

American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Post Office Box 204
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NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 - Number 1

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Message from the President

On December 6, 1987, the land trust reached its first birthday. There was no official celebration, but it was a happy coincidence that we had just passed through our first Deer Season (firearms) without incident. Despite the posting of signs with the ACLT name and address, no requests for permission to hunt were received.

The annual membership meeting on October 24 was from all accounts a great success with 103 adults and 10 children attending. Highlights of the meeting were Peter Vogt's journey into the future through his crystal ball, Carl Fleischhauer's slide show featuring the cultural/historical resources of the property, with Mark Switzer filling in admirably for the the photographer-author, and the delicious buffet. Most of the members attending took advantage of the tours offered in the afternoon. Plans are now in progress for producing a trail map and brochure that will allow individuals and groups to explore the property with a guide to principal features of interest.

We thank outgoing board members Elaine Cochran, Frank Caldwell, Jr., Austin Canfield, Jr., Don Kollmorgen and Norman Prince for their commitment of time and effort during the past year and welcome new members Dan Boesz, Carl Fleischhauer, Aileen Hughes and Bob Ulanowicz and Mark Switzer who was elected to a second term. The board met immediately after the annual meeting to elect officers and will meet bimonthly on the 4th Saturday of the month beginning on January 23, 1988. The regular meeting place is the Battle Creek Nature Center and the time of the meeting is 10:00 a.m.

The minutes of the Annual Meeting are reprinted below.

The meeting was called to order by the President, Ralph Dwan, at 10:15 a.m. He announced that the newly constituted board of directors would meet following the annual membership meeting and that there would be three options for tours of the property after lunch to be lead by Mark Switzer, Oliver Flint and Peter Vogt.

The President then gave his report by narrating the highlights of the past year's activities in organizing the land trust as a non-profit, tax exempt corporation, negotiating a contract to purchase the 450+ acre Gravatt/Miles tract, soliciting contributions through the newsletter and by establishing an escrow account, qualifying as an Agriculture Preservation District and finally going to settlement on October 1, 1987.

The Treasurer's report was given by Gary Loew. He referred to his written report, which was distributed, and described the activities of the fund raising committee in identifying potential members and making personal contact. After describing how the sale of Transfer Development Rights (TDR'S) will help to pay off the balance of the purchase price, he concluded with an explanation of the Land Purchase Summary and the Income and Expense Report.

Peter Vogt then gave the report of the Land Use Committee. He recognized the members of the committee and thanked them for their participation. Subcommittees are operating in the following areas of attention: Historical and Cultural, Forestry, and Wildlife. After calling for volunteers to help in refining the land use plan, he concluded by looking into his 'crystal ball' to describe a humorous and fanciful future for the ACLT.

A question and answer session followed with members asking about future plans for acquiring additional land, the need to broaden the membership, details on the TDR program, at the participation of school children and other matters. Board members responded to these concerns, and the session ended with a lively discussion on the issue of permitting hunting on the property.

The Nominating Committee report was given by Don Dahmann. There are 5 vacancies on the 15 member board of directors. According to the Articles of Incorporation 4 are to be elected by Charter/Sustaining members and 1 by Regular members. Nominated in the first category were Dan Boesz, Carl Fleischhauer, Aileen Hughes and Mark Switzer. In the second category the nominee was Bob Ulanowicz. The slate was moved, seconded and approved by voice vote.

A slide presentation showing the historical and cultural features of the property was given by Mark Switzer, using the slides and commentary prepared by Carl Fleischhauer. It was well received by the membership.

Board of Directors

Ralph H. Dwan, Jr., President
Peter Vogt, Vice President
Aileen R. Hughes, Secretary
Gary A. Loew, Treasurer
Daniel L. Boesz
Donald C. Dahmann
Carl Fleischhauer
Oliver S. Flint, Jr.
Edward Hacskeylo
John H. Jones
Daniel Priest
Joseph Steller, Jr.
John Mark Switzer
Robert Ulanowicz
Caroline E. Van Mason

An introduction of guests followed. Sandy Hillyer of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation gave congratulations to ACLT for its good work. He discussed the CBF role in helping ACLT get started and stated that they had been willing to provide a loan of \$50,000, if it had been necessary. He then described CBF's role in monitoring implementation of the Critical Areas legislation. Arnold Norden of the Department of Natural Resources said that Oliver Flint had gotten him interested in ACLT. He proposed the National History Review as a possible way of sharing our experiences with other groups.

Member Allan Loew then praised the ACLT volunteer workers and the membership joined in applause. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m. and luncheon was served. Present were 103 adults and 10 children.

