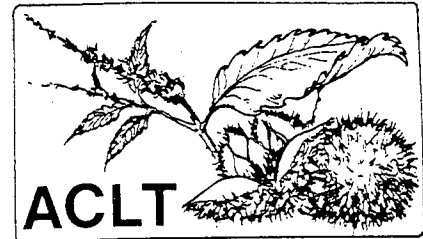


# American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Post Office Box 204  
Port Republic, MD 20676



## NEWSLETTER

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

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### Message from the President

Last week we took the final steps in locking our property into the Calvert County Agricultural Preservation Program, effectively barring any development of the land in perpetuity. ACLT land holdings consist of two tracts totaling 439 acres. Last year the 336-acre tract lying between Scientists' Cliffs and Parkers Creek Roads was entered into the County program; revenue from the sale of the development rights from this tract, combined with member contributions, enabled us to pay off our entire debt by October 1, 1988.

Almost one year ago, we applied to the State Agricultural Foundation for its purchase of an easement on the 103-acre tract on the south side of Scientists' Cliffs Road. The difference between the County and State programs is that the State easement purchase is outright with no tradeoffs in marketable transferable development rights (TDRs). Philosophically, the ACLT Board leaned toward the State program that did not entail any transfer of rights to build somewhere else. We were pleased then to learn in March that the State Foundation's Board of Trustees had voted unanimously to purchase our easement and that our property was ranked first among a total of three in Calvert County easement sale applications for Fiscal Year 1989. But, we were equally disappointed to find the State formula set its offer significantly under our asking price and very substantially under a bid for remaining TDRs that we had held in abeyance. Consequently, we have withdrawn from the State program. Our disappointment is somewhat assuaged by knowing that the monies ACLT did not accept from the State will purchase easements from some other landowners whose applications might not have been considered eligible before. Also, we know we have entered a contract for the sale of our TDRs with a reputable developer with demonstrated concern for combining conservation with responsible growth.

Meanwhile, we continue to try to work out a contract to purchase the Russell Tract on Parkers Creek. It is somewhat complicated as we are dealing with three owners, but we have every reason to believe a satisfactory agreement will be reached before too long. Among the concerns of the owners, who do not know us very well, is how best we can guarantee that the property will never be developed by us or anyone else in the foreseeable future. We believe we can provide the sellers such a guarantee.

It may be of interest that the ACLT Board made an attempt to work out with the County a way to save for parkland and recreation the "Schwab Tract" on Parkers Creek Road near the power lines and on which the ball field is located. The land contains the headwaters of the West Branch of Governors Run and is one of the sites recommended for protection by the Maryland Natural Heritage Foundation because of its significant plant and wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, the ACLT had inadequate financial resources to preserve the entire tract without County support. Nevertheless, we do hope that we will be able to work in concert with the developer, the County and the Forest, Park and Wildlife Service of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to protect significant parts of the forests in this special watershed ecosystem.

Our best laid schemes to have a regular date for our Board Meetings at the Battle Creek Nature Center have "gang aft agley" with two more holidays falling on the fourth Saturday of the month this year. Therefore, please note these changes in the schedule: May 20, July 22, September 23 and November 18. The date of the annual meeting in October will be announced well in advance.

Finally, we extend our thanks to those of you who took the time to respond to our call for volunteers in the last newsletter. We will need your help as we move into various new program phases, and it is assuring to have

a nucleus we can rely on. You will hear from us. We were particularly pleased to have a volunteer for photography and videography.

### **ACLT Communications Center**

By chance, we have discovered that the small sign-in box at our main entrance has multiple uses. On the registration sheets you not only let us know who has walked the trails on a certain date, but, with your recorded observations, you help other trail walkers know what to look for as they follow in your footsteps. We have asked the more knowledgeable of our member naturalists to alert you to special things you should look for a particular times. We'll let these sheets accumulate over several weeks for your information. From them, too, we will be able to develop over time our own nature walk brochures for each seasons.

