly endless array of talents and interests, yoga being just one. He teaches yoga locally at the

Northeast Community Center, teaches for the Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) working with inmates from the women’s facility in Jessup, is a photographer, and a musician (string bass). Before moving down to Calvert County a decade ago, he was a photographer for the Smithsonian with the Sackler and Freer Galleries. Kathy was also working with the Smithsonian at the time, as an editor, which is how the two met. Nowadays Kathy works from their home as a magazine editor, allowing her a bucolic and inspirational setting in which to do her work.

Due to their flexible schedules, Kathy and Jeff are willing and able to give a great deal of attention and time to the ACLT. They are involved in nearly every facet of volunteerism from canoe guiding to barn restoration, trail maintenance, downed tree removal, Earth Day clean-ups, water quality monitoring on Parkers Creek, photography, even Double Oak snake removal. “We were out hiking on the North Side trails one day. When we returned to our car, Peg called out to us that she needed help inside the house. We charmed a black snake out of the dryer and released it outdoors for her,” Jeff recalled with a smile. From small tasks to large, both Jeff and Kathy seem to know when to come to the rescue. When land manager, Liz Stoffel needed assistance with chain sawing and clearing a downed tree across Double Oak Road last winter, Jeff was there to help. A few months later the staff needed digital images of wildflowers on ACLT properties for trail signage. Sure enough a CD of

gorgeous wildflower images arrived in the mail from Kathy and Jeff, just in time for us to use.

Thoughtful development and land preservation is an ongoing theme in both Kathy and Jeff’s lives. Before moving down to Calvert County they were involved in SACReD (South Arundel Citizens for Responsible Development), as well as the local radio station 97.5 FM which is the only low power FM radio station licensed by an environmental organization in the United States. “We are delighted and grateful to have this [ACLT] organization preserving land here in Calvert County. Back in 1989, I met Peter Vogt through my work at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary and he told me about this fledgling land trust they had started. It’s funny how it has come full circle and we are now a part of the ACLT,” Kathy marvels.

It’s true. You never know how one person, one idea, or one vision can lead to the unveiling of something much greater at a later time. Lucky for all of us who love the outdoors, the ACLT is thriving 20 years after its inception, in large part because of the unique talents, personality, and skills that our more than 200 volunteers bring to the ACLT. In this summer of the year 2006, we thank two volunteers in particular, Kathy Stafford and Jeff Crespi for their dedication and time given to the ACLT in so many ways.

Seaona deGennaro
Community Relations Coordinator

LAND MANAGER'S CORNER

A Mahogany What???

As I am fairly new to the area, only having arrived as Land Manager a year and a half ago, I was unaware of an eerie event that occurs in the Chesapeake Bay. I was out paddling on Parkers Creek recently and was surprised to find a deep mahogany color in the water after returning to the barrier beach. When I left the beach three hours earlier the bay water was murky, just appearing to be the fairly normal turbidity that it gets after a good rain. Since that time I have noticed this color change several times. I wanted to learn more about this phenomenon referred to as "Mahogany Tide": how often it occurs, whether it is dangerous to the health of my family, and what can be done about it.

Mahogany tides are caused by major population explosions of dinoflagellates (a species of microscopic phytoplankton). The "tides" are not actually tides, but large masses of the algal bloom. They occur from late spring through summer, grow well in our central bay mesohaline (medium salty) water, and have occurred more often in the last 20 years as human population density has increased in this area. The population explosions are caused by conditions including warm temperatures and a strong flush (from rains) of nutrients into the bay. Nutrients normally refer to nitrates and phosphates which are ever present in fertilizers. Two species of dinoflagellates, *Prorocentrum minimum* and *Karlodinium micrum* can cause bay water to turn reddish-brown. Both species can be harmful to fish, shellfish, and invertebrates because the algae dying en masse can block sunlight and rob oxygen from the water. *Prorocentrum* can cause shellfish to become toxic when consumed by humans, known as Venerupin Shellfish Poisoning (VSP).

