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NEWSLETTER

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Fall 1996

President's Report: Reflections on Ten Years

We ended the first ten years of ACLT's history with a grand party in the Community House at Scientists' Cliffs. Some may think that conservationists should be out in the woods or negotiating for easements, but the celebration was very similar to the closing event of the National Land Trust Rally in Burlington, Vermont last month, which several of us attended. Conservationists are people, and after two days of serious meetings, we needed to socialize, swap stories, and share successes over good food and drink. With information gathered at the rally, we are now looking to the future, but first I want to reflect on the past.

In 1986, the opportunity was there—450 acres held by the estate of Anne Gravatt: fields, woodlands and trails that had been enjoyed for years with her encouragement by the neighbors. Peter Vogt had already been working on a plan, so the first meeting that I attended was at his cabin. What could be done to preserve this land? The Chesapeake Bay Foundation was contacted and they agreed to help, sending two staffers to a general neighborhood meeting in October at the SCA Community House to consider possible options. After much discussion, the consensus developed that we should establish a land trust, and the Ad Hoc Committee was charged to get it started.

At the next meeting one of the first questions was what to call the organization. A number of names were suggested, but the committee adopted Chuck Manning's suggestion: The American Chestnut Land Trust, after the trophy Chestnut tree and the memory of Flippo Gravatt, the chestnut expert. Ed Hacskeylo, Flippo's protégé, provided sample bylaws, and under the direction of lawyers from Linowes & Blocker we started to organize a non-profit corporation and to plan the fundraising for this acquisition. How many charter members were needed at what level of contribution? Would potential

members trust us to negotiate a contract and secure the IRS exemption letter?

Incorporation took place in December 1986, and the committee became the first board of directors. An escrow account was established with Calvert Bank and Trust to hold the money, and the first general mailing went out to solicit charter members at \$2,500 each. It worked. The green ACLT hats awarded charter members appeared around the community encouraging others to sign up. Don Dahmann arranged for the *National Geographic* to come for a photo piece on the Gravatt property and for Angus Phillips to do an article for the *Post*. Mark Switzer was everywhere—licking stamps and mowing trails. Elaine Cochran maintained the membership records and Aileen Hughes became secretary and liaison with the county. Gary Loew kept track of the money, while Peter Vogt worked on selling TDRs.

After settlement on the Gravatt property acquisition I'm sure we had a party, or maybe it was after we paid off the note. But it was Aileen Hughes who became famous for parties when she became ATLC president. Get people together, she would say, give them good food and drink, tell them what we are doing, and they will give to this cause. And again, it worked, together with the sale of TDRs as she led us through additional acquisitions of the Russell, Kenwood and Wallace tracts and raised funds for an administrator. She would start the presentation and then turn it over to Peter or Gary to make the sale.

Faces have changed and people have come and gone. Peg Niland has replaced Aileen as ACLT's main contact person. Ewing Miller is now the Vice President, following Peter and then Gary and Paul Berry is the treasurer. John Jones has gone from board member to

Board of Directors

Ralph H. Dwan, Jr., President
Ewing Miller, Vice President
Caroline E. Van Mason, Secretary
Paul L. Berry, Treasurer
Joy A. Bartholomew
David Farr
Carl Fleischhauer
Florence W. Ford
Edward Greene
James B. Greene
Mimi Lacouture
Julie Nisonger
Robert Pfeiffer
Leslie Starr
Alan Wilson

ACLT attorney. Mark Switzer is now working Saturdays, so Leslie Starr has moved from trail blazer to trail clearer. Sue Hamilton left the board, but not her beloved birds, and her son Dan manages Warrior's Rest. June Whitson also left the board but still handles the membership records in our precious "database." I can't mention all the names, but I want to thank all of you for the memories.

