

American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Post Office Box 204
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NEWSLETTER

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Earth Day Weekend at the ACLT

Earth Day 1990

On April 22, millions of people around the world will celebrate Earth Day 1990—the 20th anniversary of the first Earth Day. Planners of this year's event expect that in excess of 100 million persons will participate, making it the largest global demonstration in history.

Dramatic changes have occurred in the environmental consciousness of large number of Americans since the first Earth Day in 1970. As with any change, the most important and most lasting occurs when individuals involve themselves directly in institutionalizing the change. The American Chestnut Land Trust is an example of such direct action, as are the hundreds of other land trusts that have been formed across the country since 1970. In our case, we have many enlightened state and country officials to thank as well for providing the legislative means to assist our efforts.

So let us celebrate our own and humankind's collective progress since the first Earth Day, perhaps with nothing more than a simple walk in the woods. Join us at the ACLT property, whose woods and fields exist for such walks, for all to enjoy, let us hope for evermore. Come celebrate the tangible progress of preserving environmental diversity with us on Earth Day weekend.

—Don Dahmann

Saturday, April 21

Saturday will be a workday as well as a day to enjoy the beauty of the land. Meet at the ACLT parking lot at 9:45 a.m. for a short presentation. You can then join a trail cleanup crew, a structure repair crew, a planting crew if the seedlings are available, or just explore the trails. And, yes, we now have a "comfort station" (see page 5).

Trail Cleanup Crew.—A word of thanks to members Dan Boesz and Arnie Petty for doing a great job of trail cleanup in January. Since that time winter storms have brought down more branches, so we will check the trails again on Saturday. If you have a clippers, bring it along.

Volunteers are needed to be responsible for a section of trail throughout the year. If you already have a trail assignment let Sue Hamilton (301-586-1494) know that you will continue to take care of your section.

Structure Repair Crew.—Art Cochran and Carl Fleischhauer are asking for volunteers to assist in stabilizing the Lemuel Wallace house, which stands a short distance west of the tobacco fields. In a previous work session, a missing section of the roof was replaced. The team will nail up siding to slow the deterioration of the exterior walls. Bring a claw hammer. The abandoned house is in poor condition and we do not propose to restore it. Why keep it standing then? The house and its environment will help visitors imagine the life of an African-American family in our neighborhood during the first quarter of this century. The house stands on what had been a hundred-acre farm owned by Lemuel Wallace. At first, he and his family lived in the house and, later, it was occupied by some of his children. Lemuel Wallace was the grandfather of Woodrow Wallace, the farmer who grows tobacco on the land trust's fields.

Sunday, April 22

Sue Hamilton will lead a bird walk on the Russell Tract, the newest ACLT property. Meet at the ACLT parking lot on Scientists Cliffs Road at 7:50 a.m. and car pool to the Russell Tract. The trail may be wet, so dress accordingly.

Photographs Wanted

The land trust would like to build a small archive of photographs for the historical record and for use in communication to outsiders. We would like to receive photographs of interesting flora, fauna, members, and visitors. The type of photograph that will provide the best vehicle for communication is one that conveys a sense of people learning from or enjoying our land and its features.

All formats of photographs are welcome, although color slides and black-and-white prints are preferred. Special enlargements may be useful in some cases, especially when the original medium is color negative film. I will be coordinating the assembly of this archive; please contact me with pictures, or for advice about format. Daytime phone: (202) 707-6233; evenings: (301) 586-1277.

—Carl Fleischhauer

Welcome to New Members

We extend the warmest of greetings to the thirty-six new members who joined ACLT since the publication of the last newsletter on January 29. Several of them have already volunteered their services; we welcome all the help and fresh ideas that come our way. We hope we'll see our new members along our trails frequently. Most particularly, we hope we will get to meet them over the Earth Day weekend.