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation has enlisted a series of television advertisements in the last two years about not fertilizing lawns in the spring. The message is that by postponing fertilizing until fall, homeowners will be doing a part in saving the oysters for their own raw bar. In addition you are not only saving the oysters and other shellfish, but also yourself, from VSP. Another important step to take is to have your soil tested to determine the correct amount of nutrients needed for your particular lawn or farm field. The University of Mary-

land Cooperative Extension Service can guide you in doing this on your own, or they can have the soil analyzed at the state lab (for a nominal fee). Alternatively for those with lawn service, you can insist that this analysis be performed. These precautions will ensure that you don't over fertilize, and hopefully algae will stay at a reasonable population level and not cause fish kills.

Other contributing factors to nutrients in the bay include faulty septic systems and animal wastes. Many blame farmers for animal wastes being introduced into the bay's watershed. However, in developed areas, a concentration of pets can contribute a significant amount of waste, so it is important to clean up after our pets. Also, the practice of spraying fields with the residues of wastewater treatment plants must be handled very carefully by professionals to prevent these nutrients from entering the bay. Moreover, if homeowners were diligent about pumping their septic tanks every 2 to 3 years, septic waste pollution would be greatly reduced.

I am writing this article from my vacation spot on a beautifully clear lake in New York State. I would like the bay to be this clear on any given day. But I am relieved to know that this eerie phenomenon is preventable and that each one of us, working together, can take an active role in cleaning up our bay.

Liz Stoffel
Land Manager

Part-Time Outreach and Communications Coordinator

The ACLT is looking for a part-time (three days/week, plus weekend events) Outreach & Communications Coordinator who will be responsible for representing the ACLT at public events and coordinating the planning of ACLT-sponsored events; promotion of all ACLT programs and outreach events through telephone, print, and electronic media; and other office coordination duties. For more information, please visit us online at <http://actweb.org>.

Calvert Land Preservation Golden Anniversary — 8 August 2006

Calvert, a small suburban county with a population of 90,000 and growing, a county fragmented by more than 500 subdivisions and traversed by an increasingly congested arterial highway, has nevertheless also managed to preserve a remarkable amount of public and private acreage for nature, forestry, or farming. While both County and State governments have played a large role in Calvert's land preservation saga, it took a private charitable organization—today the “blue-ribbon flagship” for preserving natural lands in the US and beyond—The Nature Conservancy (TNC)—to preserve the first piece of land in Calvert County. It was on August 8, 1956, that the fledgling TNC settled on the 15.14 acre “Torney et al.” parcel on Hellen Creek—TNC had preserved its first piece of land, in eastern New York State, just a year before. The funds for the Hellen Creek acquisition came in part from the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland. This coming August 8th marks the Golden Anniversary of that event. I hope our Board of County Commissioners took note of this anniversary in their August 8th meeting!

So why preserve land along Hellen Creek, a small Patuxent inlet in southern Calvert County? On the north-facing slopes of the creek edge, an isolated population of Canadian hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*) has apparently survived from the colder climates of the last ice age, the last gasp of which ended about 11,700 years ago. The ancestors of our Calvert hemlocks later also survived a mysterious pre-historic pathogen, which from pollen evidence severely decimated hemlocks in eastern North America around 2700 BC.

Today, the graceful, shade-tolerant Canadian hemlock thrives in moist Appalachian gulches and at lower elevations from upstate New York into New England and southern Canada. Hemlocks are long-lived trees, a few reaching 500 to 800 years in age. The age of the oldest Hellen Creek hemlocks—and the reason for this natural stand's survival at Hellen Creek—remains a mystery—but individual trees are surely much younger. However, numerous young hemlock volunteers show they are still successfully reproducing. As in other parts of their natural range, however, many Hellen Creek hemlocks are infested by an alien aphid, the woolly adelgid, which weakens and eventually kills many trees.

