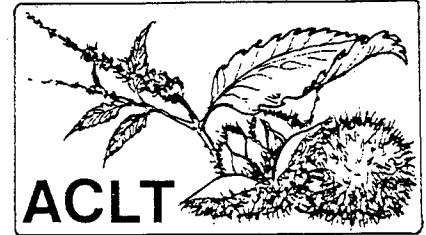


# American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Post Office Box 204  
Port Republic, MD 20676



## NEWSLETTER

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Volume 2 - Number 3

July 15, 1988

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

### Board of Directors

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### A Visit by Angus Phillips of *The Washington Post*

Many of us have experienced an enjoyable visit to the Land Trust property over the past year. Especially memorable are those times when we introduced the land to a first-time visitor. In May, Aileen Hughes, Mark Switzer, Peter Vogt and I enjoyed the good company of Angus Phillips, outdoors reporter for *The Washington Post*, in just such an experience. We walked and talked our way through the tobacco fields to the large American Chestnut tree, to the Chesley-Hance cemetery, to the Bowen-Howard residence, and up and down the trails leading to the Jett Stream several times. What a marvelous afternoon. Phillips recorded his thoughts on the visit for readers of *The Washington Post* in a 31 May article, which is included in this Newsletter with the permission of *The Washington Post*.

—Donald C. Dahmann

### ACLT to Appear in *National Geographic*

Following our *Washington Post* coverage, Board member Peter Vogt was contacted by a *National Geographic* staff member who proposed covering ACLT this fall in a new series of mini news articles. On July 4 about 200 ACLT members gathered in the woods to be photographed for the article. Ralph Dwan recounts the experience in the president's message.

### Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the American Chestnut Land Trust will be held on October 29 at Christ Church on Broomes Island Road. The business meeting will be followed by lunch and a tour of the property. Details in the next newsletter. Volunteers are needed to help with the annual meeting. Contact Caroline Van Mason (586-2226 or 202-484-7792) or Dan Priest (586-2403 or 301-656-5217).

### Call for Nominations

The ACLT Nominating Committee is looking for potential Board members to be elected at the annual meeting in October. If you are interested or wish to recommend someone, please contact Dan Boez, Chairman (Telephone (202)543-5531 or write to 127 E Street SE, Washington, DC 20003). Other members of the Nominating Committee are John Jones and Joseph Steller.

### Membership Committee Report

Letters to "regular" (non-charter) members have been going out on a monthly basis as membership anniversary dates come up for renewal. Another letter to charter members will be sent out asking for their help in supporting our educational and scientific goals and in recruiting new members. New lists of contacts to be made are being developed. It is hoped that as word of our unique approach to land conservation in Maryland spreads, we can expect increased interest and involvement. A membership form, for your use or to pass on to someone else, is included in this newsletter.

—Elaine Cochran, Membership Chairman

## Message from the President

Surely it was a lovely day for a picture-taking session in the woods on July 4th. You wouldn't believe what Aileen Hughes went through getting the notices out, but with the help of Annie Moore she got the job done. Although it was quite a walk for our senior members, Peter Vogt picked an ideal spot for the group picture. The turn-out was grand, and we should have planned a picnic considering the time we spent holding ranks for the *National Geographic* photographer.

Now where do we go from here when we haven't got there yet? The initial excitement of acquiring the Gravatt/Miles woodlands has been replaced with the normal owner's anxiety of paying the debt and managing the property. We have agreed to sell additional development rights, and the application to sell easements under the state programs was submitted on time (prior to June 1). On the management side the Board has tried to strike a balance between benign neglect and over-management. Trails have been cleared and marked (the Chestnut Tree Circle Route), buildings have been stabilized and notices posted, abandoned vehicles have been positioned for hauling away, and Woodrow Wallace by agreement has planted another crop of tobacco. All surveying has been completed as well as the forest management plan required by the county to avoid paying taxes, although the debate over the amount of timbering to be done continues. The Board is also working to establish a "fire-wood" policy. Meanwhile, we have enjoyed some good publicity, and we hope that you took the opportunity to explore the woodlands during the spring using the designated parking area and trail map. We welcome your suggestions and criticism. By the fall membership meeting we should be able to evaluate this first year of "stewardship" and look ahead to future growth.

