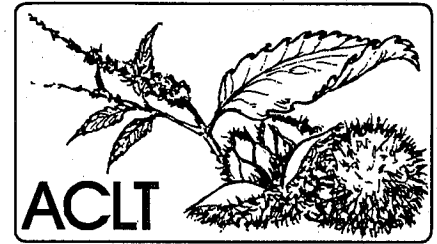


American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.
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NEWSLETTER

Volume 9 - Number 4

Editors: Ellen and David Farr

Fall 1995

Report from the President

As you will note from Paul Berry's report in this issue, the 9th annual meeting on October 28th was a very positive event. The showing of Kelly Ellsworth's video on Parkers Creek set the stage for the keynote address by John Griffin, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. He promised that DNR, with the help of the Maryland Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, would continue the effort of preserving the Parkers Creek watershed by negotiating with the remaining major land owners for the purchase of their land or conservation easements. Since DNR does not have the manpower to manage their many acquisitions across the state, he challenged ACLT and other local land trusts to assume some of that responsibility with the possibility of some financial assistance. The experience we gain from managing Warrior's Rest will be a guide as to what may be possible in the future.

The recent death of Aileen Hughes, who was largely responsible for our actively pursuing the preservation of Parkers Creek, cast a shadow over our otherwise upbeat program. But we will be ever grateful for what she accomplished in her years as ACLT president. During this past year, she continued to be active by serving as our contact with the Commodore family and by supervising our payroll records. The Maryland Land Trust Alliance has established an annual leadership award in her memory, which reflects her reputation throughout the state. No task was too small or too large for Aileen.

We are sorry that June Whitson has stepped down from the Board of Directors, but we are ever grateful that she will continue to maintain our membership records. As a volunteer membership organization, that task is key to our survival. We welcome Julie Nisonger as a new member of the board.

Speaking of volunteers, I have to give special recognition to Joe Turner, who almost single handed built a 700-foot boardwalk on the Swamp Trail during his summer "vacation." The Calvert Garden Club continues to work on the Chesley-Hance Cemetery, and Bob Pfeiffer has recruited an impressive group of volunteers for maintenance tasks at Warrior's Rest. During a guided tour

of that property after the annual meeting, Gary Loew and Elaine Dunkle spoke of its history, Karen Lucas explained the plantings done by Dr. Jett and our resident paleontologists, Mike Gottfried and Dave Bohaska, led us to the beach and the cliffs. I can't list all the volunteers, but I must mention the many hours Bill Hosler spent improving the electrical system on Double Oak Farm.

Thank to all,
Ralph Dwan

Fund Raising

In the Parkers Creek video, our neighbor, Wilson Freeland, speaks about the farmer being a steward of his land. Stewardship can also be applied to how we manage our cash resources and raise funds for ACLT operations and debt retirement. As we approach the end of the year, it seems appropriate that I give an accounting as to how we have done in this regard.

To start on a positive note, the commitment of our members and friends has again been outstanding. The combination of the response to our annual appeal and the gifts in memory of Aileen Hughes has brought in over \$15,000, which should enable us to come close to meeting our goals for the year. We were able to renegotiate our loan with the county, so that our payments can be spread over 10 years if necessary. While we expect the market for TDRs to improve next year, with the pledges in hand for the Michael payoff, we expect to meet our payment to the county.

There have been some disappointments, as we were not selected this year for the sale of TDRs under the county's purchase and retirement fund (PAR Fund). This will delay our first payment on the Maryland Environmental Trust loan. We were also unsuccessful with our grant proposal to the Abell Foundation of Baltimore after being encouraged to apply for operational expenses and

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debt retirement. We will rework that proposal for other foundations in 1996.

ACLT is fortunate to have uncommitted reserves that will allow us to meet current obligations and debt payment until we are able to sell TDRs and liquidate our debts. We will continue to explore new funding sources and we would welcome any suggestions.

Thank you for your help this year and your commitment to the future of ACLT and the preservation of Parkers Creek.