The effort to preserve the Canadian hemlocks on Hellen Creek was led by G. Flippo Gravatt, a forest pa-

thologist who researched the Chestnut blight, and also developed the summer cabin community of Scientists Cliffs, beginning in 1936. In the mid-50s, Gravatt was Representative for Maryland and the District of Columbia for The Nature Conservancy, long before there was a Maryland Chapter. Gravatt and his colleague, a young Chesapeake Biologic Laboratory fish biologist named Romeo Mansueti, also led the much better known effort to preserve the Battle Creek cypress swamp. Actually the hemlock and bald cypress projects were parts of the same preservation effort. According to an illustrated article “The Battle Creek Cypress Swamp of Calvert County”, by Mansueti and Gravatt (July, 1956 issue of “Maryland Conservationist”)

Calvert County is the northern outpost of a southern species (bald cypress, *Taxodium distichum*) a few miles north of the southern outpost of the hemlocks, a northern species!

Mansueti was the local chairman of what we now consider the “First” Cypress Swamp Committee (I served on the second committee, chaired by Judge Perry Bowen, in the 1970s). The 1956 article concluded with a request for donations toward the \$10,000 needed for both projects!

Making little Calvert County unique is its simultaneous hosting of a northern outpost of a southern species (bald cypress, *Taxodium distichum*) a few miles north of the southern outpost of the hemlocks, a northern species! On March 23, 2007, we can celebrate a second golden anniversary—the first parcel of land in the Cypress Swamp was preserved on that date in 1957. Twenty years later, on Feb. 1, 1977, our Board of County Commissioners leased the 97-acre cypress swamp tract from TNC for what we now call “ecotourism” and nature education—the lease was renewed for another 20 years on April 14, 1998. In 1977 and 1979, the county purchased 37.5 additional acres around the swamp, including land to build the popular Battle Creek Cypress Sanctuary Nature Center. Dr. Chandler Robbins, an internationally known ornithologist, and his wife Eleanor helped further buffer the cypress stand by purchasing and subsequently (11/23/1994) reselling at a reduced price 120 acres to the Battle Creek Nature Education Society (founded on August 23, 1985). Dr. and Mrs. Robbins later sold another

35 acres to BCNES, bringing the total preserved acreage there to its present 292. Countless school children and bird watchers, among many other tourists, have visited the nature center, dedicated on Sept 23, 1980, during the quarter century of its existence.

On Hellen Creek, many years were to pass before more of Calvert's hemlock stand would be preserved. In 1982, TNC purchased the 27-acre "Marble-Ward" tract. The year before, Chandler Robbins and his daughter had donated 18 acres of adjoining land, which Robbins had purchased previously to buffer the hemlock stand and its unusual bird habitat from encroaching housing. In an e-mail exchange with me earlier this year, Mr. Robbins related that his interest in preserving Calvert natural lands as bird and other habitat was sparked by Flippo Gravatt's (who died in 1969) pioneering efforts at preserving ecologically important habitats. Eleanor's dad and Gravatt had been roommates at Randolph Macon. Another seven acres at Hellen Creek were donated by "Chan" Robbins to TNC in 1991.

The most recent chapter in Hellen Creek began with the decisions of the young (1994) Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust (CPNHT) to purchase (1999 to 2006) 52 additional acres on Hellen Creek. The principal 43-acre CPNHT parcel includes most of the remaining hemlocks not already preserved in the adjacent TNC preserve. The CPNHT Board, on which I currently serve, plans to build a modest office on a recently acquired one-acre lot not far from the hemlock stand, and to open the hemlock area for nature education and passive nature appreciation. It so happened that this one-acre lot was acquired earlier this same golden anniversary year, bringing the total acreage, after 50 years, to 119 acres. Had not stalwart conservationists persevered, there would surely now be a "Hemlock Heights" subdivision, with large suburban houses overlooking Hellen Creek, and neither public access nor protection for this mysterious outpost of northern forest.

Hellen and Battle Creeks just marked the beginning of TNC land preservation activity in Calvert County. The Conservancy would go on to play a key "pass-through" role in the largest—and still ongoing—natural-land preservation project in Calvert County: Parkers Creek. The idea of creating a Parkers Creek nature park was first suggested to TNC in 1975 by a veterinary researcher (Dr. William Gay) who lived in Scientists Cliffs. At the time, only the tiny (5.13-acre) "laurel grove" had been preserved, by bequest from Jewell Glass to TNC,

in 1967. The founding of the American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT) in 1986 resulted in the first sizable land acquisitions in the Parkers Creek watershed, but negotiations between the two key landowners on lower Parkers Creek and TNC would drag on sporadically for many years.