Dan Priest
Acting Recording Secretary

Letter to the Editor

The editors would like to share the following letter received from members living in Illinois.

"Dear ACLT Editor,

"Our family recently had the pleasure of traveling from the windswept prairies of Illinois to the shores of the Chesapeake Bay in Calvert County, Md. While there we enthusiastically explored the American Chestnut Land Trust environs decked out in its dazzling mantle of fall color. After walking the trails, and viewing the old cemetery, tobacco barn, and the myriad varieties of fauna and flora highlighted by the stately American Chestnut tree it became abundantly clear why everyone involved in the trust have seemingly moved heaven and earth to protect these splendid acres.

"Too often the treasures of America are lost for lack of foresight and a 'can do' spirit. Thankfully the ACLT is in good hands, and it's comforting to know that we can return again and again to enjoy its unique beauty.

"Sincerely, The John McGahey Family"

Thanks for writing. We who live close by begin to take our "treasure" for granted. There is much work to be done to both complete acquisition of the property and to maintain and manage it for future generations.

—The Editors

Treasurer's Report

In this first newsletter of 1988 I would like to show you how we finished in 1987 and what we plan for 1988. On the next page I have presented three statements. The first is the complete accounting of income and expenses in 1987. You may recall that the payment required for the property, due on October 1st, was \$400,000, of which we had already paid \$85,000 down. We went right up to the last week until we had sufficient contributions to make the payment. Every member has our appreciation for both your contributions and, in many instances, your fund raising efforts on our behalf. We needed every dollar. We can now look forward to managing this beautiful property.

Almost all of our income in 1986-87 went toward the purchase of the property. The legal/accounting fees, the largest non-property expense category, were either to establish the corporation or to settle on the property. As I have shown at the bottom of the statement, our administrative costs were only about 2.5% of income. In developing this ratio, I subtracted land purchase costs (including settlement costs) from expenses and the income from development rights (TDR's) sales from income because the remaining income and expenses better represent the true costs of administering the land trust.

For those who didn't make the Annual Meeting, I have also included a report of the land purchase costs. Our largest expense by far, which shows both sources of income and settlement costs. You can see on this statement that we used most of the income from the sale of TDR's to make a \$150,000 advance payment on the outstanding balance. The remaining \$300,000 is due in five years. We must pay 8% interest on the unpaid balance on October 1st of each year the note is still outstanding.

The third statement is a copy of our 1988 budget. The budget was approved by the Board of Directors at the November 24th meeting. As in all budgets, you should read the notes. We plan to sell the 221 TDR's remaining on the surveyed portion of the property and to use this income to pay off the note. The development rights are valued at \$1500 per TDR in the budget. We almost had one contract for all 221 TDR's, however, the developer changed his plans so we have not yet contracted to sell them. We will still try to sell as many TDR's as possible this year to decrease the outstanding balance. Notice also that we plan to sell some timber this year. Generally, it is the Board's direction that we should use the income from timber sales for forestry management and other property improvement activities. Lastly, we have budgeted \$10,000 to survey the unsurveyed portion of the property. The County will not approve the development rights associated with this portion until the acreage is verified by a survey. The survey crews began their work in December so we should have some more news on the results by the next newsletter.

ACLI 1988 Budget

ITEM	1988
Contributions	10,000
Annual Membership	2,500
Grants	5,000
Interest	3,500
Sale of TDR's (1,2)	331,500
Timber Sales (3)	3,000
Other	500
Total	\$356,000

ACLI ESTIMATE OF EXPENSES: 1988

Advertising/Promotion	500
Check Charges	0
Dues/Subscriptions	200
Insurance	2,000
Interest	2,000
Legal/Accounting	1,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	500
Office Supplies	300
Postage	500
Newsletter	800
Land Purchase Cost	302,000
Land Survey	10,000
Forestry Management (4)	3,000
Telephone	20
Property Maintenance (5,6)	5,000
Annual Meeting	1,000
Total	\$328,820

NET \$27,180

NOTES

1. Sale 221 TDR's in 1988 at \$1,500 per TDR
2. Sale 180 TDR's in 1988.
3. First timber sale in 1988
4. Forestry improvements approx equal income
5. Construct Parking Lot and maintain trails in 1988
6. Maintenance in 1988 and 1989

Land Purchase Summary

Sources of Funds	Amount
Downpayment (Savings Account)	85,000.00
Escrow Account	241,072.87
Savings Account	81,927.13
Checking Account	115.47
Wilson IDR Purchase (121 @ \$1,500)	181,500.00
TOTAL	\$589,615.47

