

American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Post Office Box 204
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NEWSLETTER

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The Story Behind the Brochure

It was almost a year ago that the Board began to look for professional help in designing a brochure that would attractively and briefly describe to others our purposes, accomplishments and aspirations while inviting them to join us as members and help us achieve our goals. We turned first to the public relations firm of JLT Associates. Within weeks, County Commissioner Joyce Terhes, one of our members, returned to us a preliminary format, suggestions for the text and the very generous offer to provide her services *pro bono* in the production of the brochure as her contribution to ACLT. The text, we felt, could best be produced by the people who had been deeply involved in the ACLT process. Don Dahmann produced a draft and served as editor while his copy was revised and re-revised by Board members. Don showed the patience of Job through this onslaught on his authorship and brevity and incorporated the changes with a smile. By spring, when this phase was complete, we didn't have the nerve to return to Joyce. Ann Whisman, one of our members who had done such a fine job on the League of Women Voters' *Index to Living* booklet, volunteered under considerable pressure to put the text in her computer, edit as necessary and size and arrange the copy for a four-fold lay-out. Standing by was Mary Ashby Parish, a daughter of Charter members, who had agreed to do sketches for whatever space might be left. Mary is an artist with the Smithsonian and has to her credit the illustrations and design for the *Fossils of Calvert Cliffs* book published by the Calvert Marine Museum. Meanwhile, the Vogts offered Mitzi Poole's lovely pen and ink drawing of the flora and fauna beneath our venerable, old chestnut tree.* The drawing dates back to 1986 when ACLT was only a dream; Mitzi, creator of the ACLT logo and staff member at the Cypress Swamp Nature Center, had given it to Randi and Peter in appreciation for their earliest efforts to preserve the woodlands. In the end it turned out that Ann didn't want to change a word of text, Mitzi's illustration was deemed perfect for the front cover, and Mary had a wonderful time filling in open spaces that were left and finally doing the camera-ready lay-out. In spite of the many metamorphoses the brochure has gone through, it still bears a remarkable resemblance to Joyce's original format. It is seldom that something designed by a committee is so very well done; but it is seldom, too, that you can you draw on such a wealth of talent. Our sincerest thanks to the everyone who had a hand in this beautiful brochure. We hope you agree with our Board member who said, "It was worth waiting for."

—Aileen Hughes

The American Chestnut Foundation

"Networking" is currently a popular word used to describe organizations and individuals with similar goals working together for the common good of society. We want to give recognition to a local example involving members of ACLT and the American Chestnut Foundation.

If my memory serves me correctly, it was in October 1987 that Phil Rutter, President of the American Chestnut Foundation, gave a presentation at the Scientists' Cliffs Community House on his work to restore the Chestnut as an American forest tree. The gathering was jointly sponsored by ACLT and the Scientists' Cliffs Association Garden Club. Among those attending were members of the Wagner family, and from that occasion a dialogue began. It seems that the Foundation was looking for a site on which to estab-

lish its first experimental farm and Anna Belle Wagner had a farm in southwestern Virginia, which was the childhood home of her two daughters, Cheri and Jennifer Wagner. Now the Foundation is preparing to plant the first chestnut seedlings on the Meadowview farm, because the dialogue resulted in the signing of a 30-year lease for a nominal yearly rent. As their work develops, the prospect increases of one day having suitable seedlings to reintroduce the Chestnut to the ACLT property.

Now the Foundation faces the challenge of raising the funds to properly manage the farm as its South Regional Chestnut Breeding Center. They must raise \$80,000 in order to get the farm up and running this year. If you want to join the Wagners in supporting this effort, write to the Foundation at their new headquarters: The American Chestnut Foundation, 401 Brooke Hall, P.O. Box 6057, College of Agriculture and Forestry, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506-6057.

"Networking" works, but only to the extent that enough people care.

