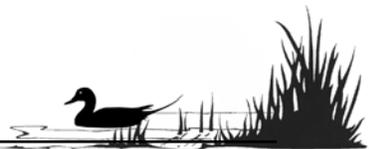


# Watershed Observer



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST - VOLUME 22 NO. 1, WINTER 2008

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## CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 8 - HIKING TRAIL  
MAINTENANCE DAY, 9:00 A.M. -  
12:00 NOON

MARCH 30 - *A SENSE OF WONDER:  
A PLAY BASED ON THE LIFE OF  
RACHEL CARSON*, 2:00 P.M.

APRIL 12 - SPRING GUIDED HIKE,  
19:00 A.M. - 12:00 NOON

APRIL 19 - EARTH DAY, 8:30 A.M. -  
12:00 NOON

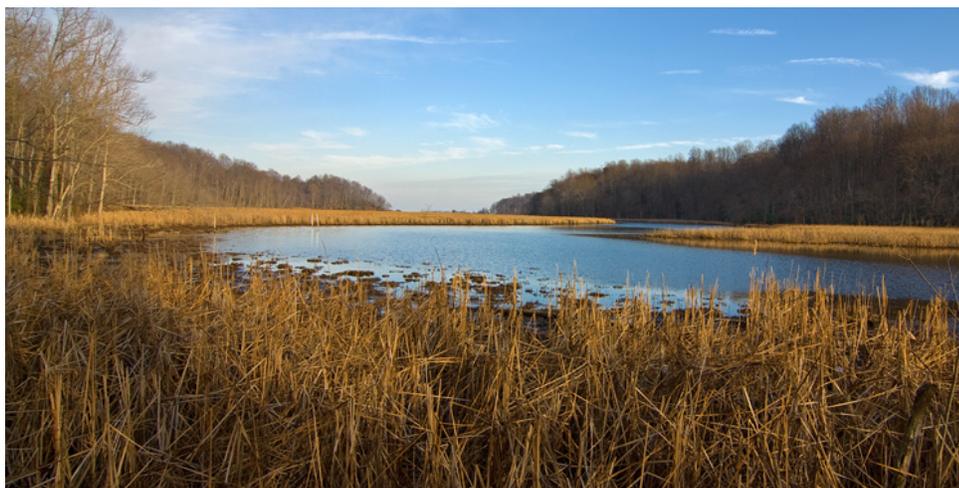
SEE [HTTP://ACLTWEB.ORG](http://acltweb.org) OR PAGE 11  
FOR FULL CALENDAR AND ADDI-  
TIONAL INFORMATION.

## The Importance of Maintaining Biodiversity in Parkers Creek for this and Future Generations

The Parkers Creek watershed is an incredible place: wild, beautiful, and special; but none of these terms adequately describe its uniqueness. The variety of the ecosystems that the creek passes through in its 2 ½ mile journey to the Chesapeake Bay and the geological history that underlays and composes its soils bring a richness of diversity seen very few places in Maryland. Research finds that the long-term success and survival of an ecosystem is directly dependent on the diversity of the species within it. Rich species diversity may be a critical factor in sustaining the Parkers Creek watershed as we accelerate into an unprecedented period of climate change due to global warming.

There are a number of rare and endangered species which inhabit the 7,000-acre watershed including tiger beetles, spiders and birds, as well as beautiful and unusual plants. It is not only the rare, that makes up the richness (the biodiversity) in the watershed as a whole, but also the great variety of common species contained within each ecosystem.

Parkers Creek's journey starts with springs (at about 165 feet above the bay); the water flows through our local sandy/clay soils sometimes into wetland tributaries like the Horse Swamp or Sullivan's Branch (home to a former bald cypress swamp) in Prince Frederick Town Center. The tributaries become palustrine freshwater streams traveling under the cool forest canopy. The main stem turns into a freshwater marsh, then widens into a brackish marsh, flowing into a winding salt marsh and out into the open bay. The plant and animal diversity changes as one follows the creek eastward.



Parkers Creek in the Winter. Photo by David Farr

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)



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Editors: Ellen and David Farr

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## From the President's Desk ... Restoring Water Quality in Calvert County

**The Water Resources Element** - Greg Bowen, Calvert County's Director of Planning and Zoning, gave a presentation to the ACLT Board at its meeting on January 19, 2008. His topic was "Watershed Planning in Calvert County," outlining the County's efforts to prepare a "Water Resources Element" (WRE) as a part of its Comprehensive Plan. The WRE was mandated by the state legislature in 2006 and applies to all Maryland jurisdictions with planning and zoning authority. In brief, each jurisdiction is to examine water supply, wastewater treatment and stormwater management in relation to anticipated growth.

**Water Quality Regulatory Basics** - The federal Clean Water Act requires each state to set water quality standards for each of its waterbodies, be it bay, lake, river or creek. These standards are to protect uses such as fishing, water supply and swimming. Those that don't meet standards are placed on the state's list of "impaired" waters. Many of the impairments in Maryland are attributable to nutrients and sediment. Among other things, nutrients promote algae growth and, when they decay, reduce oxygen levels—a common source of fish kills. Sediment blocks sunlight, preventing the growth of underwater grasses and can smother otherwise healthy aquatic habitats. Once on the list, the state is required to undertake an analysis, known as a "Total Maximum Daily Load" or TMDL to identify pollution sources and determine the reduction needed to meet standards.