Land Purchase Costs	Amount
Land Cost	\$950,000.00
- Downpayment (Savings)	85,000.00
- Due at Settlement	315,000.00
- Prepayment on Balance	150,000.00
- Total Land Payments	\$550,000.00

Settlement Costs	Amount
- Tax Stamps	7,738.50
- Recording Fee (Deed)	5,610.00
- Recording Fee (Mortgage)	16.00
- Title Insurance	23.00
- Abstract	1,737.50
County Taxes	350.00
Subtotal	379.47
Attorney Fees (IDR Sale)	8,115.97
Total Settlement Costs	261.00

Total Paid	\$8,376.97
Sources - Payments (To Savings Account)	\$558,376.97
Land Costs + Settlement Costs - Payments	\$31,238.50
- Balance Due (Note Payable @ 8%)	\$300,000.00

Treasurer's Report - 1987
December 31, 1987

INCOME AND EXPENSE REPORT	ITEM	AMOUNT
1986 Income		\$55,101
1987 Income		17
- Dividends		8,056
- Interest Earned		373,787
- Contributions		181,500
- Sale of Development Rights		583,340
- Subtotal		\$618,441

Total Income: 1987-1988		\$618,441
1987 Expenses		54
- Check Charges		100
- Dues/Subscriptions		1,737
- Insurance		11,591
- Legal/Accounting		1,907
- Miscellaneous Expenses		181
- Office Supplies		1,221
- Postage		1,162
- Newsletter		555,385
- Land Purchase Cost		\$573,328
Total Expenses		\$45,113

STATUS OF ACCOUNTS	AMOUNT
Income - Expenses	0
Escrow Account	42,985
Savings Account	1,933.21
Checking Account	185
Petty Cash	\$45,113
Total	\$45,113

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES = 2.6%

Expenses-Land Purchase Cost/Income-TDR sales
---land cost includes some related attorney fees

Woodcock Courtship at the Chestnut Trust

The land trust is an excellent place to observe the courtship display of the American woodcock (*Philohela minor*). This report on the male woodcock's spectacular song-and-airborne-dance is based on observations made early in 1987. The display is a little hard to see—not because the bird is hard to find, but because the activity is nearly nocturnal. The ground-based calling and reckless flying that make up the display occur at the fall of dark in the dim days of late winter—or, more optimistically, very early spring.

Roger Tory Peterson's description in the 1980 edition of his field guide is a model of succinct prose: "At dusk in spring, male utters a nasal beezp (suggesting Nighthawk). Aerial 'song,' a chipping trill (made by wings) as bird ascends, changing to a bubble-like warble on descent." Peterson's description of the woodcock's habitat concludes, "Nocturnal display high over semi-open fields, pastures."

On the trust's land, the bird is to be found in exactly this sort of location—in the tobacco fields opposite Scientists Cliffs Gate A, along the lane that bifurcates the fields, and in the small plant bed in which Woodrow Wallace starts his tobacco crop, a bit west of the right-hand field. Some birds will also be found in and around the Scientists Cliffs gardens just inside Gate A. In 1987, the displays began in mid-to-late February (at about 6:30 p.m.) and continued into March (and possibly later).

Find the birds by using your ears. Walk slowly and listen for the rather loud "beezp" or "peent." The woodcock tend not to fly when approached. Periodically, however, they take to the air, sometimes rising several hundred feet in a tight circle, emitting the trill described by Peterson. They can be seen as a black silhouette against the still-light sky. Sometimes they fly quickly through the trees, more heard than seen. At the end of the one- or two-minute flight, they return to the spot where they began, and resume "peenting" for several minutes.

Woodcock are valued as game birds and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wildlife biologist Greg Sepik has studied the species for a decade at Moosehorn Refuge near Calais, Maine. In the March/April 1987 issue of *The Drummer*, the organ of the Ruffed Grouse Society, he explained that woodcock are not fussy about the plant species under which they dwell, caring more about "the structure and pattern of the forest and the soils from which the woodlands grow."

"The timberdoodle," he wrote, "seeks out brushy cover with moderately dense stem growth located on good soils that produce an abundance of earthworms," the latter being the bird's food. In our area, Sepik suggested, a cover of wax myrtle or bicolor lespedeza might encourage the woodcock, as well as bobwhite quail. If planted in fields, strips should be mowed through these plants to offer the woodcock "singing grounds."

—Carl Fleischhauer

ACLT Members

Welcome and thanks to the many new members who joined since the last list was printed (September 4). The following reflects our current membership, including a complete listing of the charter members who joined by the October 1, 1987, deadline. The Editors apologize for any omissions or errors in the citation of names. Please advise us if our records should be corrected.

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