

# American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Post Office Box 204  
Port Republic, MD 20676



## NEWSLETTER

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Volume 4 - Number 1

January 19, 1990

Editors: Ellen and David Farr, 4512 Tonquil Place, Beltsville, MD 20705 (301-937-8160)

### ACLT Purchases Russell Tract

After fourteen months of negotiations, ACLT has purchased the Russell Tract, an 80-acre wilderness and wetlands tract with a 2000-foot frontage on the south side of Parkers Creek. We went to settlement on Friday, January 12, 1990. This transaction was somewhat complicated by the title being held by three separate Russell family heirs, all of whom wanted our assurance that the land would not be developed any time in the future and all of whom had to come to agreement with us on the price. The land has already been certified by the Critical Areas Forester as qualified to be established as an Agricultural Preservation District and therefore eligible for Transferable Development Rights (TDR's). As with other ACLT land holdings to date, a protective easement to preclude future development is automatically placed on the land in perpetuity with the sale of the first TDRs.

We have enjoyed working with Ed Worsham, the principal spokesman for the family, Mrs. Anthony March, and Mr. and Mrs. John Russell. We know they have mixed feelings about giving up this beautiful retreat that has been in their family for years. They have promised to come back for visits in the future.

—Aileen Hughes

[Ed. Note: See map on page 4 for location of Russell Tract and other properties referred to in this issue.]

### The Tree Harvest

Our other front page headline news this month is about the tree harvest that took place over a three to four week period during the holiday season. It was easily seen from the road and even those of us who had arranged for this limited logging operation were ill at ease when the massive harvesting equipment was lined up seemingly to lay waste to all of our beautiful forest. To allay our fears, we asked our member and professional forester, Dave Chessler, to keep a watchful eye on the operation and advise us on the quality of the work. We erected a sign at the site to explain the project to passers-by. Our timing for the harvest could hardly have been better. The ground was frozen solid for most of the logging period so damage to the ground was minimal. The harvesters are now gone and new growth in early spring will cover the scars. We thought you might be interested in reading the following views, both written before Christmas, at the height of the harvest.

—Aileen Hughes

### A Board Member's View

During the last two weeks of December, a contract crew was cutting Virginia pines on our land on Parkers Creek Road, along our boundary with the Weems' Eastview Farm, and near the parking area and gate on Scientist Cliffs Road. Many of our members have asked us to explain this activity and we have prepared this information.

*Why does the ACLT cut trees?* There are two important reasons. The first is associated with our designation as a Calvert County Agricultural Preservation District. It was this designation that permitted us to sell our Transferable Development Rights (TDRs). The sale of these TDRs provided about half of the

funds that paid for the 436-acre initial land purchase as well as the full cost of the 80-acre Russell Tract on Parkers Creek. In order to qualify for this designation, we have to be a "farm"—in our case, mostly a tree farm. Tree farms have forestry management plans and occasionally harvest trees.

The second reason is to produce revenue that can be used to help pay our operating expenses. The ACLT is young and our patterns are not yet well established, but we anticipate ongoing expenses for trail and fence maintenance, liability insurance, and perhaps even sanitary facilities. We estimate this harvest will provide the trust with \$13,000.

*Will cutting be an annual affair?* The forestry plan calls for some activity every few years, but most of the time the work will be modest. The removal of Virginia pines this year is the most pronounced and visible action we will take. Generally, we will be cutting a few tulip poplars or other hardwoods in order to improve a stand, or will be selectively harvesting individual trees in a larger tract.

*The cut at the parking lot is very obvious. Why did you choose this place?* The professional forester recommended that our first action be the removal of Virginia pines, and this is where the stands of pine are found. Our forestry plan favors cutting the exterior or perimeter tracts on our land. It does not call for cutting in the interior portions in order to protect the steeply sloped ravines, our recreational trails and natural habitats for neotropical migrants. Active forestry will take place on less than one third of the land; some 70% will be left untouched.

*Have you destroyed the environment?* We think not. Our environment is not a wilderness; it is the result of three hundred years of interaction between people and nature. We are continuing that interaction in very modest ways—opening trails, building fire roads, preserving buildings, growing tobacco, encouraging bluebirds, and cutting a few trees. We people are part of this environment, after all.

*What about wildlife?* It all depends on which wildlife you mean. Some creatures—deer, woodcock, and bluebirds, to name three—prefer open land and the edges of woods. They will welcome the cut areas. Other creatures prefer closed-canopy forest, and they will prefer the ACLT interior.