Annual Membership Meeting Celebrating Our 10th Anniversary

It was a wonderful celebration of the tenth anniversary of the American Chestnut Land Trust! Over 150 members—including five new memberships signed up on the spot—and some guests gathered on October 26 at the Community Center at Scientists' Cliffs to hear reports from the past year, elect new board members, and to recognize conservation efforts. But, most importantly, it was an occasion to look back over the achievements of the past ten years, and—after the completion of the formal meeting—to celebrate those ten years with good eating, music, dancing, and fine fellowship.

President Ralph Dwan opened the meeting at 2:30 with some introductions and the reports of finances and the major committees of ACLT. Treasurer Paul Berry reported a sound fiscal state, but reminded members of the obligations from the Double Oak Farm loans. The receipt of grants during the year was described by the president, particularly grants from two new sources: the Abell Foundation of Baltimore and the Spring Creek Foundation of Washington, D.C. Accomplishments in the preservation of land in the Parkers Creek watershed were reviewed by Ewing Miller, assisted by administrator Peg Niland who showed on the area map how much of the watershed is now protected. ACLT's next objective, the Commodore Property, is moving along, but depends upon completion of a friendly legal action to appoint a trustee for the Commodore heirs and thus clear title for the purchase.

Member Joe Turner reported for his wife, Leslie Starr, on the work of land management during the past year, but the report also stressed the need for additional volunteer support in maintaining ACLT's trails during the growing season. The purchase of new equipment has made it much easier for any member to operate and help with this work. The Outreach/Membership Services Committee report was given by co-chair Alan Wilson who listed the many successful activities of the past year and outlined some of the activities planned for the

months ahead. Membership now exceeds seven hundred, with a significant number of new members added this year. President Dwan recognized with the presentation of ACLT caps those who have achieved Sustaining Membership status (comparable to the contribution of the original charter members) with total contributions of \$2,500.

Alan Wilson gave the report of the nominating committee and this was followed by the election of board members. Current board members to serve for additional three-year terms are Carl Fleischhauer, Caroline Van Mason, Ed Greene, and Paul Berry. Elected to fill the vacancy at the completion of the term of Mark Switzer was Admiral Jim Green, and Joy Bartholomew was elected to fill the vacancy (two-year term remaining) created by Gary Loew's resignation following his move to Texas. The qualifications of Admiral Green and Ms. Bartholomew are reported elsewhere in this issue. There was a special recognition of four board members who have served for ACLT's ten years: Ralph Dwan, Carl Fleischhauer, Mark Switzer, and Caroline Van Mason.

The first of several special reports was that of Bob Pfeiffer for the Warrior's Rest Committee—reporting a successful year with ACLT's management of the property on behalf of the state for educational and research purposes, and its protection by Dan and Leigh Hamilton who have occupied the main house and overseen activities. A separate account for management expenses is in the black at year's end, augmented by rent from the house. The second special report was that of Matt Reeves, hired as a contract archaeologist by ACLT under a grant from the Maryland Historical Trust to survey the cultural resources of the Parkers Creek watershed. In his first few months he has searched many of the land and cartographic records, interviewed knowledgeable local residents, and located both prehistoric (Indian) and historic sites. By the end of his year of surveying, ACLT and local organizations should have a better idea of the wealth of cultural resources that are to be found in the watershed.

A special part of the annual meeting was devoted to reports on the work to restore the Hance-Chesley cemetery on ACLT's property, a special effort of the members of the Calvert Garden Club. Carl Fleischhauer, who served as ACLT liaison with the club, summarized the history and importance of the preservation of this significant cultural site, and the Garden Club's president Marianne Harms reviewed the extensive work that the club performed to restore the cemetery site to a condition that the club and ACLT can show proudly to visitors. An

attractive brochure on the cemetery was distributed to those attending the annual meeting.

Gary Loew, visiting from Texas for this occasion, built on some of the earlier reports of accomplishments and reviewed ACLT's five-year plan that was adopted in 1991. In almost every category, ACLT's accomplishments during the five years have exceeded plans, thanks to the conscientious support of the membership and the work of the board of directors. Ewing Miller followed Gary's report with an explanation of the procedures for developing a plan for the next five years, urging members to participate if they had ideas to contribute. This is a critical time to review the mission of the ACLT and to plan the future.