**Pollutant Sources** - The sources of sediment include stormwater runoff from poorly controlled construction sites and agricultural fields and stream bank erosion from storm-induced flows. Calvert County is particularly vulnerable to this because of its highly erodible soils and steep slopes. New development generally means an increase in impervious surfaces and, unless the runoff is effectively controlled, this can cause erosion. Nutrient sources include runoff from farms fields and urban lawns; sewage treatment plants; septic tanks, even those operating as designed; and atmospheric deposition.

**The County's Subwatershed Analysis** - Among the things the County plans to do to address the new law is a "subwatershed analysis to determine impacts of wastewater treatment plants, septic systems and stormwater." They are collecting data on house locations, imperviousness, stormwater facilities, wastewater facilities, land use, and preserved areas. Plans are in the works for an Open House in October 2008 to present the findings related to all 21 subwatersheds being studied.

**The ACLT Connection** - The County's focus on watershed planning provides an opportunity for ACLT to ensure an effective plan for the Parkers Creek watershed and also to reflect on our stewardship opportunities. Our mission includes the following, "*We protect the natural and cultural resources of the watersheds of Parkers Creek and Governors Run for the benefit of this and future generations.*" In addition to preserving and providing active stewardship over much of the acreage within the Parkers Creek watershed, ACLT has been systematically taking water quality samples in Parkers Creek for a decade. We have also continued to make

our views known regarding sewage treatment and sediment controls during construction.

We will pay close attention to the County's watershed analysis for Parkers Creek to keep our members informed and ensure that problems are effectively addressed. We also have an opportunity to enhance our public outreach efforts with on the ground examples of modern practices. A "rain garden" at Double Oak and installation of a nitrogen-removing wastewater system (it should be grant eligible) at Warriors Rest are two ideas where ACLT can potentially reduce pollution and help set a good example for the community.

I encourage all ACLT members to stay attuned to the County's efforts to restore its water resources and stay involved as the County develops any restoration plans for the Parkers Creek watershed.

Ted Graham, President

# Around ACLT

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## 2007 Accomplishments

In case you missed the annual membership meeting, here are some of the 2007 accomplishments we reported on:

### *Land Preservation*

- In 2007, the land trust settled on the 36-acre parcel of land that was generously donated to us by Ralph and Mary Dwan. This property contains pristine wetlands and unbroken woodlands immediately adjacent to Parkers Creek and brings the total land preserved by ACLT to 3,051 acres.
- We were awarded a seed grant from the Kodak American Greenways Awards Program by the Conservation Fund to support planning of a Greenway Connection between the Town of Prince Frederick, Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay.
- ACLT continued to work with the state of Maryland, Calvert County and other local land trusts on future land preservation projects throughout the county under the state-funded Rural Legacy Program.

### *Sustainable Public Access*

- The public's usage of our hiking trails was up 60% as more people learned about ACLT through increased signage, ACLT outreach, and media coverage.
- In September 2007, the State Highway Administration installed new directional signs directing the public to the land trust's trails.
- Over 250 people participated in ACLT's guided canoe trips in 2007.
- The limited access Warrior's Rest Sanctuary hosted scientific researchers from the USDA studying parasitic wasps, researchers from the Smithsonian Environmental Research Consortium searching for possibly native phragmites, and researchers from the Calvert Marine Museum who excavated a dolphin skull from Calvert Cliffs.

### *Land Management*

- ACLT has made substantial progress through a 5-year grant under the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) from the state of Maryland removing several acres of non-native invasive plants including oriental bittersweet, garlic mustard, and bamboo at our south side trailhead this year thereby providing restored habitat for native and especially rare, threatened and endangered plants that are found on our preserved properties.
- In 2007, we met our match requirement for the LIP grant eight months earlier than expected with volunteers providing 485 hours equating to \$7,500 in matching funds.
- We have almost completed work on the Percy/Howard barn restoration. The barn was "adjusted" to sit plumb and stabilized with new concrete footers.
- Volunteers maintained the trails, including a rebuilt boardwalk on the Parkers Creek Loop and a new 120-foot section of boardwalk on the Swamp Trail.

## Coming this spring . . .

### ACLT's Electronic Community

ACLT members and volunteers, go to our website <http://acltweb.org/> now to provide us with your email address and to let us know what types of communications you would prefer to receive electronically.

You will have the option to receive:

- *The Watershed Observer* electronically
- Membership renewal notices
- ACLT volunteer opportunities
- ACLT event notifications, and
- Notices from ACLT's advocacy alert system ("e-Alerts") to receive notice of public meetings, hearings, legislative actions and the like that relate to ACLT's mission.

ACLT promises to treat your information confidentially, including your email address, and to be judicious about the number of email communications you receive from us. You will have the option to unsubscribe at any time.

