

American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

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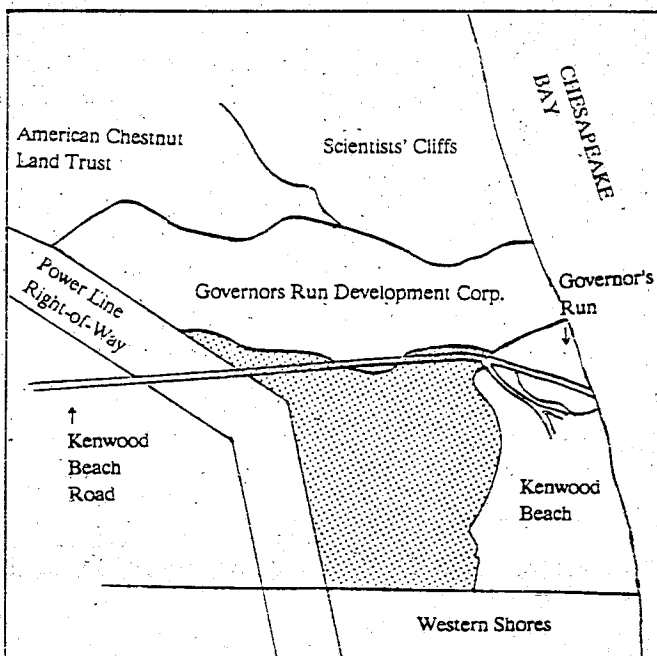
ACLT Makes Offer on 91-Acre Parcel

On Saturday, March 23, a contract was submitted to the owners of a 91.60 acre parcel of land situated just to the west of Kenwood Beach. The rough map below shows the location of the parcel (shaded area) in relation to the surrounding communities and the power line right-of-way. The northern boundary (with the Governor's Run Development Corp.) follows the old road, so the property line wanders across the current Kenwood Beach Road.

This parcel is important in that it is the southernmost portion of the continuous green space running north to Parkers Creek. It is part of the Governors Run watershed, contains a blue-line stream and has a series of ridges and valleys. The entrance road is located in the southeast corner and circles west and then north into the center of the property. The ridges were timbered 2 years ago, leaving a series of logging trails in addition to the main "road" and the opportunity to reforest.

This acquisition (we have verbal assurance that the contract will be accepted) presents the opportunity to work with the residents of the surrounding communities. We have been talking with them since last summer and will seek their support in both the acquisition and the development of a maintenance/use strategy.

—Ralph Dwan



Spring Events

Earth Day Celebration—April 20th

There will be a day of trail clearing and tree planting on Saturday, April 20th, starting at 10 a.m. — or whenever you can get to the main parking lot. John Hollowell will be directing activities. Cookies and lemonade will be on hand, and there will be a short wildflower walk at 2:30 p.m. for all comers. We will visit the new bench by the old Chestnut tree and the new bridge over the stream. Arnold Petty is responsible for these projects.

Also thanks to the efforts of Arnold Petty, most of the trails are in excellent shape. A day's effort should trim them up for the rest of the season.

Spring Bird Count—May 11th

A few determined bird watchers will be trying to survey the bird population in the ACLT on the day of the country-wide Spring bird count. (New ACLT member John Fales is the Calvert County coordinator.) If you would like to help with the ACLT count, record numbers, or just tag along to watch, please call Sue Hamilton at 301-586-1494.

Early Morning Bird Walks

Flocks of early migrants are arriving and some of our winter visitors are gearing up for the flight north. As the season advances, a greater variety of birds is going to be visiting the ACLT. There will be early morning walks (8 a.m.) starting at the main parking lot on Saturday, April 27th and Sunday May 19th.

Tick Season Again

Ticks are a problem in our woodlands from May through September. Remember to wear light clothing, cover up, use insect repellent, and check for ticks when you return home. The deer tick, which can carry Lyme disease, is small—about the size of a sesame seed. A pamphlet on Lyme disease is available from the Arthritis Foundation. Call 703-276-7555.