The announced keynote address by Dr. Peter Vogt was not possible, since Peter had an unexpected professional commitment that required travel out of the area. The importance of his vision in the successes of ACLT was recognized, however, by his selection for ACLT's 1996 Conservation Award, accepted for him by wife Randi. It was clear from the reaction of members—in a standing ovation—that Peter Vogt was the individual whose efforts were the most critical to ACLT's ten successful years.

At the close of the meeting, the anniversary celebration began with hay rides, a dedication of the Hance-Chesley cemetery at the site, and with beverages, a chili cookoff with plenty to eat, music by Teezin' with Fred, dancing, a silent auction, and the cake cutting. The winner of the chili cookoff was Joy Bartholomew, and the silent auction raised \$2,300 for ACLT. Members of the Outreach/Membership Services Committee, led by co-chairs Mimi Lacouture and Alan Wilson, provided a most fitting anniversary program to commemorate ten years of hard work and worthwhile accomplishments.

—Paul Berry

In Memory

We are saddened to announce the death of charter member Mary C. Dawn, mother of Ralph H. Dwan, Jr., ACLT President, Susan Slaughter, Molly Ellsworth, and Ursula Jaeger. Mrs. Dwan was a strong supporter of ACLT's preservation efforts and made possible the renovations to the building which houses our office.

What's Happening

Amphibian and Reptile Study Completed

Two years ago we were asked by the Wildlife Division of the Department of Natural Resources to participate in a state-wide amphibian and reptile study. We welcomed the DNR's project and were fortunate to be able to also offer a "piggyback" opportunity to CHESPAX, Calvert County's Environmental Education program, so students could visit ACLT's lands and conduct their own study with DNR's equipment.

The study involved setting up drift fences to direct frogs, salamanders, lizards, snakes and turtles into funnel safe traps to be counted. A herpetology intern checked the traps daily from March through July and cataloged his findings. We recently received a preliminary report from Dan Foley, Herpetofauna Atlas Coordinator, that the study was complete and we will be receiving a comprehensive report in January.

The preliminary report counts five different species of frogs and toads with the green frog and spring peeper the most common. The least common were the grey treefrog, bullfrog and wood frog. A few red spotted newts were caught, but the most common of the salamanders was the redback. Lizards either escaped or avoided entrapment with only one five-lined skink and one six-lined racer reported. Of the seven snakes, the northern watersnake was the predominant species, while the eastern box turtle outnumbered the eastern painted turtle nine to one.

While the funnel traps have been removed and stored at Battle Creek Nature Center, hikers can still see the drift fences near the boardwalk. These have been left in place so that CHESPAX students can continue their reptile and amphibian studies. The students also have over 30 bluebird boxes around the fields of the Gravatt tract and Warrior's Rest, giving elementary students a place to conduct on-site nature studies.

Preservation of the Somervell/Turner Property

On November 27 the first tract of the Somervell property was purchased by The Nature Conservancy for later transfer to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. This 193-acre parcel is one of four belonging to Virginia Somervell and her brother, Dr. Thomas Turner and their families. On the same day of settlement, Mrs. Somervell signed an Option for Purchase Agreement for another parcel of 100 or more acres which runs to, or near, Double Oak Road and also guaranteed an easement through a fourth parcel if needed for access. An Option for

Purchase was previously signed by the Turner Family Partnership for their tract of 100+ acres along Parkers Creek and located between the two Somervell parcels. Settlement on this tract will take place after the first of the year.

A fourth parcel, referred to as "Holly Hill" adjoins the boundary of Double Oak Farm and runs north along both sides of Double Oak Road to Dares Beach Road. The plan for protecting this 250+-acre tract is the purchase of an easement by the Department of Natural Resources at a future date. These four parcels will total between 700 and 900 acres.