## ***Membership and Outreach***

- A new ACLT organizational identity/brand was developed including a new logo featuring the Parkers Creek watershed and new letterhead featuring the tagline: *connecting people with the land*.
- We converted to a new membership database that will allow our members to renew their membership online, receive electronic alerts from ACLT and register for upcoming ACLT events.
- ACLT sponsored a showing of *An Inconvenient Truth: A Global Warning* in cooperation with the Calvert Marine Museum followed by a stimulating community discussion led by former ACLT board member and ecologist Marie Bundy.
- We partnered with eight other Chesapeake Bay Gateways sites in Southern Maryland including Sotterley Plantation, Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum, King's Landing Park and Chesapeake Biological Laboratory to co-sponsor *John Smith's Chesapeake*, a very popular speaker series in which each site hosted a speaker to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the exploratory voyages of Captain John Smith in the Chesapeake Bay.
- We developed a new kayaking event in conjunction with Flag Ponds Nature Park called the *Paddle from Parkers Creek to Flag Ponds* "following in the wake of Captain John Smith" along 7 1/2 miles of Chesapeake Bay shoreline.
- We also received favorable press coverage of our trail maintenance day, our spring guided hike, our invasive plant control program, and a number of our outreach events.
- ACLT purchased a laptop computer, projector and screen enabling us to make presentations to local community groups about the land trust.

## ***Administration and Fundraising***

- Our auditors provided ACLT with a clean, unqualified opinion on our 2006 finances.
- Road and parking improvements and a new entrance sign were installed at Double Oak Center.
- We said a fond farewell to Seona deGennaro and welcomed Charity Higgs as ACLT's new Community Relations Coordinator at our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.
- The Land Management Endowment continues to grow steadily; we ended the year 2007 almost three-quarters of the way towards our \$2 million goal.
- Both the Fall Appeal and the Auction were extremely successful, thanks to outstanding support from our members.
- Several small, new foundation grants were obtained and one existing funding source substantially increased its general operating support of ACLT in 2007.

Karen H. Edgcombe  
Executive Director

## **ACLT Introduces Three New Board Members**

At its Annual Membership Meeting ACLT recognized the contributions of three retiring board members—Barbara Benning, Paul Blayney and Andrea Clarke. We are very grateful for the time and energy they devoted to the land trust.

And now, it is my pleasure to introduce you to three individuals who have agreed to step up their volunteer commitment to ACLT by serving on the Board of Directors.

**Steve Kullen** was born in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and grew up on a dairy farm, which has given him the utmost respect for farmers, "the cows need milking at 4:00 a.m. every day, whether you are there or not. If you are lucky you can find a neighbor to milk your cows to have a few days off. Farming is every day." His family moved to Glen



Burnie, MD where he enjoyed fishing, hiking and camping. He graduated from West Chester State University in Pennsylvania with a degree in Rural Planning. Today, Steve's planning expertise runs the length of Parkers Creek and beyond. In the 1980's he was hired by Calvert County to work on the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan program and comprehensive rezoning of the county. His resume includes Environmental Planning for Calvert County, the Chesapeake Bay Initiative program, Storm Water Management/Sediment Erosion Planning, Recycling Coordinator for the Department of Public Works and the Program Manager for the Washington D.C. based National Recycling Coalition. He currently works as a Watershed Planner for Calvert County, providing environmental education and outreach for our area.

Steve and his wife moved to Calvert County 26 years ago to work together at the ARC of Southern Maryland, part of a statewide advocacy organization assisting persons with cognitive and developmental disabilities in Maryland. Steve met his wife Sue (now officially known as Delegate Sue Kullen) while she was volunteering at a Special Olympics event; he had shown up at the gym to play basketball. They purchased their home in Governor's Run from Randi and Peter Vogt with whom they became good friends. Steve learned of the ACLT through Peter. He

“encouraged us to join and, recognizing Peter’s good senses, we joined.” “Knowing that our donation and membership was doing something good for the community, the environment and our future” really brought us to the ACLT. He and Sue enjoy volunteering together. Besides the social interaction, Steve enjoys “the spring Earth Day roadside clean up and post hot dog roast”. With a solid waste background, “It’s always interesting, even though disappointing, to see what people toss out their car windows as they whisk along our roads less traveled.” A large part of a surf board has to be the most interesting of the roadside trash he has found.

Being a strong foundation for, and proud supporter of, a spouse in politics doesn’t leave much time for volunteering. Nevertheless, Steve has found time to not only support ACLT but also to be an integral part of Clean Islands International for the last 10 years. CII, based in Severna Park, is “a non-profit organization providing educational and technical assistance to island communities for developing sustainable practices and cultivating environmental awareness.” He is looking forward to his newest volunteer experience, supporting the American Chestnut Land Trust’s future by becoming a member of the ACLT Board of Directors.

**Carolyn Ebel** is originally from a small town on the Erie Barge Canal in New York State. Her youth was spent mostly outdoors, building snow forts, riding horseback and hiking on nearby farms. “In and around Middleport there were no boundaries, just fences. I could leave in the morning, return in the evening, after a day of exploring the countryside. Of course, with a town of only 2,000 and the town doctor for a father, one couldn’t get lost.” Carolyn attributes years spent at Camp Longacres, an all girls camp, with shaping her “future life in the outdoors.”



In college she spent two summers in Dijon, France, on the Experiment in International Living, living with a French family. She graduated from Wells College with a BA in French and English. Carolyn earned her Masters and Doctorate in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) from Temple University. She worked at the National Teacher Training Resource Center for TESOL teachers at Georgetown University. Her resume also includes being the Manager of the National Skills Training Program for Levi Strauss & Co., Executive Director for the

National Association for Bilingual Education and Director of the National Literacy Campaign for the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Carolyn is currently the Coordinator for the College of Notre Dame of Maryland’s Masters Degree programs in Management and Contemporary Communications at Southern Maryland Higher Education Center.