## Treasurer's Report—July 11, 1988

### INCOME AND EXPENSE REPORT

#### 1988 Income

- Dividends	0.00
- Interest Earned (1)	1,189.96
- Contributions	675.00
- Grants (2)	10,000.00
- Membership Dues (3)	1,775.00
- Sale of Development Rights	0.00
- Subtotal	\$ 13,639.96

#### 1988 Expenses

- Check Charges	0.00
- Dues/Subscriptions	0.00
- Insurance (4)	175.00
- Legal/Accounting	0.00
- Miscellaneous Expenses	13.10
- Office Supplies (5)	224.98
- Postage	235.55
- Newsletter (6)	301.25
- Land Purchase Cost (7)	90.00
- Land Survey	36.25
Total Expenses	\$ 1,076.13
Income minus Expenses	\$ 12,563.83

### STATUS OF ACCOUNTS—10 July 88

Savings Account	46,625.27
Checking Account	1,276.20
Petty Cash	280.13
Undeposited Cash on Hand	190.00
Total	\$ 48,371.60

### NOTES:

1. Interest earned through June.
2. One grant of \$10,000 from First Trust.
3. 71 annual memberships  
(new members and renewals).
4. General Liability Insurance.
5. For printing of letterhead and envelopes.
6. Expenses for reproduction of two newsletters.
7. Deed recordation cost and copies of deeds.

The Status of Income and Expenses shows a healthy and inexpensive operation for the first six months of the year. Our largest source of income this year is an unexpected grant of \$10,000. The purpose of the grant was to finance the survey costs (most of which were incurred in 1987) necessary to prepare our requests for Agricultural Preservation District Status, and it has covered those costs. In addition we have received to date 71 membership renewals, or new memberships through the dedicated work of Elaine Cochran. In many cases persons submitting their membership contributions have sent in more than the required \$25. In these cases, the amount beyond \$25 is recorded as a contribution. Expenses have been routine—primarily for insurance, office supplies such as printed stationary, newsletter reproduction and mailing and miscellaneous costs to record deeds and obtain copies of the survey maps and other material.

## Board Meeting

The next ACLT Board of Directors meeting will be Saturday, August 27, at Chestnut Cabin in Gate B of Scientists Cliffs. Meetings start at 10:00 a.m. and are open to all.

## A Progress Report of the Business Side

"In sufficient and timely manner" ACLT submitted its application to sell a development rights easement to the state for the 103 acre tract to the southeast of Scientists Cliffs Road. (The 336 acre northwest tract is entered in the County Agricultural Preservation Program.) While our volunteers worked out agreements with our neighbors to adjust long-standing fuzzy boundaries, the surveyors remapped the property. A Soil and Water Conservation Plan, another requirement, was drawn up by the County farm planner and approved. Everyone, whether our own volunteers, neighbors, County planners, foresters or surveyors, worked conscientiously and cooperatively to assure that we would meet the June 1 deadline. Now we wait.

The State Department of Assessment and Taxation helped us apply for and receive in time for the July 1 tax deadline our exemption as a "charitable, benevolent and education property." This effectively reduces our State assessment to a minimal and manageable proportion. We are 100% County tax exempt and will be exploring the possibility of other entitlements for which we may qualify as a land trust.

The Forestry Management Plans for both tracts were also filed before July 1 with the Assessor's office. ACLT's Forestry Management Committee will review them and report its recommendations to the Board in August. The foresters' plans have recognized the various interest of our many members and the foresters look on "the property as an excellent opportunity to practice their 'Multiple Use Concept' of forest management."