Working with Mrs. Somervell and Dr. Turner and his family has been a great pleasure. In 1988 member Peter Vogt began writing to Dr. Turner, planting the seed of preservation and outlining possible options. In 1993 Ralph Dwan and Peg Niland of ACLT and then Secretary of DNR Torrey Brown, Mike Nelson, DNR, and Grant Dehart, Director of DNR's Program Open Space met with the Turner Family to begin the process of the state's involvement in the protection of this unique property. Since that time, the negotiations have been in the hands of Steve Bunker of The Nature Conservancy. While the family has always been most pleasant and cooperative, this has been a very complex negotiation involving many individuals and agencies. ACLT expresses its sincere gratitude to Steve Bunker, Grant Dehart and the Somervell/Turner Family. Everyone involved has helped leave a family legacy to be enjoyed forever.

New Board Member Profiles

Joy A. Bartholomew is a resident of Port Republic, Maryland, and is currently the Executive Director of the Estuarine Research Federation. She provides executive functions to this learned scientific society on science and management issues relating to the estuarine and coastal environment. Her immediate prior position was the Director and Senior Associate of the Washington office of the Center for Policy Negotiations where she provided dispute resolution services on various environmental water and coastal resources issues and participated in environmental policy, planning and management activities.

Joy has bachelors' degrees from Florida State University and the University of Florida, and received her masters' degree in Landscape Architecture from the Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge.

James B. Greene is a resident of Annandale, Virginia and is currently the Chairman of Henry's Fork Foundation, a very successful organization which is preserving the headwaters and watershed of the North Fork of the Snake River. Jim recently retired as a Rear Admiral in the United States Navy, having served 31 years of active duty. He was the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations in charge of management of Navy bases. Under Admiral Greene's command, the Navy established its first worldwide environmental office. He was also the program manager of the Aegis Shipbuilding Program for Arleigh Burke class cruisers and destroyers.

Jim is a graduate of Brown University in Rhode Island. He also received a Masters Degree and a Masters of Business Administration from the Navy Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Joy Bartholomew and Jim Greene both bring highly unique qualifications to the ACLT Board of Directors which will serve us well. They are also highly enthusiastic members of the community, who are committed to protecting our forests and croplands in the Parkers Creek watershed.

Welcome New Members

We are very pleased to announce the following members who joined ACLT during 1996. We welcome you all!

Ms. Erin Ambrosino
Ms. Karin Anderson
Ms. Mary B. Atwood
Ms. Joy A. Bartholomew
Dr. Sylvia Batong
Dr. & Mrs. Bruce Beck
Mr. & Mrs. Stanley O. Benning
Ms. Elizabeth K. Bunch
Mr. & Mrs. Michael S. Combs
Mr. & Mrs. Tyler Fadely
Mr. Marvin Green
RADM James Greene (Ret)
Mr. & Mrs. Albert C. Grosvenor
Mr. John H. Harmon III
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Hurt
Ms. Anne C. Johnston
Dr. & Mrs. William Kirwan
Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. Leahy
Mr. & Mrs. John H. Lewis
Ms. Barbara Mason
Mrs. Jeanne Mason
Mr. & Mrs. Kent Mountford
Mr. Kevin Murphy
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Nisonger
Mr. & Mrs. James B. Parker

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Parker
Paul Koska & Brent Hutchinson, Patuxent Architects, Inc.
Dr. Stephen M. Peters
Mr. & Mrs. George Rickel
Mr. Arline Smith Roback
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Sturrock
Mr. Brian Treece
Ms. Sidney B. Welles

Volunteers Maintain Chestnut Arboretum

Just before Thanksgiving, two ACLT members rescued and improved the stand of young chestnut trees across the field from the main gate and parking lot. Dan Boesz reported that he had been walking through the area and noticed that some of the larger trees were straining against the Tubex tubes used to protect newly planted saplings from deer browsing. After a period of a few years, the tubes are supposed to biodegrade and fall away from the tree trunks. In these cases, however, either the trees grew too quickly or the tubes degraded too slowly. Some tubes had been sealed at the bottom by the expanding trunks and had filled with rainwater. Boesz also observed exuberant growth among the shrubs and other underbrush between the rows of trees which, if left unchecked, might threaten the chestnuts.