—Ralph Dwan

In Memory Aileen Ritchie Hughes

Aileen Ritchie Hughes, a charter member and past president of the American Chestnut Land Trust and a member of the Calvert County Planning Commission since 1990, died September 17, 1995, of metastatic lung cancer. She was born December 27, 1922, in Mount Vernon, NY.

Aileen and her husband, Phillip "Sam" Hughes, moved to Scientists Cliffs in Calvert County in the mid 1980's. Always active in community activities, Aileen focused her talents and interests on land planning and the preservation of open space.

Prior to moving to Calvert County, Aileen lived in Montgomery County and served as Administrator of the Cedar Lane Unitarian Church. She was active in civil rights issues and worked closely with the Montgomery County leaders and government to implement employment training programs for the disadvantaged. In 1984, at the age of 62, Aileen graduated Phi Beta Kappa and *summa cum laude* from the University of Maryland.

A few of the many accomplishments of ACLT during Aileen's presidency were: purchase of the Russell, Kenwood Beach and Wallace properties, signing of a Cooperative Agreement with Maryland Environmental Trust, adoption of the Standards and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance, receiving national recognition as part of Renew America's Searching for Success initiative, hiring a part-time administrator, opening the ACLT Office and being awarded administrative grants from the Maryland Environmental Trust, MARPAT Foundation, Baltimore Gas and Electric, and the World Wildlife Foundation. Aileen was actively working on a land acquisition project by ACLT at the time of her death. In addition to her husband, she is survived by four children.

Warrior's Rest Update

Our first Warrior's Rest property workday was held Saturday, November 4. Despite weather that seems typical this fall—rain on Friday night followed by cold wind on Saturday—over twenty volunteers showed up to brave the windy conditions and attack the holly arboretum. Battling years of abandonment, the group made considerable headway cutting bittersweet and honeysuckle vines at ground level and pulling as much as possible from the trees. Another group worked at uncovering an extensive azalea planting southwest of the holly grove. Although a substantial amount of work was done, the Warrior's Rest management committee may be calling for volunteers in the not too distant future to continue the efforts to recover the remarkable plantings that are associated with this property. If you would be interested in helping, please contact the ACLT office, 410-586-1570.

We would like to welcome our tenants/caretakers to Warrior's Rest. Dan and Leigh Hamilton, of Scientists' Cliffs, moved into the residence on the first of November and are settling in. Dan conducted his master's thesis research on Parkers Creek, and as long-time residents of the watershed, he and Leigh bring lots of enthusiasm to the project. In respect for their privacy, and to ensure that the property is used for the purposes for which it has been protected, the committee is developing a set of visitation guidelines. Included in these will be signs at the entrance and at the beach explaining the procedures for group or individual access. We would welcome input from everyone as we balance habitat issues with public access. In the interim, please contact the ACLT office if your group is interested in visiting the property or you wish to become involved with the management committee.

While everyone on the management committee deserves recognition, I would like to thank Padi Hollowell and John Jones for their speedy help in developing a very creative lease. Traditional rental agreements do not lend themselves to projects of the scope of Warrior's Rest. Karen Lucas and Joe Mihursky have provided hours of assistance in identifying trees, talking with and guiding horticulturists around the property, and helping with the direction of volunteer efforts on our first work day. Arnie Petty and Skip Ford provided the labor necessary to move the Hamiltons into the house by getting the kitchen in order and beginning to address the moisture problems in the basement. Carl Fleischhauer has completed the first assessment of the cultural resources on the property. This and subsequent natural resource assessments will serve to guide future management decisions. In short, the past two months have been busy and productive and represent outstanding progress on a project that may well serve as a model for preserving environmentally sensitive lands.

—Robert Pfeiffer

What's Happening

Our Outreach/Membership co-chairs, Mimi Lacouture and Alan Wilson, have come up with some interesting winter activities! They have three outings planned that most people have never had an opportunity to try. Bring a friend, your sense of humor, and join us for

Hay Ride and Holiday Greens Cutting

December 9th - Double Oak Farm

(See inside back cover.)