—The Editors

Notes From the President

The Switzers' Gift

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are," was the theme of a keynote address presented last June at the American Horticulture Society's Annual Meeting in Seattle. ACLT members George and Sue Switzer who attended that meeting thought seriously about what they had back home and what they could do with it and decided to donate a Conservation Easement on their sixteen acres of beautiful woodland property on Scientists' Cliffs Road to the Maryland Environmental Trust and the American Chestnut Land Trust, to be held by them jointly. Under the provisions of the cooperative agreement, the land remains the Switzers' private property, but they now have the assurance that it will be kept in its natural state and protected from further development in perpetuity no matter who might ultimately own the land in the future. We are sure all of our ACLT members will join in the chorus of thanks to the Switzers for their generous gift to the environment *where we are*. Over the next few weeks as you drive along Scientists' Cliffs Road to the Land Trust entrance you will be unable to miss on the right George and Sue's breathtaking azalea gardens ablaze with jewel-like color. You will then be able to fully appreciate the treasure they have saved for all of us.

A New Call to Order

ACLT received another treasure from George Switzer last week—his own hand-crafted gavel of American Chestnut wood from a tree that once stood on a ridge above Frog Pond, one of the trees that had been documented by Flippo Gravatt many years ago. The handsome and hefty gavel was used for the first time on March 23 to call the ACLT Board Meeting to order, the same meeting at which the Cooperative Agreement with the Switzers was officially announced. The gavel will be seen and heard *in perpetuity* at all ACLT Annual Meetings in the future. (George thought it might serve as a better tool when Sam Hughes is not around to whistle.) Thank you, again, George.

A Way to Double Your Money

Many corporations have Matching Gift Programs for their employees and retirees and give grants to match verifiable gifts. ACLT, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, does qualify as a recipient for these matching grant programs. If your donation to ACLT can be matched, we hope you will submit our name to your company's grant program. We will send in the required documentation. One of our "family membership" families who have been doubling their contributions for several years learned about ACLT through the November 1988 National Geographic article and resides in New Jersey.

Chestnut Program Coordinator

Sandy Roberts will be the Coordinator for future ACLT American Chestnut restoration programs and activities. Confidence is increasing among scientists that healthy, productive American Chestnut trees can be restored to the eastern forests, and they are looking to us for our help. Experiments that hold great promise are being conducted by the American Chestnut Foundation and the American Chestnut Cooperators' Foundation through

their associated universities. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is now organizing a State-wide effort to coordinate these programs throughout the Maryland. ACLT is to be a direct participant in that process. Being a scientist is not a prerequisite to help with these activities. Call Sandy at 301-586-1791 if you are interested in working with her.

Call for Volunteers

Throughout this Newsletter there are a number of programs and activities that suggest that volunteers are not only welcome but very much needed. Whether it is outdoor work in seedling and seed planting, marking of boundaries, tree thinning, pruning or brush cutting or indoor work like helping to set up our archive files, helping with special mailings, publicity, the writing of grant proposals or journal articles, photography and video taping, artwork, serving on committees for fund raising, the Annual Meeting or Community Outreach, we need a roster of people we can count on. When shared by many, none of the jobs are onerous. In fact, they are very rewarding. If you have talent in any of the above or are willing to learn, please take a few minutes to call any of the individual Committee members who are appealing to you for help in this newsletter or drop a note to ACLT, Box 204, Port Republic, MD 20676. Please feel free to call Aileen Hughes any time at 301-586-1749.

—Aileen Hughes, President

ACLT Members Attend Regional Conferences and Workshops

Several ACLT members have attended workshops and conferences on topics related to land trust activities this winter. Highlights from their reports follow.

Peter Vogt attended the *American Farmland Trust national conference titled "Saving the Lands That Feed America—Conservation in the 90's"* held in Washington, DC, March 7-8. Peter contributed the following report:

The American Farmland Trust is a national membership organization dedicated to arresting the loss of productive farmland, and to promoting farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. AFT goals include protecting farmland from urbanization, reducing soil erosion and salt buildup, and reducing agriculture's impact on the environment.