Boesz proceeded to enlist John Hollowell to assist. The pair cut away the filled Tubex tubes and used the tractor-powered bush hog to cut back the underbrush between the rows. Leslie Starr, Land Management Chair, had previously bush hogged with the Gravely along the rows to provide access to the trees so that the Bohaska family could conduct the annual census of tree size and mortality. The Land Management committee reminds everyone that the burdens of maintenance are great and that volunteers are always appreciated. Call Leslie Starr (410-586-0082 or 410-664-3133) or the ACLT office (410-586-1570) if you can pitch in!

—Carl Fleischhauer



Help Still Needed with Cultural Survey

Matt Reeves, ACLT's contract archaeologist, is still in need of help as he conducts the cultural resources survey within the Parkers Creek watershed. Every Thursday through Sunday, Matt is out digging for clues to the history of this unique area. If you can join him for a day or even a few hours, your help would be appreciated. To find out which site location Matt will be working, please call him at 410-257-2596.

National Land Trust Rally

Several ACLT members traveled to Burlington, Vermont this fall to attend America's largest land conservation conference, the Land Trust Alliance's **Rally '96**. The Land Trust Alliance, established in 1982, is the national umbrella organization of land trusts and provides education, coordination, leadership, and advice for participants in the land preservation movement. The alliance is currently supported by about six hundred and fifty member land trusts as well as by foundations, corporations, and individual donors. ACLT joined the alliance in 1990.

Peg Niland, administrator, Ralph Dwan, board president (accompanied by his wife Mary), and board members Ewing Miller and Leslie Starr were among the more than 1100 attendees at this conference, and all found it extremely worthwhile. (Only Peg's expenses were covered by ACLT; the others were paid for privately.)

The rally opened with a choice of 22 field trips featuring Vermont land protection projects on what all the locals said was the most beautiful fall day of the year: bright blue sky, crisp cool air, and autumn foliage at its peak. The Dwans joined the Vermont Institute of Natural Science for a strenuous hike up Snake Mountain featuring a view of the Champlain Valley. Peg toured three University of Vermont natural areas that are exemplary research and educational sites. Leslie, hoping to learn something about trail maintenance, signed up for the Catamount Trail Work Party and Sterling Falls Gorge Hike, which was billed as a half day each of hiking and trail work. The hike part also turned into trail work, as the morning hikers found that someone had recently done a lot of lopping along the trail but hadn't removed the debris. The afternoon work part was just that. Yours truly wielded a prybar and shovel to remove rocks and gravel from a culvert—a technique not likely to be useful on ACLT trails. That evening the assemblage of mostly

exhausted day trippers was treated to a concert by Paul Winter, noted musician and friend and board member of the Land Trust Alliance. Paul spoke about land preservation and played along with tracks from several of his recordings. The audience was invited to accompany him in wolf howls.

The following two days featured over 80 workshops and 17 roundtable discussions as well as talks, awards, exhibits, auctions, banquets, and a dance with a live blues band, although nothing was scheduled between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. The six workshops sessions were grouped as to topic, and the ACLT delegates for the most part selected different tracks to follow.

Ewing went to consecutive sessions on organizational management. He found them to be excellent and expects what he took from them to be of great value in the preparation for the next Five Year Plan, which has begun. He says that the ACLT scores well in performance to date, but that we are now at a critical point where we must decide our future goals, such as whether to expand or just stop and maintain what we already have. A more mature organization would be more tightly organized, with responsibilities shared by more people and more explicitly specified.

Ralph participated in workshops on fundraising and planning, such as one on what grant-givers are looking for in their applicants. He said that a highlight of the conference was meeting new people and sharing experiences, and indeed, we all felt that we had both much to learn and much to offer in this regard.