*How long will this area remain ugly?* Ugliness is in the eye of the beholder but, ugly or not, this cut area will grow up very rapidly. We expect that it will be pleasing to the eye within two or three years. For comparison, watch the new growth shoot up under the electrical wires between the two tobacco fields, where the power company cut trees and underbrush during the summer of 1989.

We are satisfied with the outcome of this first round of forestry. We believe that the harvesters have done a good job of limiting their cutting to the Virginia pines and have left a minimal amount of mess. We are grateful for the income the activity has provided. We are confident that the look of the site will greatly improve this spring and summer and feel that we have learned many valuable lessons for the future. We are also anxious to hear your opinions: Please write to P.O. Box 204, Port Republic, MD 20676.

—Carl Fleischhauer

### *A Forester's View*

The first timber harvest commenced this past December on several small stands on the ACLT property. The purpose was to remove the Virginia pine trees which are a shallow rooted, short lived species which is easily windthrown. In many areas, this was already occurring and was posing not only a fire hazard but also a safety hazard along the roads and near various homes. During this operation only the Virginia pines were removed, leaving all of the hardwood and the loblolly pines.

As a result of this operation a wide range of benefits will be realized: (1) A diversity of wildlife habitat has been created, (2) The areas that were harvested will regenerate with a variety of hardwood species, as well as Virginia and loblolly pine, (3) The roads system that was created can be maintained thus allowing access for suppression vehicles in the event of fire. If the proper seed mixtures and plants are used the roads can also provide additional wildlife food sources, (4) The money that has been generated by this sale can and should be put back into managing ACLT lands and possible new acquisitions. These are just a few of the many benefits that are realized through forest management which includes timber harvests.

Some members of the ACLT may not agree with the harvesting of trees on our property. It should be noted that one of the reasons we were able to purchase this unique piece of land was our being accepted into the Agricultural Preservation Program of Calvert County which allowed us to sell a certain number of development rights. This generated funds to help pay off the mortgage and finance future land purchases. The purpose of the Ag Preservation Program is to keep valuable forests and lands in production and to keep them from being subdivided and developed. Production means management and harvesting a crop.

I would ask you to think about this. Would you prefer to have hundreds of homes located on this property or look at a harvested area which will quickly grow back? If the property had been subdivided do you think the new homeowners would let you trespass on "their" property. Also, think of the long term loss of wildlife habitat and the potential damage to the streams in the area if the property had been developed. Over the joyous holiday season as you sat before your fireplace or wood stove, unwrapped your presents and looked at the cards your friends and neighbors sent you, did you consciously realize that these items as well as over 2,000 other products were produced from trees harvested from managed forests?

—Dave Chessler

[Ed. Note: Dave Chessler is now Executive Director of the Maryland Forest Association, a consortium of growers, forest product utilizers and manufacturers of wood products. Dave prepared our initial forestry management plans. He visited the site daily up until Christmas week and reports that the harvesters' work was "outstanding."]

### **Reforestation Begins This Spring**

ACLT has purchased 2000 loblolly pine and 100 black walnut seedlings. The first area scheduled for planting is the nine-acre tract to the left of the main parking area cleared by this winter's tree harvest. The seedlings, ordered from the Calvert County office of the Maryland Forest, Park and Wildlife Service at a cost of \$68.00, should arrive in March. Arnold Petty has agreed to coordinate and supervise the work. Arnie is enthusiastic about this project and ACLT will benefit immensely from his services.

More volunteer planters will be needed. We know there are several Boy Scout Troops wanting to help and we are gratified by the number of volunteers who have already signed up. If you want to be part of the reforestation effort, Arnie will welcome your call ((301)586-2026). The County Forestry Service will lend us as many tools to plant seedlings as they have available. Beyond that we may have to improvise.

Do you have suggestions for the kinds of trees we should consider planting in the future? Please send your ideas to ACLT Trees, P.O. Box 204, Port Republic, MD 20676. Not all species will grow in our particular soils, but we will give your recommendations our full consideration.

### **First Gift of Land to ACLT**

R. Grant Helvey of Owings, Maryland, has informed the ACLT that he is giving the parcel of land he owns on Parker's Creek Road to the Land Trust (ACLT had previously offered to purchase it). The small, elongated parcel lies between the larger of the two ACLT tracts and Parker's Creek Road. As part of the Land Trust, the Helvey parcel will provide important access from Parker's Creek Road for ACLT activities ranging from forestry to nature hikes. Grant Helvey's gift, coming on the third anniversary of the founding of the ACLT, represents the first gift of land to the Trust. The Board of Directors and the entire ACLT membership thank Grant for his generosity and hope his example will be followed by others.