Last but not least, we believe we have a buyer for 165 development rights (TDR's). Pending the final step in the County's approval of construction plans expected within 30 days, we have an agreement with a town center developer in Solomons who requires the additional right for his construction project. When successfully concluded our indebtedness to the Gravatt Estate will be reduced to \$52,500 plus accumulated interest.

—Aileen Hughes

## Rare Plant Discovered

A nationally rare plant has been found in the ACLT woods! This exciting news was conveyed to the Land Trust in a letter dated 3 June by D. Daniel Boone, co-ordinator of the Maryland Natural Heritage Program, a part of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). At ACLT's invitation, Boone's team walked over the current ACLT property on three occasions, most recently in late April. That's when the rare plant, in bloom at the time, was discovered.

The rare species is called Sweet Pinesap (also Pygmy Pipes) and bears the proper name *Monotropsis odorata*. It's one of those unusual non-photosynthesizing plants and is related to the more common Indian Pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*). Its similarity to the latter is conveyed by the "-opsis" which means "having the appearance of." From the "Sweet Pinesap" and "odorata" you may have guessed that our rare plant is aromatic. *Gray's Manual of Botany* compares its fragrance to that of violets. Sweet Pinesap is one of about 16 species (9 genera) of the chiefly North American Indian Pipe family, the Monotropaceae. A photo taken by Dan Boone shows eight elongated bell-like, rose-colored flowers clustered tightly in a nodding position. The flower cluster is positioned at the top of a two-inch long scaly, succulent stalk. ACLT members can inspect this photo at the October annual meeting.

In those few places where it has been found, *Monotropsis odorata* grows in small groups partially hidden among leaves or pine needles. Its typical habitat is sandy-soiled old pine woods from Maryland and West Virginia southeast to Georgia and Alabama. Our plants are growing in a moist but sandy upland setting surrounded by beech and red oak. The small colony found on the Land Trust is actually the only living population known in the state of Maryland. It is sobering to realize that our *Monotropsis* would probably neither have been discovered nor preserved, had the ACLT not been created. One wonders what of our planet's rich diversity of life is being lost daily without anyone even knowing about it. Maryland is fortunate to have its Natural Heritage Program to inventory our State's natural riches of flora and fauna, and we hope Maryland landowners appreciate the work this small group of dedicated professionals is doing on our behalf. The Land Trust will of course make sure a sizable area around the Sweet Pinesap colony is left undisturbed.

*Monotropsis odorata* is often called a "saprophyte," meaning any type of plant deriving its organic nutrients entirely from dead or decaying wood or other organic matter. However, according to ACLT member Dr. Ed Hacksaylo, the *Monotropsis* might also be an "epiparasite," deriving nutrients from the roots of nearby trees but without significantly bothering the trees. Either way the *Monotropsis* probably grows in intimate

association ("mycorrhizal") with a fungus in the ground, a relationship by which nutrients are interchanged between plant roots and fungus. The complexity of this hidden underground life of *Monotropis* may explain why it has never been successfully grown from seed. Who can say what biochemical (or even biomedical) song the Pygmy Pipes will some future day play to a scientist whose research has given him the "ears" to listen? By pooling our resources to buy lands for permanent preservation, aren't we buying chances for something like that to happen?

—Peter Vogt

## Trails and Roads

We had a successful workday on April 16, with 32 people showing up to clear the roads and trails of the winter's accumulation of debris. Following a long morning's work we returned for lunch and refreshments to the main entrance of the ACLT. After the workday all the trails and roads were in beautiful condition and our volunteers had learned the basics of trail maintenance. Now that we are nearly into midsummer, the weeds have sprung up on many of the roads and Mark Switzer has begun his mowing operations.

Our call for volunteers to oversee sections of the trail system met with an excellent response. Fifteen individuals or families have been assigned sections of road or trail, but there are still a few sections lacking an overseer. If you have not yet received your trail assignment or would like one, call Aileen Hughes (586-1749). With this system now in place, the routes will be easily kept open for walkers or emergency vehicles.