Mr. & Mrs. John C. Boyd
Mr. & Mrs. David R. Carter
Mr. & Mrs. John T. Crane, Jr.
Mr. Jesse J. Davis
Ms. Myrtle Easter
Mr. Joseph H. Gribble
Ms. Ailene Hutchins
Ms. Gloria G. Jones
Col. & Mrs. Francis King

Mr. Thomas Lanyi
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence G. Lipscomb
Mr. & Mrs. Sidney O. Marcus, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. John J. McCaig
Mr. Arthur B. Merrion
Mr. Sewell T. Moore
Ms. Pamela-Jean Moran
Ms. Ruth S. Peterson
Mr. John W. Ruark

Mr. Ray K. Schleeter
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Skolkowski
Mrs. Hannah Hunt Stokes
Ms. Charlene A. Sturbitts
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Vetterle
Mr. & Mrs. James M. Warnock
Mr. & Mrs. Gary R. Wood

We apologize, too, for the inadvertent omissions in the January membership roster.

Miss Catherine Cochran
Miss Elizabeth Cochran

Ms. Shirley Mihurski
Mr. Michael Makuch

Mr. Samuel F. S. Smith

—Aileen Hughes

Next Board Meeting

Again, we are unable to meet on the date published in the January newsletter. The next Board Meeting is to be held on Saturday morning, June 9, 8:30 a.m. in the downstairs meeting room of the Battle Creek Nature Center. The meetings generally are over by noon. Our meetings are always open and members are welcome to attend. It is a good way to learn how the Board manages the ACLT affairs and our members' concerns. Coffee is served but we encourage everyone to bring their own ceramic cup.

Outreach Committee Report

Two items should be of interest to members of ACLT as we touch base with our neighbors in the larger community.

Library Lecture Series. ACLT's "How and Why" series of talks was incorporated into the Calvert County Public Library's "Beat the Winter Blahs!" program in February and March. With the Library's publicity and encouragement we were thrilled to find ourselves short of chairs to seat the unexpected numbers that came to hear about forming a land trust, tree farming, how endangered species are discovered and the cultural aspects of ACLT. All together the turnout for the four talks totaled about 100 people. ACLT hopes to organize a similar series next year. We welcome your ideas.

Summer Scholarship Awards. ACLT is offering summer scholarships to support two Calvert County Public School students participating in the Maryland State Department of Education program for Gifted and Talented Students. The courses selected are to be in the field of environmental studies and related topics, such as the Patuxent or Potomac Rivers, the Chesapeake Bay or Land Conservation. It is our intention that the scholarships will be granted to two students who could not participate in the programs without this financial assistance. Students are selected by the school system on the basis of a comprehensive application that includes a teacher recommendation, a student essay, and test scores. Students do not need to be in gifted and talented programs at their schools. A follow-up report will appear in a future issue of this newsletter.

—Elaine Cochran

Treasurers Report—April 1, 1990

With a few minor exceptions I have closed out last year's books in preparation for submitting the 1989 taxes so I will provide a summary of 1989 income and expenses below followed by the 1990 budget.

INCOME CATEGORY	1989 BUDGET	TO DATE	REMAINING
Contributions	6,000	18,499.26	-12,499.26
Membership Dues	10,000	10,187.49	-187.49
Grants	5,000	0.00	5,000.00
Interest Earned	7,980	17,537.43	-9,557.43
Sale of TDR's	152,300	174,345.00	-22,045.00
Timber Sales	500	0.00	500.00
Misc Income	120	<u>2,004.82</u>	<u>-1,884.82</u>
TOTAL	181,900	222,574.00	-40,674.00
EXPENSE CATEGORY			
Check Charges	0	38.71	-38.71
Dues/Subscriptions	300	100.00	200.00
Insurance	540	592.00	-52.00
Legal/Accounting	725	0.00	725.00
Misc. Expenses	120	460.45	-340.45
Supplies	480	496.91	-16.91
Postage & Shipping	600	475.60	124.40
Equip Rent & Maint.	120	0.00	120.00
Printing & Pubs.	540	1,247.48	-707.48
Land Purchase Cost	100	0.00	100.00
Land Survey	2,000	0.00	2,000.00
Forestry Management	2,000	0.00	2,000.00
Property Maintenance	6001.3	22.26	-722.26
Meetings	1,000	1,392.00	-392.00
Taxes	75	<u>37.57</u>	<u>37.43</u>
TOTAL	9,200	6,162.98	3,037.02
NET	172,700	216,411.02	-43,711.02