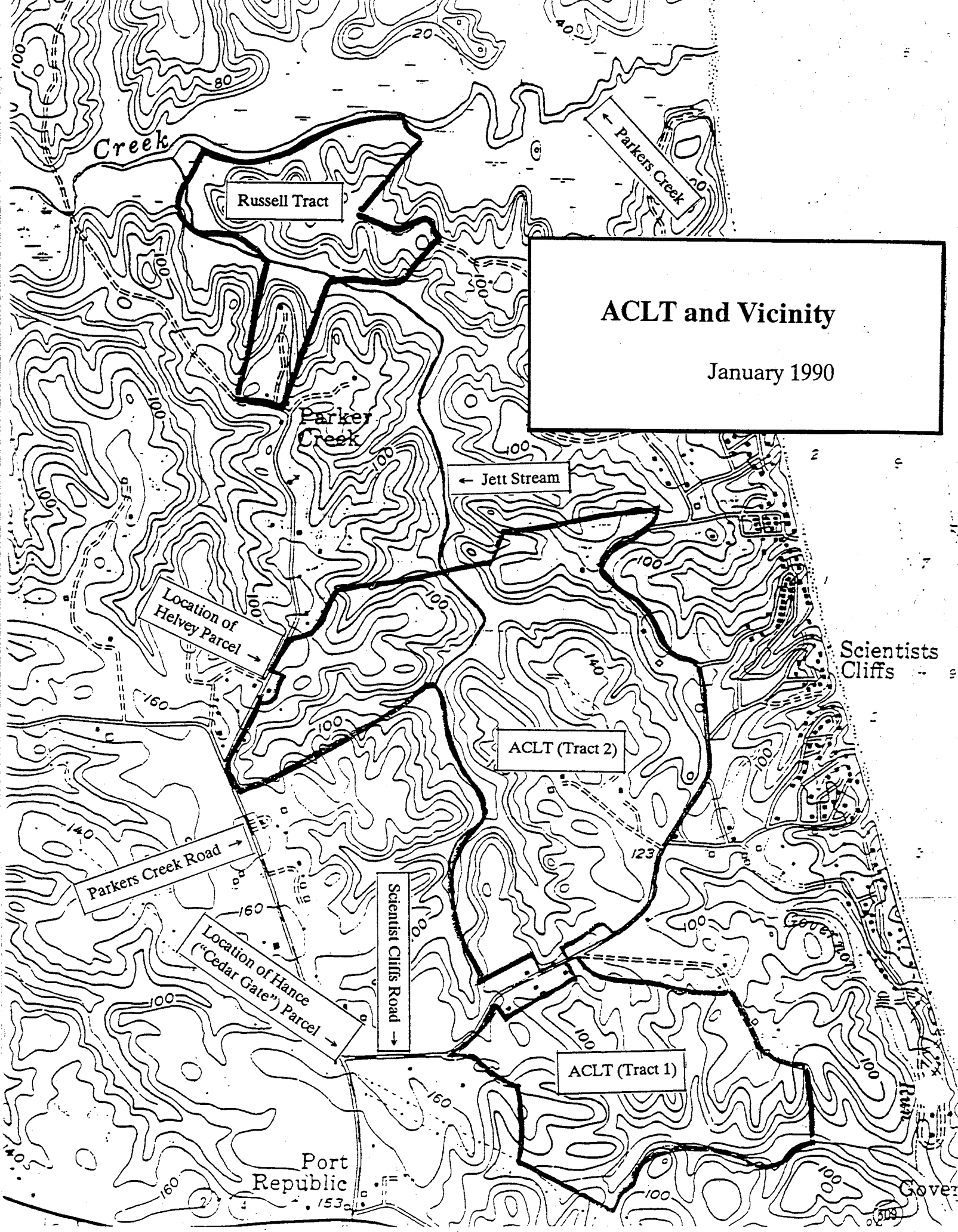
—Peter Vogt

### **What Will Be the Fate of the Tobacco Field at Cedar Gate?**

The last ACLT mailing of the year was an appeal to contribute to the purchase and preservation of the seven-acre former tobacco field at the northeast corner of Scientist Cliffs Road and Parkers Creek Road. No one can drive towards or away from the ACLT entrance without seeing and enjoying this little bucolic gem, with the tobacco barn as a picturesque backdrop, a barn in which the tobacco grown by Woodrow Wallace on the ACLT fields is curing at this very time. It's been some years since tobacco was last grown on the Hance tract; an annual mowing has favored wildflowers, including, according to ACLT member Sandy Roberts, the charming and relatively rare butterfly weed, a cousin of the more common milkweed.