Eight years ago she moved from the Great Smoky Mountains area of Tennessee to Calvert County. When asked, “why Calvert County?” she responds, “to be closer to my children; that, along with the ‘outdoor’ opportunities of this area attracted me.” Suzi Cook, a neighbor of Carolyn’s told her about ACLT. Suzi knew “I was hiking the ACLT trails and thought my interests were close to those of ACLT members.”

Carolyn is not new to hiking, “while in Tennessee I hiked all the trails in the Smokies (900 Miler Club), the 2,147 miles of the Appalachian Trail, all of the 6,000 footers in the Southern Appalachians (Beyond 600 Club), and 40 state high points (including those in ice cream parlors in Delaware and on trash heaps in Florida).” Kayaking is her favorite activity in the summer, along with hiking with a group from Annapolis, and biking several times a week in Drum Point. She also volunteers with the Drum Point Property Owners Association and has served on their board. It seemed only natural that she would become an active member of ACLT, volunteering on trail maintenance days and helping with mailings. Carolyn says, she “looks forward to expanding my activities with ACLT, using skills from my past, as well as present.”

**Al Basile** was raised in the DC area and learned the trade of his Italian father, a tile setter, at a young age. He grew up assisting his father with projects and continued into the building trade after finishing college at the University of Maryland. He worked as a Superintendent/ Production Manager for local home builders and gradually moved into larger commercial building projects. Al then took his project management skills to Prince George’s County, with the Department of Inspections. He is currently a Space Management Specialist with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.



Al and his best friend since childhood, Angelo Cimini, used to race home from school to hunt birds and squirrels in their backyards. Being raised closer to DC, it was al-

ways in Al's master plan to move his family to the rural countryside of Calvert County, closer to fishing, hunting and nature. Al married his wife Gina on October 28, 1989 and they have two daughters: Elisa, 16, and Christina, 11. With his knowledge of construction he built his family's home off Sixes Road in 1994.

Angelo, one of founding members of Double Oak Hunt Club along with Leon Myers and Steve Howerton, invited Al to join the membership of the Double Oak Hunt Club in 1997. Al takes great pride in being a hunter, "it's about the hunt, observing, studying and knowing what to look for, the habits of the wildlife you are hunting." He enjoys upland bird, turkey and deer hunting. He views "being able to hunt at Double Oak as a privilege not a right." He loves that being a member of the Hunt Club requires volunteering, "it gives you a sense of ownership, a sense of respect and stewardship for the land." He has been the Double Oak Hunt Club Vice President for two years. Recently, Al had the perfect hunting experience on youth hunt day. He brought his neighbor Zach, who he has taught to hunt, and "he was able to site, shoot and track his very first deer. It was the perfect scenario."

Just as they did as children, Al and Angelo get together on a regular basis not only to hunt but to make wine together. They were taught their wine-making skills by Angelo's father. Al's family passed down some wine-making traditions as well. Al enjoys volunteering to cook for people. Growing up in an Italian family, his mother taught him to cook and cook well. He has fed as many as 200 people at volunteer functions such as ACLT Earth Day, Knights of Columbus events, and St. John Vianney Men's Group dinners. Al also has his own organic garden with okra, corn, beans and Italian lettuces.

His favorite ACLT activities, that don't include food, are carpentry projects including the Corn Crib reconstruction. He especially liked getting back to the old-style craftsmanship of building using axes. He has also volunteered on the Double Oak office renovation and on Barn Work Days.

The Basile family is full of volunteerism, not only do they all volunteer for ACLT as a family, but they all have individual interests as well. Al looks forward to becoming more active as a board member. He is excited about growing the ACLT membership and activities to include youth volunteerism and possibly a youth mentor program.

Charity Higgs  
Community Relations Coordinator

## 2007 ACLT Greens Sale

The ACLT Greens Sale and Beach Hayride held December 8, 2007 at Warrior's Rest was the culmination of a very busy and productive season of public events.

The event really began a week in advance with the Holly Arboretum work day. During the work day, volunteers trimmed trees and cut greens, holly, and other vegetation which would be used to make the wreaths, garlands, and assorted bunches of greens for the following week's sale. This was the first official event for Charity Higgs - our new Community Relations Coordinator. Relaxing after working on clearing vines, Charity said with a smile, "I'm truly impressed with the friendliness of our volunteers, their devotion to ACLT, and their willingness to work so hard. It's truly amazing!"

The Greens Sale and Beach Hayride was a very successful fundraising event for Warrior's Rest. New logo apparel was introduced (and found its way under many ACLT members' Christmas trees.) Winter apparel - fleece jackets, hooded sweatshirts, crewneck sweatshirts, and long-sleeve tee shirts - were featured and sold briskly with some sizes selling out immediately. Funds from the sale of wreaths, garlands, and greens support Warrior's Rest. A special thanks to all of our volunteers that helped out at this successful event.



Chris and Claire Higgs (husband and 4-year-old daughter of ACLT's Community Relations Coordinator, Charity Higgs).

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

From the upland woods (which make up the headwaters of the creek) to the barrier beaches, at its mouth, there are many species of trees that make up the forest alliances. See *Vegetation Mapping and Assessment of the American Chestnut Land Trust Forest Ecosystem* by Steve Stadleman, 2006. Bald Cypress and American Chestnut are rare species now, but they can still be found in the watershed area. There are beautiful sections dominated by mountain laurels. There are still lots of native dogwoods; they shine when they blossom in early spring. Sycamores, tulip poplars, white oaks, red oaks, chestnut oaks, sweet gum, hickory, beeches, loblolly and Virginia pines stand tall in the upland woods. Paw-paws, sassafras, American holly, black cherry, spicebush, ironwood, devil's walking stick, and redbud comprise the understory of the upland woods. Standing in the freshwater wetlands are viburnums, green ash, willows, and red maple. On the edge of the salt marsh are bayberry, red cedar, hackberry, wax myrtle, native persimmon, and groundsel trees.