The 1990s were the golden years of natural land preservation in Calvert County and elsewhere in Maryland. The state economy was booming and its government, led by Governor Parris Glendening, was eager to set aside special open space for future generations in our increasingly crowded state—already as densely populated as Britain and Germany, and losing land much faster to development than those nations. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources and TNC, with the encouragement of the ACLT, embarked on an ambitious preservation plan for Parkers Creek. The success of ACLT in using private donations and TDR sales to preserve 810 acres and its offer to enter into a long-term management agreement to provide for the operation and maintenance of the land for the benefit of the public following its purchase helped "leverage" the DNR effort. In the Parkers Creek watershed, TNC negotiated purchases of eight parcels, totaling 1712 acres and 9.8 million dollars, from 1995 through 1999. TNC chose not to sell TDRs off these lands, thereby retiring enough development rights to have resulted in 350 additional homes. By far the largest single landholding (757 acres) had been assembled by the late Comptroller, Louis Goldstein, over many years. This tract of forest, wetlands and Calvert Cliffs was purchased from the Goldstein estate on April 1, 1999, for \$5.5 million. Per prior agreement, TNC then resold the 1712 acres (losing some money in the process) to Maryland's Department of Natural Resources for the purpose of education and research. The American Chestnut Land Trust manages this area on behalf of DNR, at no fee, plus its own adjacent current holdings of about 870 acres, for passive recreation, nature appreciation, research and education.

It was also in the mid-1990s that TNC agreed to partner with the Maryland Environmental Trust to cohold a conservation easement on 600 acres of Cove Point marsh and adjoining forest surrounding what is now the Dominion LNG facility.

Although 4.5% of Maryland's smallest county doesn't sound like much land preserved for nature in the public interest, it is the result of 50 years of mostly col-

laborative efforts among local and State governments and charitable nonprofit land trusts. Many players on this stage offered their sweat and tears, the patience to sit through endless committee meetings, political will, leadership, and private generosity. There is still some farm and forestland left to be preserved in Calvert, so we hope TNC will build on its half century of successful involvement here. Land prices have increased, but so has the need to preserve land, the priceless living skin of the earth. Our “nature parks”, green islands in the suburban sea, are the last best hope of holding on to what is left of the rich animal and plant life seen by John Smith (and known to millennia of native Americans) when he landed here 398 years ago. Our parklands attract visitors from far and wide—adding their tourist dollars to the County economy—and bring the “great outdoors” into the lives of our increasingly “denatured” children. Won’t you share some of your own dollars with The Nature Conservancy and any or all the five local land trusts we are fortunate to have in this special County?

Peter Vogt
ACLT Member

[Thank you to Dwight Williams (Calvert County Natural Resources Division), Steve Bunker (TNC), and Doug Samson (TNC) for digging out many of the dates and acreages; Karen Edgecombe and Katelyn Turner for comments; Bob Boxwell (Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust); and Dr. Chandler Robbins.]

ACLT Calendar of Events – 2006

Saturday, September 9, 9 am – 12 noon – *Arboretum Work Day* - Join the *Arboretum Volunteer Crew* at Warrior’s Rest as they prune and maintain these historic trees.

Saturday, September 9, 1 pm – 4 pm – *Trail Maintenance & Vine Vindicators* - Join EITHER a trail maintenance crew getting the South Side trails ready for autumn and winter OR join the Vine Vindicators as they work to remove Asian Stilt Grass on the South Side trails. Meet at the ACLT barn at the South Side trail head at 1 p.m. Snacks & water for both groups will be provided.

Friday September 15, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm – *Volunteer Appreciation Dinner* - The ACLT staff hosts this incredible evening with delicious food and handmade items to honor and thank our dedicated and faithful volunteers.