We will also try to keep a supply of plastic bags in the sign-in box. The trails are pretty clean just now, and, with a little bit of joint effort, we should be able to keep them that way. Please, from time to time, take one of the bags along with you for cans, bottle caps, wrappers and broken glass. If there is need for more intensive clean-up, please let us know through the sign-up sheets.

### **Spring Walks in the ACLT**

#### **Spring Nature Walk**

Saturday, April 15, at 10 a.m. Leader: Peter Vogt. An easy hike. This will be an ideal weekend to see and enjoy the spring wildflowers.

#### **Bird Walk**

Saturday, May 6, at 8 a.m. Leader: Sue Hamilton. A 1 1/2-hour circuit walk at a leisurely pace. We will hope to see some spring migrants, especially warblers. Along the way, we will see quite a few wildflowers as well.

#### **Tour of the "Russell Tract"**

Saturday, May 27, at 2 p.m. Leader: Mark Switzer. This hike will take us across a swampy area and up a steep hillside. Everyone who goes must be prepared for some *rough* "bushwhacking" with Mark. However, the hike is well worth the effort—there are several old trails, we may see some interesting wildlife, and the panoramic view of Parkers Creek is spectacular! Please wear boots and long pants.

#### **Cultural Sites Tour**

Saturday, June 10, at 10 a.m. Leader: Carl Fleischhauer. This will be a three-part walk. The first tour will be an easy stroll near the tobacco fields, the second will include sites opposite Gate C in Scientists' Cliffs, and the third part will be a visit to the cemetery. Participants may drop out when and if they wish. Wear long pants and socks; it will be tick season!

*Meet for all walks at the ACLT parking lot on Scientists' Cliffs Road, opposite Gate A of Scientists' Cliffs.*

### **Other Trail News**

Mac Fried is taking on the trail blazing task. While accepted standards of the Appalachian Trail Club will be used for the blaze markings, Mac proposes, for our own convenience, that ACLT's trails be color coded. It will be easier to coordinate our trail system with our maps. To our knowledge, no one has been permanently lost in our wilderness, but a few incidents of finding civilization again only on the other side of the forest have been reported. It is a long way around.

The junk cars are GONE. Thanks to the Classifieds, the eagle eyes of John Axley and the follow-up of Dan Boesz and Arnold Petty, a contractor was found to haul them away. We considered cutting them up in little bits and putting larger trash bags in the sign-up box, but decided our members had better things to do when they hit the trail.

### **Ticks and other Hazards**

Remember that ticks and poison ivy are abundant in the forest. Check yourself and your companions for ticks while you are in the woods and after you get home. The June 1988 issue of *Consumer Reports* has an excellent article on ticks and the diseases they carry.

## Interim Visual Aids Project

We want to get started on a first-rate presentation of our Land Trust story with scenes of our forests and crop lands, our trails, the flowers, the fauna and our activities as they change throughout the seasons. This is a long range project. Meantime, perhaps a number of our member photographers have existing photos, slides or video segments that we can use for an interim presentation during the Public Library series, starting in June. Please call Aileen Hughes, 586-1749, if you can contribute to this venture.

## Place Names (Part II)

If someone knows who named Governors Run, why, when, or for which governor, please let me know. Not many Southern Maryland streams are called "runs," perhaps because the term "creek" referred to a stream whose lower parts were estuarine and hence navigable, which Governors Run certainly is not. At any rate, the name was in use at least as early as 1835, when land presently occupied by the community of Governors Run was part of "Mr. Frazier's Plantation." In the following decade the land passed into the ownership of the Dorsey family. The low, flat valley floor at the mouth of Governors Run forms one of the few gaps in the Calvert Cliffs and offered colonial farmers access to the waterfront. Its use as a transshipment point for tobacco hogsheads and other goods is revealed by an 1824 map which refers to "Frazier's Landing." An 1847 map already refers to the beach area as "Governors (sic) Run." A steamboat pier was built soon thereafter, the last remains of which lasted until the hurricane of 1933. The present recreation-type piers were built in recent decades.