On May 28 a group of volunteers marked our first trail. Using blue tape, we have marked a half mile route from the parking lot, by the tobacco field, to the American Chestnut. For those who might like a longer walk, an additional half mile loop beyond the Chestnut tree has been marked, making a one and a half mile circuit walk. The blue tape is a temporary marker that will be replaced by permanent blazes when the entire system is color coded and marked. Now all of our members should be able to find our prized American Chestnut.

All our work with the trails—clearing, marking and maintenance—has been accomplished by dedicated volunteers. Thanks to all who have given so freely of their time.

—Oliver Flint

## Cultural Resources Update

**The Lemuel Wallace Site.** Continuing research has provided some additional information on the small house and tobacco barn that stand on the high ground just west of the tobacco fields at the Trust's main gate. In an earlier newsletter, the site was named "Bowen-Howard," associating it with the family of Octavius Bowen, who lived in this area in the years after the Civil War, and with the Howard family, who bought the Bowen farm in the 1880s and lived in the neighborhood until the 1930s.

Recent conversations with Woodrow Wallace, the Trust's tobacco farmer and neighbor to the north, however, indicate that this particular house, barn, and the immediately surrounding land had belonged to his grandfather Lemuel Wallace in the early part of this century; the Bowen-Howard land seems to have been next door. Thus, Carl Fleischhauer and Mark Switzer report that this site will be named for Lemuel Wallace.

Woodrow Wallace recalled that when he was boy in the 1910s and 1920s, his grandfather actually lived in another house on Parkers Creek Road and rented the farm to Woodrow's uncle William. In William Wallace's day, the tobacco field stood near the house, in the area that now includes the plot where Woodrow Wallace has had his plant-starting bed. William Wallace cured his crop in the barn uphill from the house.

At some point, the house was electrified, but it was never plumbed. John Hollowell identified the spring that furnished water for the residents. It lies in the creek bed one hundred yards to the east, between the house and the tobacco fields. In recent years, the spring was improved by the installation of a large cylindrical section of cement pipe. Looking at it, one can imagine children being sent to fetch water, returning to the house carrying full pails up the grade. In addition to the house, barn, and spring, Woodrow Wallace remembers a privy and a meathouse, where home-killed pork would have been cured.

Old land deeds show that Lemuel Wallace bought a one-hundred-acre tract from John B. and Kate L. Gray in 1909; we believe this to be the property under discussion. In 1926, he sold a bit less than an acre to Edward Carr and his wife; this site is correctly named and identified in the earlier newsletter and on Joe Steller's helpful map. Lemuel Wallace died in the mid-1930s and the next owner—and the last before the Trust—was Flippo Gravatt, who obtained the property in 1936.

Flippo Gravatt used the dwelling as lodging for his laborers, increasing the amount of sleeping space by adding a small structure immediately to the east of the house. Woodrow Wallace explained that this added building had been a small cabin or shed originally erected at "the beach," meaning Scientists Cliffs.

The Lemuel Wallace Site has special interest because it is an example of black ownership of rural land and black farm operation in the years between Emancipation and the Great Depression.

During the Trust's work weekend in May, John Hollowell, Mark Switzer, Art Cochran, and Carl Fleischhauer began the process of stabilizing the Lemuel Wallace house. The crew affixed sheet metal to the south-facing portion of the roof, covering a large hole that admitted water into the structure. A few weeks later, Mark Switzer stacked and burned the pile of rotting wood that was all that remained of the added building Flippo Gravatt had dragged to the site. More work needs to be done, however, to fully protect the structure from further deterioration.

**Visit with Dorothy Johnson.** On May 20, Carl Fleischhauer visited Dorothy Howard Johnson of Prince Frederick, the daughter of Percy Howard, and later the wife of attorney Wilmer Johnson. For a few years after their marriage, the couple lived in Scientists Cliffs. The Trust, of course, is particularly interested in recollections of life at the old Percy Howard farm, which stood across the road from Scientists Cliffs Gate C. Dorothy Johnson lived there from 1908, when she was born, until the early 1920s, when the family moved to Mutual. There will be report on the conversation in a later edition of this newsletter.