Saturday, September 23, 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm – *Plants for Food and Healing* - For untold thousands of years, people have taken sustenance from the plants that grew around them. Join Battle Creek Nature Sanctuary naturalist, Tania Gale, and guest, Dr. Peter Vogt, for a hike through the woods to find some of these plants and discover some of their uses. Fee: \$1 for BCNES or ACLT members, \$3 for non-members. To register call Battle Creek Nature Center 410-535-5327. Location: American Chestnut Land Trust (meet at South Side trailhead at ACLT barn off Scientists’ Cliffs Rd. in Port Republic).

Saturday, October 14 and Saturday, November 4, 9 am – 12 noon – *Vine Vindicators* - Enjoy the autumn weather while working to remove invasive vines on ACLT properties.

Saturday, October 7 – *20th Anniversary Celebration and Auction* - Enjoy locally grown, seasonally fresh food prepared by Blue Wind Gourmet and Maryland wine by Basignani Vineyard, bid at the auction, enjoy music by local band Rockfish, and enjoy the evening!

Saturday, October 7-Sunday, October 8, 10 am – 5 pm – *29th Annual Patuxent River Appreciation Days (PRAD)* held at Calvert Marine Museum - Learn about the importance and beauty of the Patuxent River, Chesapeake Bay, and their adjoining waterways. Volunteers needed to assist at the ACLT booth.

Saturday, October 21, 9 am – 12 noon – *Barn Work Day* - Interested in historic tobacco barns? Join us as we repair one of ACLT’s old tobacco barns.

Saturday, October 28, 11 am – 4 pm – *Tales for a Haunted Trail at Annmarie Garden* - Put on your Halloween costumes and bring the whole family for a walk through the garden trail lined with fun booths and loads of free candy. We are looking for volunteers interested in manning our booth, handing out candy and catching the Halloween spirit!

Wednesday, November 8, 7 pm – 8:30 pm – *The Bitterness of Bittersweet & Bamboozled by Bamboo*: How You Can Create a Healthy Landscape in Your Own Backyard - Join Land Manager, Liz Stoffel, and guests from Maryland Department of Natural Resources at the Calvert Library in Prince Frederick, and learn how and why invasive species are harmful and what individual home and landowners can do to create healthy landscapes.

Saturday, December 9, 11 am – 1 pm – *Greens Sale and Beach Hayride* - Fresh cut evergreens for holiday decorations, drink hot cider and take a hayride to the beach.

Canoe Trips*:

- Saturday, September 9th - Harvest Moon Canoe Trip (5 pm – 8 pm)
- Saturday, September 23rd - Sunset Canoe Trip (3 pm – 6 pm)
- Saturday, October 14th - Autumn Canoe Trip (9 am – 12 noon)

*Depart from Warrior’s Rest and enjoy a scenic tour of Parkers Creek. **Reservations are required.** Please call the ACLT office at 410-586-1570 or e-mail us at info@actweb.org to register. Canoe trips are physically strenuous, requiring paddling for three hours (frequently against wind and tides), and may require participants to help carry a canoe for up to ¼mile over sand to access the creek. **Note:** Event dates may change. Check our website at <http://actweb.org> and future newsletters or call the office to confirm dates, times and locations.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT ...

Spring Appeal

The ACLT wishes to thank the following members who made a contribution to the 2006 SPRING Appeal Campaign