—Ralph Dwan

Membership Information—New Mailing Labels

This summer we are consolidating the ACLT contribution and mailing lists into a single database. We are most appreciative of Anne Moore, Membership Chairman, for volunteering her computer and her time to accomplish this task. You can see the first sign of our progress this month in the number code that appears on the first two lines of your mailing label. An explanation of this code follows. From now on, you will be able to tell where you stand in terms of your own membership.

Reading the digits from left to right: 000 0 0 0/0/00 0 /0/0/00

000 Your membership number

001 – 130—Charter Members (at least \$2,500 contributed before October 1, 1987)

200 – 299—Lifetime Members (at least \$2,500 contributed after October 1, 1987)

300+ —Regular Members who pay the minimum *annual* dues of \$25 or further augment their dues with additional contributions

0 Indicates with a 1 or 2 whether yours is an individual or two member contributing unit

0 Your donor level:

Charter and Sustaining (Lifetime) Members are coded 1–6 representing the number of \$2,500 shares contributed (1=\$2,500; 6=\$15,000)

Regular members are coded 1–5:

1	Basic Membership Dues	\$25.00
2	Sponsor	\$50.00
3	Patron	\$100.00
4	Partner	\$500.00
5	Benefactor	\$1,000.00

0/0/00—The date of your original contribution to ACLT.

0 0/0/00 to the right of your label—your *current* donor level (same as code above) and the date of your *last* recorded contribution to ACLT.

If you are a Regular Member and if the date at the right of your label is prior to 8/1/88, it is time to renew your membership. We plan to send out a reminder to members who have not renewed their membership, but it would help us immeasurably now if most of our members would respond to this newsletter appeal by sending in 1989 dues payments and, at the same time, again consider augmenting the dues payment with a generous additional contribution. We hope to have all of our memberships brought up-to-date by our Annual Meeting in October. If your records do not agree with ours, please let us know. Write Box 204, Port Republic, MD 20676, or call Anne Moore (301-586-2427) or Aileen Hughes (301-586-1749).

—Aileen Hughes

Landscape, Ruins, and Monuments

The motto in our new brochure reads, "Preserving the Natural and Cultural Landscape of Calvert County, Maryland." There are several reasons for choosing the word *landscape*, beginning with the term's web of connotations and its metaphoric impact. The word immediately calls to mind great prints and paintings, suggesting the beauty of works of art from Constable to Hokusai.

Landscape is also a term used by historic preservationists. Joe Showalter, a member of Calvert County's Historic District Commission as well as of the Land Trust, has written newspaper articles that speak feelingly of the need to preserve the county's rural landscape. Joe asks us to conserve the tobacco fields along with the historic frame houses and weathered barns that punctuate them.

This use of *conserve* connects the challenge of keeping agriculture alive with that of keeping a forest alive and, like our use of *landscape*, reinforces a perception of a common cause in the preservation of nature and culture. Compare these words, for example, to *wilderness*, a fighting word in parts of the American West. Or compare *landscape* with *Open Space*, a governmental term with a similar denotation but lacking the latter's rich connotations, even suggesting barrenness.

Webster's defines *landscape* as "a portion of land which the eye can comprehend in a single view." The notion of an "eye," of course, reminds us that *landscape*—like all categories—is a human invention. More interesting, however, is the suggestion that landscape involves signification; we are to "comprehend" it.

Signification has both natural and cultural manifestations. Hunters and trappers speak of "deer sign" or "fox sign," meaning the tracks, droppings, or tree-scratchings that indicate the presence and activities of animals. The old roads and the abandoned cemetery at the Chesley-Hance Site on the Land Trust are signs of culture, as are indentations in the ground near old fields that may mark the locations of former tobacco plant beds. And since Virginia pine is the first tree to take over abandoned fields, closely packed stands of pine (things of nature) signify the locations of former tobacco fields (things of culture).

Signs in the landscape provoke contemplation, and my own reflections are stimulated by sight of the tenant house and barn on the hill above the tobacco fields. During the 1920s and 1930s (or thereabouts), Lemuel Wallace rented this house, barn, and land to his son William, Woodrow Wallace's uncle. William Wallace raised tobacco along the road to the old dump and in late winter, after the cured tobacco leaves had been stripped from the stalks, he would press the crop into hogsheads with the two screw-jack tobacco "prizes" in the barn. After the Gravatts obtained the property in 1936, they used the house to lodge some of their laborers.