**The 1988 Tobacco Crop.** Woodrow Wallace has begun the annual cycle of tobacco culture on the Trust's land. Some farmers joke that the tobacco grower's "year" lasts for thirteen or fourteen months, because the initial phase of work on the new crop coincides with the marketing of the previous year's crop.

The year 1988 will be the first in which Woodrow Wallace will not perform the traditional initial phase; he has come afoul of new government rules designed to protect the environment. Here's the story: tobacco seeds must be started in weed-free soil. In order to kill the weed seeds before tobacco is sown, the bed is covered by plastic and a herbicide is applied. Called "gassing," the herbicides are typically applied from aerosol containers. Beginning this year, herbicides can only be applied by someone with a special applicator's license, and Woodrow Wallace said that he preferred not to take the examination required to receive the license.

Once started in a bed in February or March, the young tobacco plants grow under a protective cover of a porous fabric. In May or June, the eight- or ten-inch-high plants are transplanted into the growing field.

In June of this year, Woodrow Wallace had to buy plants from other farmers, some of which were plants they left behind when starting their own crop. As if this wasn't headache enough, his transplanting operation has coincided with a very dry spell. But the work went on; the June 25 crew, for example, included son Sam Wallace, grandsons Edward and Jonathan Weems, and their cousin Derrick Parker.

—Carl Fleischhauer

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## Membership – American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

I would like to join the American Chestnut Land Trust to help preserve Calvert County's rural land for educational and scientific purposes.

I would like to renew my membership in the American Chestnut Land Trust.

I have enclosed a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Regular Membership – Family	\$25.00	Partner	\$500.00
Sponsor	\$50.00	Benefactor	\$1000.00
Patron	\$100.00	Lifetime	\$2500.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to ACLT. Send payment to:

American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.  
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### **Along the Trails—**

One hundred and thirty members and visitors have signed the register at ACLT's main gate since its opening on April 16, not counting the one hundred and eighty-four who signed in on the 4th of July for the *National Geographic* picture taking event. They have come from as far away as Okayama, Japan, Ontario, Canada and the Big Lake, Minnesota and as near as across the road. While some walkers have reported seeing yellow-rumped and blue-winged warblers, indigo buntings in profusion as well as hermit thrushes along the laurel trail, others saw pileated woodpeckers, woodcocks and the red-eyed vireo. Blue grosbeaks and a sharp-shinned hawk were sighted on the first of May when the showy orchids were still in bloom and the bamboo just beginning to sprout. The finale of the May 7 birdwalk was an aerial chase of a osprey by a bald eagle over the tobacco field, with the eagle easily overtaking the smaller bird on the straightway but being outmaneuvered and outfoxed on the sharp and sudden turns. If you want to learn how to watch birds and to recognize them by their calls, don't miss the next early morning walk with Sue Hamilton and Oliver Flint. Early morning is apparently the best time to spot red fox, evenings a good time to see white-tailed deer. For those to whom poison ivy is a nightmare, we can hold out some hope for future years. We'll be getting advice and assistance from our soil conservation and forestry management programs to bring the noxious vine under control along our trails. Meantime, cover up with long sleeves and pants, spray on insect repellent; when you get home check for ticks and wash well with soap. Finding deer tracks or sunning snakes, walking through patches of delicate but profuse wildflowers, listening and searching for birds in the underbrush and canopy of the forest makes it all worthwhile.

—Aileen Hughes

### **Tick Watch**

Maryland's forests abound with ticks and ACLT's acres are no exception. Two cases of Lyme disease (carried by a species of tick) have been reported from Calvert County (*Calvert County Recorder*, June 17, 1988). Check yourself and your companions 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.

—The Editors

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