Calendar year 1989 was a good year for the ACLT, although the good news is somewhat misleading because income was higher and expenses were lower than budgeted, in part because of delayed land purchases and billings. Contributions and miscellaneous income were greater than anticipated. Interest earned was higher than expected because the purchase of the Russell tract took longer than planned leaving that money in the bank earning interest for a few more months than we budgeted. We also were able to sell the remaining development rights from the Gravatt property for approximately \$250 per right more than the budget projection.

On the expenses side of the ledger we spent about \$3,000 less than budgeted. The main differences were accounting expenses that were not billed until 1990, land purchase expenses that were not necessary because the property was not purchased when we anticipated and forestry management expenses not needed because the logging (and reforestation) did not take place until early this year. Printing expenses were greater than anticipated because we had not budgeted for the brochure at the beginning of the year. The net was a gain of \$43,711. We ended the year with approximately \$407,755 in liquid assets, most of which were programmed for the purchase of three properties: the Russell tract, the Hance tract (limited amount set aside) and the Wallace tract.

The 1990 budget looks considerably different because we will be accomplishing many of those tasks not completed last year. The status of accounts thorough February with April expenses is shown below.

INCOME CATEGORY	1990 BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	REMAINING
Contributions	4,000	2,225.00	1,775.00
Membership	21,000	4,620.00	16,380.00
Grants	0	0.00	0.00
Interest	15,000	2,407.69	12,592.31
Sale of TDR's	0	0.00	0.00
Timber Sales	13,000	13,046.61	-46.61
Other	500	45.00	455.00
Merchandise Sales	<u>500</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>500.00</u>
TOTAL	54,000	22,344.30	31,655.70

EXPENSE CATEGORY			
(C) Historical and Cultural	300	0.00	300.00
(C) Land Use Management	3,500	617.38	2,882.62
(C) Membership	100	0.00	100.00
(C) Outreach	1,000	0.00	1,000.00
Bank Charges	200	70.26	129.74
Dues/Subscriptions	500	0.00	500.00
Insurance	600	480.60	119.40
Interest	0	0.00	0.00
Legal/Accounting	1,750	1,415.00	335.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	500	0.00	500.00
Supplies	1,000	596.21	403.79
Postage & Shipping	600	100.00	500.00
Printing & Publications	1,000	248.40	751.60
Land Purchase Cost	3,600	3,614.20	-14.20
Land Survey	5,000	0.00	5,000.00
Meetings	1,500	120.00	1,380.00
Taxes	2,600	2,485.67	114.33
TOTAL	<u>\$23,750</u>	<u>\$9,747.72</u>	<u>\$14,002.28</u>
NET	\$30,250	\$12,597	\$17,653

The (C) preceding the first four entries under "expense category" indicates a committee budget. You will notice that we have budgeted about 2 1/2 times more expenses than we did in 1989. The primary reasons are that we will be reforesting and improving the area timbered earlier this year; we have the legal, settlement and survey costs associated with the purchase of the Russell tract; the bill for the audit and preparation of 1989 taxes was received this year; and we will pay for the survey of the Russell tract this year. Other operating expenses have only minor adjustments. The above operating budget does include the settlement costs associated with the 80-acre Russell tract, but not the \$177,760 we paid for the land itself which becomes an asset. We currently have about \$250,000 in liquid assets.

Properties currently being pursued include the Hance tract and the Wallace tract, but whether we will be able to purchase either of these is speculative at this stage. We have received approximately \$18,000 in pledges towards purchase of the Hance tract which, when combined with funds committed by the Board may be considerably less than the market value of the property and, in any case, neither property has been placed on the market yet. Also, our current information is that the Wallace tract is considerably less acreage than our earlier estimate of 50 acres—principally because portions of it have been sold off in previous years.