The ruined state of the house and barn reinforces my reading of them as artifacts of a bygone day. The condition of the buildings indicates that no third party has come between us and the property's last, authentic users, adding coats of paint and refurbished interiors. For me, the appropriate treatment for the buildings is *stabilization*, finding ways to reduce the rate of deterioration.

These two ruins are monuments to change, like the living ruin of our tripartite chestnut tree and the Virginia pines marking the sites of old fields. In our landscape, they coexist with monuments to continuity, like the wooded vale of Jett Stream and Woodrow Wallace's present-day tobacco operation. We have supplemented all of these monuments with artifacts of our own: boundary signs, hiking paths, bluebird boxes, and, above all, the protection of the landscape itself. We hope and trust that this last monument signifies the future.

—Carl Fleischhauer

Chestnut Seeds

In the January 1989 newsletter we reported that we had received a carton of American Chestnuts from a 75-year-old tree in Seattle. Member George Switzer has germinated about a dozen of the chestnuts and will continue to monitor their growth. Prospects are good that they can be transplanted next spring.

Annual Meeting Notice

The Annual Membership Meeting of the American Chestnut Land Trust will be held on October 28, 1989, at Christ Church on Broomes Island Road. The business meeting will be followed by lunch and tours of the property. Details in the next newsletter. Volunteers are needed to help set up for meeting. Contact Caroline Van Mason (301-586-2226) if you can help out.

Another Tick Reminder

The tick risk is fairly high from May through September, so take precautions when you go into wooded or brushy areas. Cover up (tuck pants into sox or boots), use an insect repellent containing deet, and look for ticks on yourself and others when you return. The deer tick, which can carry Lyme Disease, is very small (pinhead size or smaller). There have been numerous articles recently with discussions of the symptoms of Lyme Disease and advice on removing ticks. If you haven't seen one of these, The Maryland Veteri-

nary Medical Association (Box 439, Fallston, MD 21047) has a pamphlet called *Lyme Disease in Maryland*, with good information from the human perspective and advice relating to the care of animals as well. Meanwhile, ACLT is bushhogging in an effort to keep the main Land Trust trails free of brushy undergrowth.

—The Editors

Report on the Maryland Land Trust Retreat

At the end of April, Peter Vogt and Aileen Hughes attended an overnight retreat at the Aspen Institute's delightful Wye Plantation facility on the Eastern Shore as representatives of ACLT. The conference was held under the auspices of the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), the Chesapeake Foundation (CBF) and the American Farmland Trust (AFT) for the purpose of bringing together their staff members with officials of the dozen or so Maryland land trusts and related conservation groups to share aspirations, accomplishments and goals and to discuss ways in which we could be mutually supportive. We learned, too, of the broadening range of services and assistance now available to established land trusts such as ours as well as those in the embryonic stage. The Land Trust Exchange informs us that land trusts are now the country's fastest growing conservation movement. There are now 740 land trusts operating in 46 states, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, with that number increasing by 25 each year. There is still much to be done in Maryland where there are only local land trusts, falling considerably short of Connecticut's 92 land trusts which have preserved some 50,000 acres of land. We were pleased to learn that ACLT has already begun to serve as a model for the newest of the land trusts in Maryland even though we are only two and one-half years old. Before the conference adjourned, a steering committee was appointed from among the participants to organize an on-going coalition of Maryland land trusts called the Maryland Land Trust Alliance. The Alliance "proposes to encourage greater communication and sharing of expertise among land trusts regarding future land preservation issues." The structure and membership of the umbrella organization is under review; a draft of the "Purposes Statement" will be presented to members at the first general meeting of the new Alliance in the fall. ACLT looks forward to being a full participant in this exciting new program.

—Aileen Hughes

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