Skeet and Bow & Arrow Shooting

January 13 - Double Oak Farm - 2:00 p.m.

Cross Country Skiing

(Let the office know if you're interested and we'll call you when the first good snow falls with a meeting time and details.)

Opportunity for Volunteers

A special thank you goes to Kirsty Uunila, an archeologist with Jefferson Patterson Park, for initiating a substantial grant request to the Maryland Historical Trust for an archeological study of the Parkers Creek watershed. ACLT is the applicant and, if granted, we'll be looking for volunteers to assist this year-long project as a partial "in kind match" of time.

Equipment Needed

As our land holdings and management responsibilities increase, our administration workload also increases. We now need to provide another work station in our office for volunteers. The following is a "wish list" for anyone able to donate equipment:

file cabinet (legal size)	vertical plan holder
desk chair	IBM or Mac computer
desk supplies	laser printer

DNR Secretary Speaks at 1995 Annual Meeting

ACLT's annual meeting on October 28 drew one hundred members and guests to the St. John Vianney Parish Center in Prince Frederick. Members heard reports on the land trust's activities for the past year, viewed the new video on Parkers Creek, and heard a challenging report from John R. Griffin, Secretary of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources. These annual meetings provide members with the opportunity to learn the latest about ACLT's efforts to preserve the Parkers Creek watershed, as well as related efforts throughout the state.

Following a welcome from the Reverend Francis M. Walsh of St. John Vianney, ACLT president Ralph Dwan introduced various guests and board members, and also

requested a moment of silence in memory of Aileen Hughes, ACLT's former president who did so much to advance the land trust's work. He then moved on to reports. Treasurer David Farr provided each attendee with a financial statement showing that finances were within the year's budget. President Dwan reported that a memorial fund for Aileen Hughes has grown to over \$6,300, and the first annual appeal has realized nearly \$4,000 to date. The pledges for the Double Oak Farm repayment, however, are still below the anticipated annual \$20,000. Alan Wilson reported on the status of ACLT's membership (now 424) and introduced several new members. He and Mimi Lacouture also described the many outreach activities in which ACLT was engaged during the past year. Committee chair Mark Switzer commented on problems and achievements in managing ACLT's lands, including work on the trails and completion of a new trail guide. Of special interest was the work of ACLT member Joe Turner in constructing a 700-foot boardwalk on the swamp trail.

An important report was that of Gary Loew for the Land Acquisition/Preservation Committee setting forth some of the alternatives considered by the committee and the board in preserving ACLT forest lands. Although these alternatives were described in an article in the previous issue of this newsletter, there had been little response from members. To obtain more member reaction, therefore, each attendee was given a questionnaire with a request for review and response. Bob Pfeiffer reported on plans for the management of Warrior's Rest, Dr. Page Jett's former property purchased by the state late in the summer. Under an interim agreement with the state, ACLT is to manage the property, and Bob Pfeiffer chairs this management committee. Information about Warrior's Rest was reported in a previous newsletter, and an update appears elsewhere in this issue.

A fourteen-minute video on Parkers Creek, produced for ACLT by Ellsworth Productions using a grant from Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, was well received by members, with a number of requests to borrow or purchase copies. An announcement on availability also appears in this issue.

The featured speaker for the meeting was DNR's Secretary Griffin who described a number of his department's efforts and funds that support environmental preservation in the state. He was optimistic that state funding will continue for these support programs, especially Program Open Space funds that were used in the purchase of Warrior's Rest and could also be used to purchase easements or land adjacent to Double Oak Farm. On the other hand, the operational funds of his department are severely stretched, so he is urging the state's land trusts to become more directly involved in the management of the land that is acquired by DNR. Mr. Griffin was also complimentary

of the work of local governments and local land trusts, with mention of the success of ACLT's efforts.