The ACLT Board has come to call the seven acres the "Hance Parcel" after its current owners, Thomas L. Hance and his sister (actually the seven acres consists of three separate smaller parcels). The Hances' father, the late Thomas Hance Sr., had purchased the parcels on separate occasions from the family of the late Clarence Commodore, who planted the field in tobacco for many years. Descendants of Mr. and Mrs. Commodore still own the wooded land just north and east of the Hance tract. Just a little farther east is the current edge of the Land Trust.

Mrs. Elvin Howard, longtime resident of Port Republic, recalled that the road intersection (Scientist Cliffs Road/Parkers Creek Road) used to be called "Cedar Gate." This was in the days before the development of Scientists Cliffs, when the road of that name was still called—according to the deeds researched by



Creek

Russell Tract

← Parkers Creek

**ACLT and Vicinity**  
January 1990

Parker Creek

← Jett Stream

Location of Helvey Parcel →

Scientists Cliffs

ACLT (Tract 2)

Parkers Creek Road →

Scientist Cliffs Road →

Location of Hance ("Cedar Gate") Parcel →

ACLT (Tract 1)

Port Republic

Gover

Mark Switzer—"Bayside Road." As you clattered down this narrow dirt lane, choking in dust or mired in mud, depending on the weather, you would have had to stop at frequent intervals to open stock gates and close them again behind you to prevent the escape of farm animals. Responding to Carl Fleischhauer's inquiries, Woodrow Wallace, now in his mid-seventies, still remembers the locations of these long-gone gates. The "Cedar Gate" predates even Mr. Wallace's recollections and Mrs. Howard does not recall a gate actually there. But the name tells us that a stock gate once existed at the road intersection and we can speculatively picture a prominent old cedar there too, or a stand of cedars. With a nod to local history, we might equally well call the Hance parcel the "Cedar Gate Field."

Several ACLT members have recently called to ask me whether they should contribute toward buying the "Cedar Gate" field from the Hances. The appeal letter, after all, seemed somewhat ambivalent, reflecting the fact that ACLT Board members varied in their commitment. I count myself among those Board members who have no ambivalence about wanting this field to be part of the Land Trust. It is right there as the "front gate" to Land Trust Country. It is in the same watershed, separated from the ACLT by only a short stretch of wooded land which the Trust could reasonably hope to acquire in the future. The Hance field was a postcard scene when planted in tobacco, and again as a lake of goldenrod in the late summer. Make a right turn onto Scientist Cliffs Road at night and your headlights will sweep the field, sometimes catching a small herd of deer.

Someday soon (as if you hadn't noticed) there will be nothing but subdivisions and commercial strips between the Land Trust and Washington, DC. To my knowledge only a single field along the way, a corn field in Dunkirk belonging to ACLT member, Dr. Eisenman, has been permanently preserved. The Hance/Cedar Gate field with its tobacco barn backdrop is a postcard from Calvert County's 350-year long agricultural past. We won't forgive ourselves for letting even this little field fall to development. The ACLT after all stands not only for preservation of natural areas and the practice of responsible forestry, but also for the preservation of Calvert County's rapidly vanishing rural heritage.

So far 26 pledges or contributions have come in. Ten for sizable amounts (more than \$1000). The total pledged to date (\$15,025) added to the sum pledged by the ACLT Board from its dwindling reserves, may well not be sufficient. Please act now, since time is running out. Remember, your contributions are *tax deductible*.

If the Hances do agree to sell the seven acres to the Land Trust, I know how we can commemorate the day of settlement—by planting a cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) by the Cedar Gate.

—Peter Vogt

### 1990 ACLT Board Meetings Scheduled

All ACLT Board meetings are open, and members are always welcome. Meetings are scheduled every other month and are held downstairs on Saturday mornings at the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center, starting at 8:30 a.m. and concluding around noon. Meeting dates for this year are January 20, March 24, June 2, July 28, September 29 and December 1. The Annual Luncheon Meeting will be held at Christ Church on Broomes Island Road at 10:00 a.m., October 27. If you should want to confirm an upcoming meeting date or want to have an item of your particular interest placed on an agenda, please call Aileen Hughes in advance at (301)586-1749. Coffee and snacks are available at our meetings with plenty to go around for our member guests. Board members are helping to reduce the flow of plastic foam trash into our landfills by bringing their own ceramic cups to our meetings. Won't you plan on doing the same?