I also do not know when Port Republic was named, although the name presumably postdates the American Revolution. The name "Port Republic" was in use at least as early as the Coast Survey map of 1847. There are only two other "Ports" in Maryland, Port Deposit on the Susquehanna and Port Tobacco on the Potomac in Charles County. Port Tobacco is actually a convenient corruption of an unrelated Indian sound-alike word "Potobaco". Port Republic never amounted to more than a few stores, a scattering of farmhouses, and Christ Church, the first version of which was built in 1672 or earlier. The present structure dated basically from 1772, but with numerous subsequent alterations and repairs. Port Republic's best known surviving store, once the headquarters of the local "tobacco factor," still stands at the intersection of MD 765 and Parkers Creek Road. Perhaps the term "Port" related to the presence of the tobacco factor or also to the nearby "port" at Governors Run. Historians refer to the store as "Beniah Bowen's" store after a 19th century owner. In recent decades it has been called "Ogden's Store" although it presently is an antique store ("Bourbon Street Antiques").

Even a casual glance at a map of Calvert County shows that Port Republic is a classic "crossroads" community, located as it is at the intersection of several ridges of high ground. These ridges came to carry colonial roads, and before that probably Indian trails. Riding northwest from Port Republic, early travelers reached Prince Frederick by way of the "Ridge Road," more or less the route of modern Rte. 2/4. To the southeast lay St. Leonard. Just to the east was the landing at Governors Run. To the northeast what is now called Parkers Creek Road crossed Parkers Creek and carried the traveler to Prince Frederick also. Old Bayshore Rd. (now Scientists' Cliffs Rd.) branched off to the east, heading toward the farms in the present area of the Land Trust and Warrior's Rest. Riding southwards from Port Republic, the colonial traveler could reach Broome's Island, or, if he turned south-southeast on what is now called Mackall Road, the mouth of St. Leonard's Creek. Geography dictated Port Republic as the ideal location for a church, which, in 1692, was to serve a parish extending from Hunting Creek in the north to the south end of the County, and from the Patuxent to the Bay.

Parkers (or Parker) Creek is the oldest place name in the land trust area. The stream, which is navigable for about 1.5 miles by shallow draft-boat, was named after a Puritan, William Parker, to whom were granted two large parcels of land along the cliffs north of the creek. Parker received these lands about 1651, so the creek may have received its present name that early. The oldest map with Parkers Creek labeled on it is a sketch of a property north of Parkers Creek which was surveyed by Robert Jones on the 28th of April, 1682. Jones was County surveyor for the years 1682-3 and, miraculously, his notebook survives. The 100-acre property is shown lying just to the west of a "Parkers Creek branch" and its corners are marked by trees, e.g., "a hicory" and "a white oake." There was no house on the property yet, but its purchase by a George Bussy from a Francis Buckstone shows that land even in the interior of Calvert county had already been parceled out for some time.

I hope anyone with additional information about these and other local place names will get in touch with me.

—Peter Vogt

## **The Outreach Committee**

The Outreach Committee has been given the mandate "to explore and implement ways we can foster greater awareness of land conservation in the larger community through educational programs, scholarship opportunities and establishing closer ties with other organizations with similar aspirations and goals."

The first goal will be furthered by four presentations to be given at the Calvert County Public Library in Prince Frederick this summer. We hope members will support this part of outreach with their presence and encouragement on any or all of the following dates: June 8, July 20, August 10 and September 14. The order of presentation has not been set, but topics have been agreed upon as well as the speakers. The topics will be 1.) "The How and Why of a Tree Farm" by Calvert County Forester Ken Jolly, 2.) "The How and Why of Forming a Land Trust" by Gary Loew, Ralph Dwan and Aileen Hughes; 3.) A representative from the Maryland Heritage Foundation (Maryland Department of Natural Resources) will speak on the protection of endangered species; and 4.) "How and Why Oral History is Compiled and Recorded" by Carl Fleischhauer.

On Monday, April 24, Peter Vogt and Oliver Flint will conduct a tour of the property for members of the community who are charged with the responsibility for the development of the environmental educational program for the Calvert County Public Schools. Invitations have been accepted by the Superintendent of Schools and two of his assistants as well as the Directors of each of the following publicly supported parks: Calvert Marine Museum, Jefferson Patterson Park, Flag Ponds/Battle Creek Nature Center and King's Landing Park. It is hoped the potential of the ACLT property may be recognized and utilized by the schools for greater understanding of its environmental and cultural importance in the county.