Peg went to a diversity of sessions ranging from wetland mitigation to planned giving to complex world of developer easements. She found the day-long post conference on Organizational Development worth the whole trip in itself. Peg appreciated seeing where ACLT fits into the picture with regard to land trusts nationwide, although she feels that similar events organized on a regional level would also be helpful.

I, Leslie, attended mostly workshops on stewardship and conservation science. The Introduction to Restoration Ecology was particularly inspiring and exciting. It dealt with repairing the damage caused by humans to indigenous ecosystems and gave impressive examples of ecosystems rehabilitated by such diverse means as removal of exotic invasives, stream bank stabilization, and altering the water table. A non-stewardship workshop which was also exciting was about a land preservation coalition in Berkshire County, Massachusetts of sportsmen and "environmentalists." These two groups of people realized that their goals with regard to land use are

virtually identical and have become tremendously successful in jointly acquiring land threatened by development.

Although the size of the convention necessitated that activities be spread over three locations, the LTA planners did a great job of arranging schedules and transportation. We were all able to attend as many events as we wished, although it was not possible to be in more than one place at a time. Lunches and dinners were at the Burlington Sheraton and featured topic tables, guest speakers, awards, and a live auction, as well as delicious locally-produced food. The closing evening's event was held at Shelburne Farms, a 1400-acre model protected farm on the shores of Lake Champlain. Scores of local farmers and chefs offered their specialty foods and beverages in the three large tents through which we roamed with small plates for samples. Although it seemed that the first few portions were insufficiently tiny, it soon became apparent that there were plenty of delicious things to try and by the time the music began one was almost but not quite too full to enjoy dancing to the Unknown Blues Band.

—Leslie Starr

Looking Ahead

As mentioned in the presidents report, ACLT is undergoing strategic planning for the future. Under the guidance of Ewing Miller, vice president, board members and special invitees are brainstorming to set the direction of the Trust for the future. In 1992, member Don Dahmann compiled the views of some of our members on ACLT's future which we now are using as one of the sources of guidance in our planning. We share with you this significant document:

The Challenge Before Us: A Vision for ACLT in the 1990's

Responding to the U.S. government's offer to purchase tribal lands, Chief Seattle posed a series of questions in his letter to President Pierce. He asked, "How can you buy or sell the sky and the land? If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Will you teach your children what we have taught our children?—that the earth is our mother?" It is still worth asking these questions.

Today's economic system, derived of those brought to these shores by Europeans, included pricing mecha-

nisms fully capable of addressing Chief Seattle's questions. Starting five years ago, ACLT combined the European-inherited economic system with a typical American do-it-yourself attitude to address some of these questions in Calvert County. When local citizens organized ACLT to purchase the Gravatt property, they declared, formally in legal terms and informally to anyone who would listen, that undeveloped land was a resource with a monetary value. The down payment on those initial 440 acres came directly from our own pocketbooks. Subsequently, we have been able to sell this property's development rights in Calvert County's Agricultural Preservation Program and now own not only the Gravatt property but additional tracts of land.

Since our initial purchase, ACLT has been able to preserve a total of 600 acres in the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds. We have been successful beyond the expectations held by any of us five years ago. In the same period, though, Calvert County has lost 6,000 acres of forest and farmland to development. It has gained more than 8,000 new residents. If the county's population growth rate over the past 20 years continues through the next two decades, Calvert County will have 113,000 resident by 2010 (up from 21,000 in 1970). What open space will remain in 2010 when the settlement density will approach 600 persons per square mile, more than double its current level?

While we all realize that it is impossible to return any portion of Calvert County to pre-European settlement conditions—among other things, we would be excluded—it remains within our grasp to preserve an extraordinary ecosystem that includes cliffs, barrier beaches, salt and freshwater wetlands, and surrounding uplands. That ecosystem is the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds.