Besides the trees within each ecosystem, there is a great diversity of other plants: including grasses, sedges, ephemeral wildflowers, fungi, annual, perennial, and evergreen vegetation. Each ecosystem hosts its own diverse range of insects, arachnids, reptiles, amphibians and mammals. The geological history, which leaves fossil shell beds exposed in the soil, makes for micro-ecosystems of very specialized plants.

The watershed hosts an incredible variety of birds, which include both migratory and resident species. There are forest interior dwelling species (FIDS), raptors, sparrows, wrens, woodpeckers, game birds, marsh birds, water fowl and many others. See <http://acltweb.org/naturalresources/birdlist/birdlist.cfm>. There is such a wonderful diversity of birds that the MD-DC Chapter of the Audubon Society has declared Parkers Creek an Important Bird Area (IBA status).

In a New York Times article "*Study Bolsters Value Of Species Diversity*" By William K. Stevens Published: February 1, 1994, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0DE7DB1239F932A35751C0A962958260>, Two researchers, Dr. David Tilman of the University of Minnesota in St. Paul and Dr. John A. Downing of the University of Montreal, studied prairie ecosystems and found that systems with a high species diversity survived drought (an extreme stress event) better than those ecosystems with a limited number of species. According to the article: The more species an ecosystem has, Dr. Tilman explains, the more likely it is that some will be resistant

to drought, disease, insect plague or any other stress that can threaten it. These resistant species spread and take the place of those harmed or killed by the stress. "This is a process that could apply to any ecosystem," he said, which makes it important to preserve biological diversity "because it's nature's insurance policy against catastrophes."

The data indicates that global warming has already begun to cause extreme stress events. Stress events are drought, flooding, polar ice melts, and disturbances in normal seasonal changes (such as early springs and prolonged summers). Increased freshwater from polar ice melt mixed into saltwater seas could even affect the flow of currents in the oceans that bring North America its temperate weather. These events will occur all over the world and be sustained over a prolonged number of years.

On the National Public Radio (NPR) program "*The DNA Files - The Heat Is On: Evolution in Action*" <http://www.dnfiles.org/programs/heat> it was reported that global warming and its affect on species is becoming "a force of evolution." Not just a few species in remote ecosystems are being affected, but 40-50% of all species. Biologist Camille Parmesan of University of Texas found that in the last 30 years, as a result of warmer temperatures, plants and animals have shifted the areas where they live (their ranges) "away from the equator and toward the poles." They have also shifted their natural timing (blooming, leafing, breeding earlier, and later dormancy).

Some of the changes are becoming genetic. Evolutionary biologists, Christina Holzapfel and William Bradshaw at the University of Oregon, study the pitcher plant mosquito. They found that these specialized mosquitoes have genetically evolved in a 5-year period—to cope with changes in seasonal timing, "evolution occurring at break-neck speed due to global warming." However, not all species will be able to shift areas, plants especially, but also animals unable to move beyond manmade barriers. Species who are longer lived or live in isolated niches will not be able to genetically adapt as quickly as mosquitoes.

As extreme weather events and seasonal changes occur many species will be lost. In the Land Manager's Corner over the last year I have written several articles highlighting native species and ACLT's non-native invasive plant removal program. Invasive non-native plants are setting up monocultures in our ecosystems by killing or taking up resources needed by native plants and animal spe-

cies. The purpose of the invasive removal program is not just to get rid of the weeds but to make sure that native species (including the rare and endangered species) still have a place in the local ecosystems and continue to thrive. Working to retain Parkers Creek's diversity of species is important at this pivotal time on the brink of massive change. Maintaining the biodiversity will help Parkers Creek's special ecosystems to survive into the future.

Join ACLT's Vine Vindicator program and help preserve Parkers Creek's biodiversity. Work as a team one Saturday a month, or every Wednesday morning (two hours per week), or work individually (after training) on your own schedule. See the ACLT Calendar (<http://aactweb.org/>) for scheduled workdays and training sessions.

Liz Stoffel  
Land Manager

## 2008 Canoe Trip Schedule

April 20, Sunday, 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

May 11, Sunday, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

May 31, Saturday, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

June 14, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

*Flag Ponds to Parkers Creek Paddle*

June 21, Saturday, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

July 19, Saturday, 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

August 16, Saturday, 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

September 7, Sunday, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

September 13, Saturday, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

October 11, Saturday, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Depart from Warrior's Rest and enjoy a scenic, volunteer guided tour of Parkers Creek. **Reservations are required. A \$10.00 per person donation is requested.**

Please call us at 410-414-3400 or e-mail us at [info@aactweb.org](mailto:info@aactweb.org) for more information or to make your reservation.

## Making Connections

A story submitted by Thomas H. Franz

A phone call on a Friday; a mild fall afternoon, the boys are home from school, bored and looking for attention. Alan and Chris, fatherless, mentored and befriended, asked for a movie. I fetched them up and to their surprise, turned down a dead-ending Double Oak Road, explaining that it was too early for a movie. We had a little over an hour before dusk to take an adventurous quick hike, then, get a bite to eat before the show. They agreed to my plan and we experienced a thrill, which led Chris on the larger trail to becoming an Eagle Scout.