Following Mr. Griffin's talk, President Dwan presented ACLT's 1995 Conservation Awards to DNR and to the Maryland Chapter of The Nature Conservancy for preservation efforts in the Parkers Creek watershed, particularly the purchase of Warrior's Rest. Secretary Griffin and DNR's Jonathan McKnight accepted on behalf of DNR, and ACLT member Steve Bunker accepted for The Nature Conservancy.

As in previous years, those present were treated to a sandwich lunch and then were invited to tour ACLT's new boardwalk on the swamp trail and the Warrior's Rest property.

—Paul L. Berry

New Board Member Profile

Julie MacLean Nisonger is a native of Columbus, Ohio, with degrees from Ohio State University (fine arts) and the University of Maryland (print making). For 20 years she taught Studio Art, Design, Drawing and related subjects at the College Park campus. She has been a resident of Calvert County since 1977, where she has been active in Adult Education, as a volunteer and former board member of the Battle Creek Nature Center, and as an officer and board member of the League of Women Voters. She currently is the chairperson for the League's County Transportation Study. She brings to the ACLT Board a strong record of community involvement as well as an artist's concern for the environment.

Land Trust Alliance National Rally

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA) held their annual National Land Trust Rally at the beautiful Asilomar Conference Center near Monterey, California, from October 15–18, 1995. Over 900 people from all over the country (representing approximately 260 land trusts) participated in the largest land conservation conference ever held. The focus of these rallies is to provide the leaders of grass roots land conservancies the skill, information and contacts they need to protect critical land resources.

This year's rally featured parallel sessions organized into 12 major topics, 2 plenary sessions, and several pre-conference seminars. There was something to stimulate the interest of everyone interested in land conservation, be they first time novices or experienced mentors. Lest you think that this was "all work and no play," there were plenty of opportunities to experience this beautiful region in over 30 field trips as well as a closing party at the Monterey Aquarium (best in the world in my opinion). As exciting as the program was, perhaps the best part was the sharing of concerns, ideas and solutions by similarly motivated people.

Monterey is a long way from Port Republic and it was unfortunate that there was no one there who officially represented ACLT (I was there as an LTA employee). Next year's Rally will be held in Burlington, Vermont, from October 17–30, 1996. I hope that it will be possible to have several ACLT representatives at Burlington. See you there!

—Ed Greene

Land Management Strategy

This is the second in what may become a series of articles on land management strategy—for reasons that will become clear further on. In the last issue of the Newsletter I mentioned that the Board of Directors was considering revising the forestry management plans of the five properties we own and which must have management plans to retain their Agricultural Preservation District status. At the Annual Meeting I summarized our thinking with regard to how we might amend these plans and distributed a questionnaire to obtain the thoughts of our membership. I will use this article to report the results of the survey, and where they are leading us.

In response to the first question, "I understand what an 'old growth' or 'climax' forest is." 47 of 51 (92%) of respondents Strongly Agreed or Agreed (SA/A). Also, in response to Question 9, "I walk on ACLT trails—x/yr." 38 of 41 or 92% use the trails at least once a year and 68% use them approximately 5 times or more a year. From these answers, I believe it is safe to assume that we are as a group knowledgeable of the implications of the choices presented and able to make informed decisions without much additional education.

Questions 2-5 were designed to present a range of land management options. Responses to these provided some clear, and interesting, direction. Question 2, the **extreme "old growth"** option, "As a long term strategy, the ACLT should cut no more trees and let all properties evolve to an 'old growth' condition." evoked split, and strong opinions. Of 45 respondents 49% SA/A while 47% Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed (SD/D) and only 2 (4%) had No Opinion. It appears that about half would like to pursue this option while half prefer an approach that would allow timbering under some conditions.

Question 3, which presents a more **balanced** policy, stated, "The ACLT should pursue a strategy of harvesting trees in some areas while preserving others in their natural state." Of 47 respondents 28, or 60%, SA/A while 30% SD/D. We can't tell why some respondents disagree with this policy, but it seems likely that they would be those who favored the extreme old growth policy tested in Question 2.