### Chestnut Seeds Available

Shortly before the holidays we received a large box of American chestnuts from Maurice Ball of Seattle, Washington, to be used and distributed as we see fit. Mr. Ball had read about ACLT in the National Geographic in November 1988, and last year sent us a small carton of chestnut seeds on the off chance the trees might once again thrive here. The blight that has virtually wiped out the American chestnut in the East during this century has not yet reached the northwest region of the US, and we are happy to report the American chestnut is still alive and well out there. Last year, a number of the nuts Mr. Ball sent us germinated under the watchful care of George Switzer, and the seedlings are now ready to be planted out-of-doors this spring. The chance of these seedlings surviving to maturity in the eastern forest is highly remote, but a number of people have indicated their interest in giving it a try. We have packets of twelve seeds to send out as long as they last on a first come first served basis along with instructions for planting or roasting. Just let

us know of your interest by writing CHESTNUTS on your new member applications or membership renewal checks.

### ACLT Offers Conservation Award

This month ACLT has announced contests with a prize of a \$100 US Savings Bond going to a Boy Scout and a Cub Scout who submit evidence of projects that best serve to conserve or improve the natural or cultural heritage of Calvert County.

Projects could include wildlife habitat improvement, construction of nature trails, restoration of historical buildings or sites. Most of the project work should be complete during 1990.

Entries should be postmarked no later than October 31, 1990, and mailed to Boy Scout Conservation Award, The American Chestnut Land Trust, P.O. Box 204, Port Republic, MD 20676. For more information on the contest call Bob Ulanowicz at (301)586-1489.

### ACLT Membership List (January 1990)

We welcome and send thanks to the fifty new members who joined ACLT in the past year. We hope you have enjoyed exploring our nature trails and historic sites over the changing seasons and hope you will want to become even more involved in ACLT activities as time moves on. We thank, too, all Regular Members who have renewed their memberships during the past year and those Charter Members who have sent us additional contributions.

The following list reflects our membership rolls as of January 15, 1990. Charter and Sustaining Members are life-time memberships while Regular memberships are renewable during each calendar year. Because the sum of contributions of some of our Regular Members is so substantial, we have included some selected members on our current roster even though ACLT did not receive a contribution during the 1989 calendar year.

The mailing label on this newsletter will show you where you stand. The date on the right is the date of your last contribution to ACLT. If you are a Regular Member, it is time to renew if it is any date prior to February 1, 1989. We apologize for any omissions or errors. (They are human even with our computers.) Please advise us if our records should be corrected.

—Annie Moore, Membership Chairman

#### Charter Members

Dr. & Mrs. Ernest Ambler  
Brenda Bates & J. Stewart Armstrong  
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Mr. & Mrs. Wallace L. Ashby  
Dr. & Mrs. William Clark Ashby  
Dr. & Mrs. John Axley  
Honorable & Mrs. William H. Ayres  
Mr. & Mrs. Earl B. Bailey  
Mr. & Mrs. Clete P. Baum  
Ms. Carol Bendorf  
Mr. J. Roger Bentley  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bibb  
Mrs. Christine C. Boesz  
Mr. Daniel Boesz  
Mr. Francis L. Brannigan  
Mrs. Maurine R. Brannigan  
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Mr.\* & Mrs.\* Frank R. Caldwell, Sr.  
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Mrs. Elaine V. Cochran  
Mr. Peter Cochran  
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Dr. Judith S. Dahmann  
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Ms. Clarissa C. Dryden  
Mrs. Mary C. Dwan  
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph H. Dwan, Jr.