The paved Double Oak Road ended at a hunter's parking spot. There was a fork leading one way to an abandoned farm road, along which was a makeshift hunting camp with a steep trail winding down to the creek. The other fork was an old historic road called Parkers Creek Road. It was unpaved and encroached by woods and fallen trees. The plan was to go down Parkers Creek Road and return by way of the farm road. It was about a three-mile round trip.

We hiked quickly and quietly hoping to spot deer and turkey. Aside from turkey scratching in the roadbed, we saw neither. As we descended toward the lower terrain, I had hoped we would hear the sounds of the wetland. There were no sounds, complete silence! The bog came into view to our right and we looked over the area formed by a long beaver dam containing tall poles of dead trees. We looked across the expanse, spotting something high in a tree. It appeared to be a huge nest, at a quarter mile distance away, about five feet wide and six feet deep.

Dusk was coming upon us and something seemed not right here. It was too quiet. There were no birds or insect sounds. It was eerie. We continued down to the creek to the ghostly pilings remaining from the old Parkers Creek Bridge. We shivered in the eeriness of the place and then I spotted it; it was on the top of a dead pole, facing away from us, a hunter.

I whispered, "Looook!" and it turned slowly toward us... spreading its huge wings full length, staring at us before lurching slowly, gracefully for the sky.

Birds and insects came alive as we thought about where we were. Parkers Creek had been a stopping place for the Susquehannock Tribe in route to make war in Southern Maryland; and the gift came to mind! The totem pole, a pole topped with a wing-spread eagle, hovering over our nation's flag.