In summary, the ACLT remains financially healthy. We are able to maintain and improve our properties and to continue to pursue other purchases in our area of primary interest, the Governor's Run and Parkers Creek watersheds. Clearly, however, property is escalating rapidly and major purchases will be beyond our means before long. Accordingly the Board of Directors has established a Long Range Planning Committee to look ahead and determine both how aggressive we wish to be in terms of fund raising and land purchase and what options, other than direct purchase, such as encouraging others to put their properties in APD's, receiving donated property or conservation easements may be alternatives to preserving land without the expense of direct purchase. The committee should have a report available by the Annual Meeting.

—Gary Loew

Our Neighbors

A land trust is only one of many ways to create "islands" of farm or forest land within the inevitable suburban sea. A larger island can be quilted together from public and private preserves. The larger the island, the more diverse and healthy the wildlife it can support, and the greater the chance for a truly rare species to gain a foothold. And, of course, economy of scale dictates that a larger island can more efficiently support rural land uses like farming and silviculture.

Consider the case of ACLT neighbors (and members) Ronald and Nelia Talley, who own 60 acres between Wash Hance Road and Parkers Creek. Their tract, once part of a larger farm, is a microcosm of the present ACLT lands—thickly forested, cut by steep ravines, and crowned by a small, conspicuously level field with a tobacco barn on its edge.

The Talleys planned to replace their present residence with a finer one, but lending institutions are reluctant to accept land as collateral. Selling the land to a developer would raise the money for the new house, but then the Talleys' tree farm would be no more. They would either build in the new subdivision or take the money and buy a smaller piece of land elsewhere. The Talleys seriously considered these options and even had the tract listed for a while. Fortunately there was a third solution which will allow the Talleys to stay on their tree farm and still build a new house.

Yes, the Project Forester established that the quality of the Talleys' forest was high enough to make their land eligible for Ag Preservation status. The area, 60 acres, exceeded the 50-acre minimum (20 acres would suffice if the land abuts against an existing APD, such as the ACLT lands and, as of now, the Talleys). The Talleys' decision has many happy consequences: For the owners, it will mean that taxes on the land will remain extremely low (of course, their house will still be taxed at the normal rate). They are now eligible to sell TDRs, probably at a rate of \$2500 per acre or even more. A modest but respectable profit, averaging \$1000 to \$1500 per year at today's prices (more in the future) will be returned from timber sales. Trees will renew themselves on their own until and unless the world comes to an end, but when managed according to the Project Forester's plan, the Talleys' tree farm will even be more productive.

There is another happy consequence of the Talleys' decision: The permanently preserved land area in the vicinity of the ACLT has just been increased by 60 acres. True, the Talleys' forest is not open to the public, but it does not matter to the warblers (nor to us) whether they nest with the Talleys or the ACLT. The number, health and diversity of wildlife that can survive in the Land Trust area depends ultimately on the acreage and diversity of contiguous protected area—public and private—that can be cobbled together. And that will depend on the decisions of neighboring landowners like the Talleys. Songbird species requiring many hundreds or even several thousand acres of contiguous forest for successful nesting are still occasionally sighted in the ACLT area. It is here, and in the Calvert Cliffs State Park, that these creatures will be making their last stand in Calvert County, even as their populations continue to fall throughout the Eastern United States.

No argument, the APD program is an ideal way for a landowner to cash in on the development boom, do a good turn for the environment, and hold on to his or her acres. Local land conservation in the private sector will allow the ACLT to concentrate its limited financial resources on those worthy parcels that are put up for sale.

—Peter Vogt

American Chestnuts to be Planted

At 9 a.m., on Monday, March 26th, a group gathered at the ACLT parking lot, CHESTNUTS uppermost in their minds. Nine ACLT members were there to meet three American Chestnut Foundation people: Phillip A. Rutter, President, American Chestnut Foundation; Cameron Gunderson, M.D., Member of the Board, A.C.F.; and Frederick V. Hebard, Ph.D., Superintendent, Wagner Research Farm, A.C.F. ACFers had brought with them 110 germinated chestnuts from the Clapper tree to be planted on ACLT land (see below for important details about the origin of these nuts).