The ACLT Board agreed to make \$150 in prizes available for awards next year to an individual Boy Scout, Girl Scout and 4H Club member who completes a project on an environmental or cultural history topic. The criteria will be drawn up in consultation with responsible persons in these organizations.

—Elaine Cochran, Chairman

## **The Bluebird Trail**

Last year a pair of chickadees raised two broods in one of our "Bluebird houses." They built a beautiful nest out of moss, and the tiny baby birds delighted the children who saw them.

This year the Bluebirds started investigating our old boxes in late February. On Easter Sunday, Arnold Petty put up two more boxes. Within two hours, a pair of Bluebirds was checking them out! By April 1st, the beginnings of a nest had appeared in one of the boxes, and a complete nest of twigs in another. (However, since the female sometimes builds more than one nest, we can't yet be sure whether both will be used!)

Please call me (586-1494) if you would like to visit the Bluebird houses during my weekly check; too many visits may disturb the birds or even alert predators to the presence of a nest.

The female Bluebird does all the nest building, while the male chooses the site and defends the territory. The nest of twigs and dried grasses takes about 10 days to build, after which the female will lay 4 or 5 eggs and incubate them for 12 to 14 days before they hatch. The baby birds will fledge in 15 or 20 days. Both parents feed the young, but the youngsters from the first brood may help care for a subsequent crop later in the summer. Sometimes a female will lay eggs in another Bluebird's nest; this is called "egg dumping."

We will keep records of our observations and share them with Andy Brown at the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center, who is compiling records of Bluebird nesting in Calvert County. Please note your observations on the visitor's log by the parking lot.

—Sue Hamilton

## **Breeding Bird Census Project**

The National Audubon Society started the Breeding Bird Census in 1937 to coordinate the efforts of serious observers to collect data about bird populations. This program is now managed by the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University. Dr. Todd Engstrom, of the Bird Population Studies Institute there, is providing me with encouragement, instructions and forms to start a census in part of the ACLT.

Careful study of a meticulously measured and described plot of land provides data which can be compared to that of studies done in different habitats and years. If the methods used are uniform, these comparisons give vital information about changes in populations of different species of birds. A relatively homogeneous square area of a least 25 acres is ideal.

Mark Switzer has agreed to help with surveying the plot—that is, he surveys; I assist. Unfortunately, I tend to get distracted by woodpeckers and frog calls just when I'm supposed to be untangling string or carrying sticks.

When the parcel has been plotted into a grid of 36 squares, marked by labeled sticks, a random sampling of the vegetation will be necessary. Help with that part of the project, in late May, would be appreciated, too!

Once the preparation is complete, it will be time to census the breeding bird population (June and July are the best months for this area). Two or three people will make at least nine different dawn trips around the grid to note the species location and behavior of each bird that can be seen or heard.

—Sue Hamilton

### Forestry Seminar Reports

ACLT was well represented this year at the Southern Maryland Forestry Seminar in Waldorf, a day-long series of Workshops on forestry management, responsibilities of forest ownership, forest projection and wildlife management, to name a few of particular interest to us. We thank Nita and John Axley, Gary and Sandra Loew, Arnold Petty and Joe Steller for giving so generously of their time on our behalf. We are pleased to share with you some of their reactions and comments:

The workshop, "Wildlife Management," given by Bradley Dorf, District Wildlife Manager was one of the best sessions I have attended in the past four years. For good wildlife management he recommended that there should be 2% to 5% open fields. The forest area should be 50% saw timber, 25% pole timber and 25% seedlings and should be made up of 25% soft wood and 75% hardwood. Because of the probable gypsy moth invasion, oaks should be thinned and beech and maple encouraged. [Nita Axley.]