The Eagle we saw was golden brown. We would see it again with two others. It would see us again and remember!

~~~~~

On a cold, but sunny winter afternoon Alan, Chris, Joe and I headed south toward Parkers Creek searching for the huge nest we had seen in the fork of an inverted tripod of branches on our earlier trek. It had all changed!

A recent winter ice storm had tested both man and beast. Nature had taken its toll! All three branches had broken by the weight of the ice and left the nest upended at the top of the tree. Scurrying through brambles, we noted that the tree was on a steep hillside. Commencing toward the upper side we saw that many feathers and bones had been shaken from the nest during the storm. The nest was as large as we had estimated on our first sighting. Standing in a raised position at the side of the nest, we could see hopping movement. There was a large young bird floundering back and forth within the nest.

The “Wow” moment changed drastically to an “Ah Ha” moment when I saw out of the corner of my eye against the background of blue sky, a creature’s eye, with head turned to meet my eye, sighting us from a quarter mile away, as through a hole in the ceiling, a Bald Eagle in full flight. I cried, “OK guys, take cover with close branches over your heads until we see what happens next.” The sharp-eyed creature that had spotted us returned to the nest and, hovering there, gave a guttural expression, answered by another in a tree not a hundred yards away. The nest had been guarded the whole time as we approached it.

At this time, we spotted in the distance, coming from the Parkers Creek bog area, three more large birds. I at first thought they might be hawks taking advantage of the eagles’ plight, to make an attack. The eagles’ response was immediate. They rose up and faced their foes. However, to our surprise, there was no contact. They played like friendly fighter pilots practicing maneuvers.

Our golden brown friend and his family did not seem to mind our presence and, in fact, seemed to have bonded with us. I say this now in hindsight, as our next encounter with this eagle family tells it all. They gave us a celebration show that we would never forget.

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Mid-morning on a bright, spring Saturday, Alan, Chris and I headed once more to Parkers Creek. A short distance from the old pilings of the Parkers Creek Bridge location, we heard a rustling in the reeds of the bog, but could see nothing. At the creek we turned east, down the creek, when a large shadow came over me. I looked up and saw two adult Bald Eagles, between the sun and me, catching my attention.

Soon thereafter, we saw a shady spot at two large oak trees where we settled down for our lunch of summer sausage, block cheese and juice. It was a loud lunch, with the boys jabbering away about many things. All of a sudden, it became very loud, bringing silence and awe to our little group—a sound I had never heard before. From over the tree tops a large sound traveling from the bottom of the hill, to over our heads and on up the hill, a sound with changing pitch as it traveled—two long, loud screams. When overhead, we saw it was one of our eagles. We had never heard an Eagle Yell before this event. It *was* tremendously loud. I can only describe it by painting a picture. Imagine a wooden paint stirrer pulled quickly across a picket fence amplified at extreme volume.

We sat in awe and wonder. It was a celebration! We were present as the eagles celebrated the first flight of their young one, which we now realized was what we had heard earlier in the bog as it set down to rest. We shared in the celebration, remembering our earlier bond with the family of eagles. Chris, at that point must have thought, “Joe did it! I am going to become an Eagle Scout, too!” And he did!

[Note about the Author: Thomas H. Franz cared for his wife for a number of years when she suffered from degenerative dementia. He already knew something about care-giving as he had enjoyed taking inner city kids on mountain hikes (83 trips and 360+ kids), volunteering in scouting, and mentoring fatherless boys. His wife died peacefully on December 8, 2007. Mr. Franz lives, surrounded by his grown children and grandchildren, in Dares Beach.

Eagle Scout, the highest rank in Boy Scouts, was awarded to Joseph Niedzielski 11/30/1993 and Christian Wagner 3/21/1999, both from Troop 430 at St. John Vianney Church in Prince Frederick, Maryland.]



Bald Eagle flying over Parkers Creek, Photo by Bruce Armstrong

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT ...

## New Members

ACLT would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since the Fall 2007 newsletter:

Mr. & Mrs. Louis Amtmann  
Ms. Mary Burke & Mr. Paul Dickinson  
Ms. Danielle Chappell & Mr. Karl Adler  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Crunkleton  
Mr. Thomas A. Franz  
Mr. Scott Galczynski  
Ms. Charity Higgs  
Ms. Donna Kille  
Ms. Jan Owings  
Mr. & Mrs. James Paxton  
Mr. William Sale  
Ms. Laura T. Sewell  
Mr. Paul Spampinato  
Ms. Nancy Teich  
Ms. Katrina vanZee  
Ms. Liese vanZee  
Mr. Pieter vanZee  
Mr. Jerome Wallace  
Ms. Kathryn Wilber &  
Mr. James O'Reilly & Family  
Ms. Karen T. Zambroski

## Fall Appeal

The Staff and the Board of Directors wish to thank the following members who made a contribution to the 2007 Fall Appeal:

Mr. & Mrs. William Arms  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Bailey  
Dr. & Mrs. Robert L. Bartlett  
Dr. & Mrs. Charles Bennett  
Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Benning  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Berry  
Mr. & Mrs. Tim Bintrim  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul H. Blackman  
Mr. & Mrs. David E. Bonior, M.C. (Ret.)  
Mr. James Borell & Ms. JoAnne Longhill  
Mr. David Brownlee &  
Ms. Melanie Maholick  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Caldwell, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. John C. Campbell  
(Campbell Communications, Inc.)  
Mrs. Martha K. Canfield  
Mr. & Mrs. James T. Cavanaugh  
Mr. & Mrs. A. Robert Cole  
Ms. M. Susan Cole  
Drs. Judith & Don Dahmann  
Ms. Kathy Daniel  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Dennett  
Mr. & Mrs. David Didion  
CDR & Mrs. Freeman Dodsworth  
Dr. & Mrs. William A. Dorsey  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Douglas  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Drumm

Mr. Alvin Wilson & Ms. Ethel M. Dutky  
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Dwan  
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel M. Ellsworth  
Mrs. Jefferson B. Feagin  
Mr. Carl Fleischhauer & Ms. Paula Johnson  
Mr. & Mrs. Philip A. Fleming  
Sen. & Mrs. Bernard Fowler  
Mr. & Mrs. Glynn Frank  
Mr. & Mrs. Duncan Frazer  
Mrs. Magda Freeman  
Dr. & Mrs. Peter A. Freeman  
Mr. & Mrs. William I. Gay  
Dr. Edward U. Graham  
RADM & Mrs. James B. Greene, Jr.  
USN (Ret.)  
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick J. Griffin  
Ms. Margo Coffin Groff  
Dr. Edward Hacskaylo  
Mr. William Haile & Ms. Joy Bartholomew  
Ms. Barbara Harris  
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Hildebrand  
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen A. Howerton  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert A. Jaeger  
Mr. & Mrs. Taysir Jaouni  
Mr. Peter A. Johnson  
Mr. & Dr. William D. Johnston  
Ms. Elizabeth L. Johnston  
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher C. Kelly  
Ms. D. Jane Klemer  