Question 4, to **continue current policy**, produced the greatest surprise of the survey. It read, "The ACLT should continue its current policy to treat all properties as tree farms and extract maximum income from timber (while not harvesting in environmentally sensitive areas such as ravines, steep slopes, etc.)." Only 6 of 41 respondents, or 15%, SA/A; 10% had no opinion; and 31 or 75% SD/D. It is clear from this response that

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Parkers Creek Video

Order Form

This beautiful 14 minute video, which includes sweeping aerial views of the creek as well as interviews with neighbors and naturalists, had its first public showing at our annual membership meeting in October. There were numerous inquiries at the meeting about acquiring a copy. It was also suggested that one be given to every school and library in the county.

The cost of reproducing the video is expected to be between \$5.00 and \$8.00 per copy. We have placed an initial order for copies and would like to make them available before Christmas. The price per copy is \$10.00, which includes tax and shipping costs. Please use this form to order copies.

Name

Address

Phone

Number of copies desired _____ @ \$10.00.

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ _____.

If you wish the video to be mailed to an address other than above:

Please mail this order form to: ACLT - Video, P.O. Box 204, Port Republic, MD 20676



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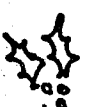

Holiday Hayride

Saturday, December 9
(rain date December 10)

2 PM - 6 PM

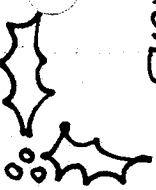
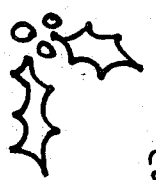
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Land Management Strategy cont.

the great majority of the membership wants change. However, from Question 2, only about half want to preserve all properties untouched, so how should we change?

Question 5, the **ecosystem management plan**, provides the answer. It read, "The ACLT should develop a land management strategy to preserve as much of the Parkers Creek watershed as possible in its natural state; to develop an integrated ecosystem management plan." In the context of the meeting, I explained that we had 5 separate forestry management plans for our 5 tracts of property, each developed relatively independent of the other to manage the property for timber production. The responses to Question 5 provides a strong membership direction to revise these plans and to develop a comprehensive strategy whereby each separate plan contributes to the total goal of ecosystem management. The membership is supporting, I believe, timber harvesting, timber stand improvement and other proactive management activities as long as they contribute to the goal of total watershed ecosystem management.

Questions 6-8 were designed to test the need for more membership participation and feedback activities. To Question 6, "I would like to participate on the ACLT Land Acquisition and Preservation Committee." 16 of 32 (50%) SA/A. Question 7, "I would like more information about ACLT properties and management choices." resulted in 18 of 37 (48%) SA/A. Similarly, to Question 8, "I would like to have some regular means to input my thoughts into the land management decisions of the Board of Directors." 15 of 44 (44%) SA/A. Accordingly, we will keep this discussion going through the newsletter and perhaps, special meetings or mailings at critical decision points.

It has been, and continues to be, an enjoyable chore to review our policies and adapt them to our evolving concepts of ecosystem management. We did not have these options 2 or 3 years ago. That we do now, however, is due to the support of many people: our membership, contributors, and volunteers; neighboring property owners, who have taken and are taking steps to preserve their properties; our County staff for their advice and time; our County Commissioners for their revolving fund and their willingness to consider more broadly based management plans; and the Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the State for their expertise and supporting land purchases. As it has taken many people and groups to bring us to this point, it will take as many, or more, to move into the increasingly complex future. If you would like to participate in plan development and implementation and haven't notified me please call or write to the office. Also, I remind you that our Board meetings are open, and that members often sit in—sometimes just to listen and other times because of a special interest. We have been successful because of a knowledgeable, informed participative membership. Stay involved and contribute—it can only make us better!

—Gary Loew



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HAYRIDE
Dec. 9th