The seminar offered more than the good coffee/donuts and lunch that they served. By far the most valuable session of the three that I attended was "Rights, Responsibilities, and Liability of Forest Ownership," given by attorney Thomas LaHood. ACLT owes the highest responsibility to inspect our property as safe for those people invited onto our land for business purposes. ACLT does not have to inspect for those entering our property for their own benefit. Responsibility for reasonable care, however, is still there. Furthermore, our liabilities vary for salesmen, children, trespassers, and volunteer workers. LaHood also covered property rights, forms of business ownership, contracts, financing, and other topics. As a Board member, I left this session with a clearer view of our legal rights and duties as well a feeling of comfort that we have had good counsel in ACLT's short history. [Joe Steller.]

ACLT's participation in the Southern Maryland Forestry Seminar appeared to be unique. The seminar is structured for those forest owners who both occupy and land and look to the forest for a portion of their economic support. We do neither. The workshop sessions, nevertheless, presented some very beneficial ideas and suggestions applicable to the ACLT. The session, "Forest Protection" was concerned primarily with fire suppression and suppression. Presuppression activities applicable to ACLT consist of maintaining good access to the woodlands and fire breaks of ten feet or more. The existing trails serve both purposes, although the locked gates could conceivably be a problem. All individuals with keys to the gates should be responsible for seeing that all gates are unlocked in the event of a fire. The solution to the danger existing from the small pockets of excessive undergrowth and debris would be a controlled burn which is neither practical nor acceptable. Some thought should be given to a procedure to completely close (prohibit access) during periods of extreme fire hazard created by drought accompanied by an extended period of low humidity. Although the State maintains a limited capability for fire suppression, it is obvious the ACLT will of necessity look to the local volunteer fire department for the primary fire suppression effort. The lack of camping, hunting and motorized traffic on ACLT lands minimized the danger of a serious fire. [Arnold Petty.]

I attended two seminars: Marketing and The Critical Area Law. The Marketing seminar was excellent. Dave Chessler, the former state forester for Calvert County, and now the Marketing and Utilization forester for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, taught the first segment of the seminar. He reviewed the total forested acreage in Maryland, the species distribution, industry statistics and other general information about present and future opportunities for the forest industry in Maryland. Most Maryland markets are for primary forest products such as pulpwood for paper, sawlogs for building lumber and furniture, posts, woodchips for particle board, veneer logs and firewood. There is, at this time, no substantial secondary industry such as furniture making, finished grade lumber or paper products. There is evidence of growing interest in some export markets, primarily in the Pacific Basin.

Dave was followed by Ed Yates of the B. Y. Lumber Company who provided the industry view. He

discussed the considerations of the timber buyer. In pricing a stand of lumber he considers the quality of lumber, ease and cost of access, the total volume of the stand, other costs of harvest such as number of stream crossings, cutting limitations, requirements to top, reduce slash and so forth. He, as did Dave Chessler, recommends involvement of a professional forester to aid in tree marking, development of contract provisions and contract supervision. He also detailed his costs (insurance, taxes, operational, equipment and facilities), his concern about the declining market area in southern Maryland and the uncertainty about his selling price at the time he is negotiating with the land owner. He reinforced the need for landowners to obtain references and insure that they were working with reputable firms.

I skipped another, planned seminar because I ran into a friend who had recently purchased a large, forested tract which he was managing as a tree farm. He detailed his efforts over a several year period to survey the property, arrange for cutting, selling and reforestation. The state foresters were, in his case, as they have been in ours, knowledgeable and helpful in the development and execution of his land management goals. It reinforced for me the many discussions we have had in committee meetings, board meetings, the annual meetings and just among members about the many possible objectives of forestry management and the variety of choices that must be made in developing and carrying out a land use plan that encourages multiple uses. We have benefited greatly from the quality professional advice we have received from County and State personnel such as Dave Chessler and the informed decisions made by our land use planning committee. We will have more choices and new decisions to make each year. The Forestry Seminar was an excellent vehicle to prepare the uninitiated to make these choices. It is a yearly event and I highly recommend it to anyone who wishes to learn more in about land use management or who plans to take an active role in ACLT planning.

[Gary Loew.]