A short walk brought the group to the two sites being considered for the planting, and Messrs. Rutter and Hebard declared both to be suitable. One is along Scientists' Cliffs Road, just west of the parking lot; the other just beyond that on higher ground, where the woods has recently been cut. The second site may be more suitable since the soil will be enriched by the decaying debris from recent timber cutting. The nuts will be planted in Tubex Tree Shelters which will protect the seeds and plants from being eaten by the animals, will serve as support for the growing plants, and as a greenhouse to hasten growth. The shelters have a life of about 5 years after which they will begin to disintegrate. The planting is expected to take place on April 1, or soon thereafter, with Arnie Petty in charge of a group of volunteers.

The ACFers were interested in seeing our chestnut tree so the tour continued in that direction with several stops at various hybrid chestnut trees. The visitors were much impressed with our tree although they were reluctant to advance any prediction about its life expectancy. They took a few cuttings to be used in their breeding program.

NOTE: The Clapper tree is a named variety of the chestnut developed by Russell Clapper of the USDA. Clapper apparently was hired and supervised, at one time, by Flippo Gravatt. The Clapper tree is a first backcross to an American Chestnut of a Chinese-American Chestnut hybrid. It has displayed moderate levels of blight resistance and excellent growth rate and form. These seeds are from a grafted clone of the Clapper tree growing on the Lockwood Farm of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. All of the nearby trees which might have been pollen sources are American Chestnut. The largest nearby tree, and probably one of the major pollen sources, is a grafted individual of the large, surviving, American Chestnut tree growing on our property.

—Carol and Oliver Flint

Privy to the Privy

ACLT now has the benefit of its first out building, or more precisely, an outhouse. Down the lane from the visitor's parking lot and around the corner by the tobacco bed it stands. Constructed of rough hewn poplar in board and batten style, its sloped roof reaches toward the sky. The main frame is composed of thirty 2x4's. Inside it is decorated with black walnut accessories, all carefully crafted by the architects and

general constructionists, Arnold Petty, Dan Boesz and John Hollowell. Pit bosses Carl Fleishhauer and Dan Priest dug until Carl could be seen no more. That is a deep, deep hole. All in all, there are 75 man-hours involved in the design, construction and finishing work. This does not include the woman-hours donated to obtain the building permits and to provide lunches to the work crew. The pressure treated lumber used in the support system was purchased from Dunkirk Supply. The rough cut boards were obtained from Sam's Saw Mill in Mechanicsville. Dick Mulford donated the shingles. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this effort.

So...if it is a "rest" you need while enjoying ACLT, do so in comfort since you are now privy to the privy.

—Tina Boesz

Report of the Land Acquisition Committee

We have been in touch with the Hance family and have been assured of the opportunity to present our offer when the family is ready to put the property on the market. In case you missed a chapter, the property is also known as "Cedar Gate" and consists of the recently plowed field at the intersection of Parkers Creek Road and Scientists Cliffs Road. The significance of the plowing has not been determined.

The main reason for this report is to thank those who have made pledges and outright gifts. Aileen Hughes has sent an acknowledgement letter to the latter, but pledges are just as important in this effort. To date, in addition to the funds set aside by the ACLT Board, we have received 21 pledges for \$11,400 and 14 cash contributions for \$7,125. If you haven't as yet joined the effort, please send us a note today indicating the amount you wish to pledge. In case you decide to make a contribution, please note whether it is restricted to this project or unrestricted.

—Ralph Dwan

Seedlings Donated

Member Gary Loew is donating 40 black walnut seedlings to ACLT. The seedlings have been ordered and will be planted in the cleared area to the right of the parking lot. If you'd like to help with planting, give Gary a call (301-257-3833).

Donations of trees or seedlings are always welcome. Please contact Arnie Petty (301-586-2026) or John Axley (301-586-1656) first to find out what is appropriate and where it might be planted.

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