Having achieved its initial goals, ACLT is now asking itself if we can make a still greater impact on this corner of the Chesapeake. Significant land preservation opportunities lie immediately at hand, both geographically and temporally, that are so special and mean so much to maintaining the continued diversity of physical environments in Calvert County, that we are again seeking support of people like you to help achieve a sort of "ultimate dream" for the land trust. Our window of opportunity to achieve that dream will close within a very few short years.

What are these new land preservation opportunities, and what do they cost? First the opportunities, because we can quantify them. All of ACLT's property lie within the Parkers Creek watershed to the north and the Governors Run watershed to the south. The Governors Run watershed

is now fairly well protected. Our real challenge, and the truly extraordinary prize in terms of preserving undeveloped land in the local ecosystem, of maintaining land use diversity in Calvert County, and of creating opportunities for all to witness the enormous variety of flora and fauna close at hand, is the remaining portion of the Parkers Creek watershed.

The Parkers Creek watershed, which is roughly defined by Dares Beach Road on the north, Route 2/4 on the west, and Parkers Creek and Scientists' Cliffs Road on the south, accommodates many different forms of human settlement. It includes the Prince Frederick Town Center and a wide variety of residential development and farms. Some of the farms are protected as part of the county's Agricultural Preservation Program. Small segments of additional open space are preserved through the clustering of residential structures in individual developments. Development of the portions within 1,000 feet of mean high tide are restricted by Critical Area legislation. ACLT itself has preserved over 400 acres of the watershed.

The Parkers Creek watershed is the largest and most diverse remaining natural area in Calvert County. The bay-front cliffs themselves, including their contents, are unique in the Atlantic coastal plain. Beyond the cliffs, the jewel of an area contains virtually all the landform elements that are otherwise scattered throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay region—a barrier beach, meandering stream, natural levees, saltmarsh, and freshwater wetlands. All of the wildlife associated with these various habitats, from full time residents to occasional visitors, from crabs, turtles and fish in the water to great blue herons and bald eagles in the air, also live there.

Amazing from the point of view of humans is its ease of access and its apparent wild state. If one travels by canoe the mile or so from, the mouth of Parkers Creek at the bay to the limit of its navigable water, virtually no signs of human habitation exist in the entire viewshed—no houses or building, no contemporary roads—and no sounds except for the occasional airplane. Just you and the rest of nature. Right here, in Calvert County, within an easy drive of over five million human beings. The Parkers Creek watershed is an ecological treasure virtually in our side yard.

Can ACLT expect to preserve the entire remaining open space within the Parkers Creek watershed? Certainly not. Such a task would necessarily involve the cooperation and commitment to landscape preservation of many others and tremendous financial resources. But the ACLT can take the lead.

We accepted a leadership role in land preservation when ACLT was founded. Now, we need to find out how to make the hundred of other pieces or as many as possible fit into place to preserve the Parkers Creek watershed.

Money is a very important piece of the puzzle. How much such a task might take, we really do not know. Our immediate goal is to raise \$500,000 over the next three years, so that we might be in a better position to continue to bid on critical smaller parcels as they come onto the market. This money will again need to come, in large part, from our own pockets. We are planning to appeal to other sources as well—private corporations, Calvert County, the state of Maryland, and both local and non-local foundations. But we must start with ourselves.

One of a Kind

Nature knows no assembly lines

Or duplicates.

Each thing is one-off.

—Jane Klemer

Our challenge is to demonstrate the will of local citizens to express, with their own money, the importance of preserving an environmental asset as valuable as the Parkers Creek watershed. The time to demonstrate our resolve is now. Any chances of success will certainly vanish within only a few years.

—Don Dahmann, 1992

Don and his collaborators not only wrote of a Vision, but had vision. While the window of opportunity to protect land in the Parkers Creek watershed is closing, we have lead the way in meeting the challenge—by our examples of strong leadership, financial commitment, land stewardship, determination to succeed, and rallying the support of others to share in our vision.

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