Del. Sue & Mr. Steven Kullen  
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory W. Locraft  
Mrs. Mary M. Loew  
Mr. & Mrs. John Lucas  
Mr. Michael Makuch & Ms. Anne Warner  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Manning  
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene McHugh  
Mr. John J. McNeely  
Mr. & Mrs. John R. Menassa  
Mr. Ewing H. Miller  
Dr. & Mrs. Robert G. Miller  
Mr. Anthony & Hon. Constance Morella  
Mr. & Mrs. Leon Myers, Jr.  
Mrs. Julie M. Nisonger  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Nutter  
Mrs. Virginia O'Neill  
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Phillips  
Dr. & Mrs. Austin Platt  
Rev. William M. Plummer  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert D. Prince  
Ms. Lisa Racioppi  
Mr. & Mrs. David E. Redden  
Mr. & Mrs. John Reed  
Mrs. Eleanor B. Rickel  
Ms. Betty Lynn Roberts  
Mr. Daniel W. Sampson  
Dr. & Mrs. James G. Sanders  
Mr. & Mrs. Warren F. Sengstack  
Mr. Todd Sheldon & Ms. Mary McGahey  
Ms. Susan Simon

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative  
(SMECO)  
Mr. Mark Smith & Dr. Denise Breitburg  
Mr. John H. Spence  
Mr. & Mrs. Steven P. Stadelman  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Stathis  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Steller  
Mr. James W. Stone &  
Ms. Crawford Feagin Stone  
Ms. Mary K. Stone  
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Straka  
Mr. Patrick Simpson & Ms. Patricia Tantum  
Mr. & Mrs. Harry C. Teich  
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Trentman  
Mr. Joseph Turner & Ms. Leslie Starr  
Col. Caroline VanMason, USA(Ret.)  
Ms. Mary C. Walker  
Mr. Wilmer J. Waller  
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan R. Warner  
Mr. John D. Watson, Jr. &  
Ms. Lelia Blackwell  
Mr. Peter J. Watson & Ms. Kathleen Heins  
Western Shores Civic Assn.  
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Williams  
Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Wood (Wood & Whitacre  
Contractors)  
Mr. & Mrs. James Woodmansee  
Mr. Klaus Zwilsky & Ms. Roberta Safer

## Gift Memberships

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

Ms. Karen Edgecombe  
RADM & Mrs. James B. Greene, USN  
(Ret.)  
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Griffin  
Ms. Vivian Horner  
Capt. & Mrs. Patrick Murphy, USN (Ret.)  
Ms. Patricia Tantum  
Mrs. Carol Hanke Teich (Waldon III  
Heritage)

## General Contributions and Designated Gifts

Thank you to the following for your generous gifts:

Ann's Circle, Inc. - In honor of  
Donna Wilson  
Mr. & Mrs. John C. Boyd  
Mr. John W. Burke & Ms. Judith Ayres  
Double Oak Hunt Club - financial  
assistance to purchase an educational  
game  
Mr. & Mrs. David Farr - Land Acquisition  
Fund  
Mr. Conrad Hoska - Land Acquisition  
Fund

Mr. Jonathan C. Kelly - A Christmas present to Chris Kelly  
 Maertens Fine Jewelry and Gifts - from the sale of ACLT inspired jewelry.  
 Ms. Kelley Ellsworth - In honor of the good work done by Ralph Dwan  
 Mrs. Ann Simms - A Christmas present to Janice Rodgers  
 Mr. Glen O. Pyles - Land Acquisition Fund

## Memorial Contributions

Thank you to the following members who made memorial contributions since our last newsletter:  
 In memory of Joe Nisonger who was a Charter Member and longtime supporter and volunteer:  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Mihalcik  
 Ms. Nancy McK. Smith

In memory of Ruth Arbuckle who was a Charter Member and longtime supporter:  
 Ms. Nancy McK. Smith  
 Ms. Virginia Ayres

In memory of Anne & Byron Hanke who were Sustaining Members and longtime supporters:  
 Mrs. Emily Hanke vanZee

In memory of John Parker:  
 Ms. Nancy McK. Smith

## May we borrow ... ?

The ACLT needs the following props for the set of the one-woman play, *A Sense of Wonder*, to be held on March 30, 2008:

- A wooden desk (ca. 1960 or earlier)
- A wooden straight-back chair
- A wooden table
- A small wooden bookcase
- A comfortable upholstered armchair (such as a wing back)
- A small side/end table to sit next to the armchair
- A teapot, cup and saucer, and sugar bowl

If you are willing to lend any of these items, please contact Pat Tantum, [info@actweb.org](mailto:info@actweb.org), or call the office at 410-414-3400. Thank you!

## ACLT Calendar of Events - 2008

**Saturday, March 8, 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - *Hiking Trail Maintenance Day*** - Join ACLT staff and volunteers as we work on the hiking trails in preparation for spring and summer hikers. Cook out and picnic lunch for volunteers at noon.

**Sunday, March 30, 2:00 p.m. - *"A Sense of Wonder: A Play Based on the Life of Rachel Carson."*** Acclaimed actress Kaiulani Lee has written and will perform this one-woman play based on the life and works of environmentalist Rachel Carson. St. John Vianney Family Life Center. Admission fee.

**Saturday, April 12, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon - *Spring Guided Hike on Gravatt East*** - Enjoy the newly spruced up trails and spring's early offerings on the East Loop Trail.

**Saturday, April 19, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon - *Earth Day*** - Volunteer crews will be working along roadsides and on selected projects. This is a great way to meet ACLT neighbors, members, and volunteers while helping improve our Calvert County community. A picnic lunch will be hosted at the end of the day's activities for volunteers.

**Saturday, June 7, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - *Parkers Creek Celebration at Double Oak Farm*** (formerly Family Day) - A day of fun activities for the whole family, in celebration of the natural and cultural resources of Calvert County.

**Saturday, June 14 - *Paddle from Flag Ponds to Parkers Creek by Kayak*** - Start early to get in shape for this seven-mile paddle. ACLT will be partnering with Calvert County Natural Resources Division in coordinating this event.

**Saturday, September 27 - *13<sup>th</sup> Annual Silent Auction & Celebration*** - Bid on donated items at the auction, catch up with other ACLT members and enjoy the evening at ACLT's annual fundraising event!

**Friday, October 24, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - *Volunteer Appreciation Dinner*** - The ACLT staff hosts this enjoyable evening to honor and thank our dedicated and faithful volunteers.

**Sunday, November 2, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon - *Fall Foliage Hike at Double Oak*** - You can't beat the fall colors at Double Oak Farm! Don't miss the last guided hike of the year. (Remember to set your clocks back one hour.)

**Saturday, December 13, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - *Greens Sale and Beach Hayride*** - Purchase fresh cut evergreens for holiday decorations, drink hot cider and take a hayride to the beach.

*In addition, ACLT offers guided canoe trips from April through October. The 2008 canoe trip schedule appears on page 8 of this newsletter and on our Web site, <http://actweb.org>.*

# Come Join Us!

Detach and Mail to: The American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc., P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

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 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.



**American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.**  
**Post Office Box 2363**  
**Prince Frederick, MD 20678**

**NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
PERMIT NO.  
548  
PRINCE FREDERICK  
MD**