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Mr. & Mrs. Lewis R. Firth  
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Mr. David M. Graham  
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Dr. & Mrs. Edward HacsKaylo  
Ms. Margaret A. HacsKaylo  
Mr. William E. HacsKaylo  
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Mrs. Lucille M. Jones  
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Mr. & Mrs. Charles N. Manning  
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Mr. & Mrs. William T. McDonald  
Mr. Bruce L. McDonald  
Mr. & Mrs. R. William McGillicuddy  
Ms. Deborah McKnight  
Dr. & Mrs. Joseph J. Mihursky  
Mrs. Robert G. & Kathleen Miller  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis W. Moore  
Dr. John O. Nestor  
Mr. & Mrs Joseph W. Nisonger  
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 Miss Kristina Dahmann  
 Ms. Opal D. Weida

### Corporations and Foundations

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 Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Inc.  
 Governor's Run Development Corporation  
 Merrill Hastings Foundation

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 Mrs. W. S. Arbuckle  
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 Mr. & Mrs. James G. Olson  
 Ms. Alenka Paquet  
 Mrs. Dorothy N. Parr  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen T. Phillips  
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 Ms. Patricia A. (Mitzi) Poole  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dwight J. Porter  
 Mr. & Mrs. Warren E. Prince  
 Mr. & Mrs. Norman E. Prince, Jr.  
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 Mrs. Louise Pyles  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Michael C. Shisler  
 Mrs. Mary-Stuart Sierra  
 Mrs. Joan K. Smith  
 Ms. Merrily A. Smith  
 Dr. Nancy McK. Smith  
 Mr. Clayton A. Smith, Jr.  
 RAdm. & Mrs. William O. Snead  
 Mr. William O. P. Snead, III  
 Ms. Theresa M. 'Sue' Sousa  
 Mr. & Mrs. Geoffrey E. Stamm  
 Mr. Timothy Stratton  
 Mrs. Alma L. Straw  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas E. Street  
 Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd W. Swift  
 Ms. Susan Traynham  
 Mr. & Mrs. Samuel A. Tucker  
 Dr. & Mrs. Robert E. Ulanowicz  
 Mrs. Frances Valanidas  
 Ms. Holly & Wanda Van Goor  
 Dr. & Mrs. Volker M. Vogt  
 Mrs. Anna Belle Wagner  
 Ms. Anne H. Warner  
 Mr. & Mrs. James S. Weaver  
 Mrs. Janet A. Weaver  
 Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Webb  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bob Weems  
 Mr. & Mrs. John D. Whisman  
 Mrs. Everett Wilcox  
 Mr. Stephen L. Wilcox  
 Mr. & Mrs. Mark Wilkening  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dwight F. Williams  
 Mr. J. Flawn Williams III, & Vickie Moss  
 Mr. & Mrs. T. W. Winternitz  
 Mrs. Patricia Winters  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas H. Wolf  
 Mr. & Mrs. John W. Young  
 Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Young  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas J. Young  
 Mrs. Harry Zehner, Jr.

\* Deceased

### **ACLT Place Mats**

For our Annual Meeting luncheon, Mitzi Poole adapted her pen and ink drawing of the ACLT American chestnut tree in its woodland setting for paper place mats. Bordered with the leaves and seeds of the trees that provide the canopy of the forest as well as those that flourish beneath them, these charming place mats printed in brown on cream colored paper are perfect for the breakfast table or any casual or country dining. The mats have been laminated for durability and are now sold in sets of four for \$10 for the benefit of ACLT. Over 400 mats have been sold since their introduction on October 28. These sets make wonderful hostess gifts (they lie flat in your suitcase). When children are given crayons, they happily entertain themselves while adults converse around them (the mats wipe off with a damp, soapy cloth). To order, send check to ACLT, Box 204, Port Republic, MD 20676. Please add \$2.00 for cost of postage and handling if mats must be sent through the mail.

### **ACLT Outreach Programs**

Under the auspices of the Calvert County Public Library, ACLT will hold a How and Why series of programs on ways to preserve our County's natural and cultural heritage. The programs are scheduled for Thursday evenings, 7:30 p.m., February 8 and 22 and March 8 and 22 at the Prince Frederick Branch. For the first program on the *How and Why of Forming a Land Trust*, members of our Board will share our experience in acquiring land and participating in the Calvert County Agricultural Preservation Program. Future programs will include the *How and Why of Cultural and Historical Research* led by Carl Fleischhauer, the *How and Why of Protecting Our Endangered Species* led by Judith Robertson of the Maryland Natural Heritage Foundation and, finally, the *How and Why of a Tree Farm* with Ken Jolly, Calvert County Project Forester. Each of these are matters of ongoing interest and concern to Land Trust managers. You may have read recently in local newspapers as well as in the Washington Post that the Agricultural Preservation Program of the County and the way it is being administered is under attack. This first meeting on February 8 may prove to be of interest to a broad range of people in the county. We hope so, and we will hope to see you there.

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