Ms. Olivia Alison
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Altoz
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Anderson
Mr. & Mrs. David Beard
Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Benning
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Berry
Mr. Robert Boxwell
Mr. & Mrs. John Boyd
Mr. Vernon Brumbaugh
Mrs. Martha Canfield
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Carmany
Mr. & Mrs. John Daniels
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Dennett
Ms. Elizabeth Detwiler
CDR & Mrs. Freeman Dodsworth
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Drumm
Ms. Ann Dunnington
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Dwan, Jr.
Dr. & Mrs. Glenn Edgcombe
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Ellsworth
Ms. Marjean Farver
Ms. Lynn Ferris
Mr. Lewis Firth
Mr. Carl Fleischhauer
& Ms. Paula Johnson
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Fleming
Senator & Mrs. Bernard Fowler
Mr. & Mrs. D. Duncan Frazer
Mrs. Magda Freeman
Dr. Ted Graham
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Greene
RADM & Mrs. James Greene, Jr.
USN (Ret)
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Griffin
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Head
Mr. & Mrs. James Hollowell
Mr. & Mrs. Conrad Hoska
Mr. & Mrs. William Hosler
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Howerton
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Jaeger
Mr. & Mrs. Taysir Jaouni
Mr. & Dr. William Johnston, III
Ms. Louise Woerner
& Mr. Don Kollmorgen
Del. & Mr. Steven Kullen
Mr. John Little, Flag Harbor
Marine Service
Mrs. Mary Loew
Mr. Julian &
Amb. Patricia Lynch Ewell
Mr. & Mrs. Ron Magnussen
Ms. Anne Warner
& Mr. Michael Makuch

Mrs. Ella Lee Fulton Manning
Dr. Keith Matlack
Ms. Pamela-Jeanne Moran
& Mr. Philip Turner
Hon. Constance
& Mr. Anthony Morella
Mr. & Mrs. Leon Myers
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Nicodemus
Ms. Margaret Niland
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Nisonger
Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Noell
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Nutter
Ms. Gladys Ogden
Mr. John Douglas Parran
Mr. Brent Huchinson
& Mr. Paul Kosla, Patuxent
Architects
Dr. & Mrs. Austin Platt
Mr. Glen Pyles
Mr. & Mrs. David Redden
Mrs. Sandy Roberts
Mrs. Ann Ross
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Ruhling
Mr. Daniel Sampson
Dr. & Mrs. James Sanders
Dr. & Mrs. John Saunders
Ms. Mary McGahey & Mr. Todd Sheldon
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Showalter
Mr. Henry Shryock
SMECO, Ms. Bernadette Lewis
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Stadelman
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Stathis
Mr. & Mrs. J. Mark Switzer
Ms. Leslie Starr
& Mr. Joseph Turner
Ms. Mary Walker
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Wilden
Mr. Alan Wilson & Dr. Steve Peters
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Yuill
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Zahniser III
Ms. Roberta Safer
& Mr. Klaus Zwilsky

New Members

The ACLT would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since the Spring 2006 Newsletter:

Mr. & Mrs. Leroy Burkman
Ms. Alexandra Clarke
Ms. Joyce Gridley
Mr. Richard Marks
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Reynolds
Mr. & Mrs. David Serpan
Mr. & Mrs. Sean Sprouse
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Webster, Jr.

Mr. & Mrs. Shawn White
Mr. & Mrs. W. A. White

Sustaining Members

The ACLT would like to congratulate the following members who have reached the Sustaining Member contribution level:
Mr. & Mrs. James Hollowell

New Corporate Member

Mrs. Elizabeth McLean, Concerto Intranets

General Contributions and Designated Gifts

Donation to offset Family Day expenses:
Col. Caroline VanMason, USA (Ret)

Donation to offset expenses for ACLT office relocation:
Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Benning

Gift Memberships

Thank you to the following member who donated a gift membership since our last newsletter:
Dr. Andrea Clarke
Ms. Margaret Niland

Memorial Contributions

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

Donation in memory of "Champion Black Mac Allan" aka Max, a best friend to Mr. Alan Wilson & Dr. Steve Peters:
Dr. Tina & Col. Dan Boesz



Come Join Us!

Detach and Mail to: The American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc., P.O. Box 204, Port Republic, MD 20676

Name _____ e-mail _____

Address _____

Phone _____ I (we) learned about ACLT from _____

Regular Membership

Corporate Membership

Land Saver - \$35.00

Habitat Protector - \$500.00

Land Saver Corporate - \$150.00

Land Protector - \$60.00

Trustee of Land - \$1000.00

Land Protector Corporate - \$250.00

Land Conservator - \$150.00

Sustaining - \$2500.00

Land Conservator Corporate - \$500.00

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 204, Port Republic, MD 20676 or call (410) 586-1570. 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.

**American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.
Post Office Box 204
Port Republic, MD 20676**

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