I attended workshops dealing with the role of local land trusts, PDR's (Purchased Development Rights), TDR's (Transfer of Development Rights), and Educating America on "Where our food comes from."

The TDR session was packed, as more and more local jurisdictions are introducing this form of clustering. Montgomery County (MD) played a prominent role at the workshop because their program has been around for over 10 years and has saved 15,000 acres. (Actually Calvert County's TDR program, established in 1977, may well be the oldest application of this technique to farmland/forest land preservation in the US.)

One speaker compared TDR programs to "Playboy Centerfolds," alluring but often unattainable. Another speaker emphasized the limitation of public moneys to buy PDR's and praised TDR's as the only way to go: a "Terrific Deal for Rural America."

The bottom line for the ACLT is that although we have lots of laurels growing on our land, now is not the time to be resting on them! Since the formation of our land trust in 1986, over 6000 acres of farm and forest land has been lost to development in Calvert County. More use of TDR's and other clustering techniques could have accommodated the same number of immigrants on a much smaller acreage!

Nationally the statistics are frightening—several million acres of productive crop land are converted to urban/suburban uses each year. This is over 5000 acres per day! Meanwhile the US population grows by 7000 per day, and around the world there are 250,000 new mouths to feed each day. How long can we continue to burn the candle from both ends?

On March 15 Aileen and Sam Hughes participated in the *National Trust for Historic Preservation's Middle Atlantic Regional Meeting*. From Aileen:

The National Trust through its 1991 Program Council is endeavoring to form and strengthen alliances between conservationists, historic preservationists, and community and regional planners to protect America's natural and cultural heritage so that shared goals for stewardship of sensitive and often irreplaceable resources will "be placed on the front burner of the American agenda, alongside environmental pollution, education and economic strength." ACLT was invited to participate along with representatives from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Maryland Environmental Trust and the Land Trust Alliance. While most participants were professionals in their fields, it was rewarding to find ACLT as a grassroots, volunteer organization earning its respect for having addressed the interrelationships of cultural and natural environments through its basic commitments and statement of purpose. Conferences that draw together environmentalists and conservationists with people who are in a position to take action and do something about the shared environmental and cultural concerns are becoming more and more frequent at national, regional and local levels. If any ACLT members would like to be advised of upcoming conferences so they may attend, please call Elaine Cochran, 301-586-0482, or Aileen Hughes, 301-586-1749.

ACLT was represented at this year's *Southern Maryland Forestry Seminar* by Skip and Flo Ford, Nita and John Axley, and Mac and Nedd Fried. The seminar was held in Waldorf, MD, on March 2 and included workshops on "Forest Ecology," "Small Woodlot Management," "Rights, Responsibilities, and Liability of Forest Ownership," "Improving Upland Game Habitat Through Forest Management Practices and Coverts," and "Forestry and Wetlands." Such workshops give ACLT members an opportunity to learn about good land management practices and communicate that information to our committees and volunteers.

It was pointed out at the meeting that Maryland is losing approximately 6,000 acres of forest land each year. 96% of the wood is being harvested without any technical advice, thus compromising the wetlands and endangered species as well as the water and air quality of our state.

One of the workshops attended by John Axley pointed

out the importance marking forest boundary corners. A suggested method is to use white 5" P.V.C. pipe for the corners with the line between pipes shown by blue *oil base* paint applied in 2" x 8" stripes on trees, each within easy sighting distance of each other. This blue marking of trees represents a *legal* fence marking system. John plans to implement this in the near future.

Report of the Land Management Committee

ACLT became a co-sponsor of the Calvert County Tree Planting Program with a donation of \$150. This program, under the direction of Ken Jolly, is an offshoot of the Calvert County Forestry Board. Plantings took place at five sites within the county.

ACLT is the proud owner of a used Massey Ferguson tractor. The purchase price of \$4500 included a new bush hog mower and a new road blade. An additional \$700 was spent to bring it up to first class condition. We now can now mow and repair our roads and trails using volunteers.

Once again, our thanks to Arnold Petty for the much needed bridge connecting the yellow trail to the 100 year old Chestnut Tree trail. With the help of Dan Boesz, Arnie also installed a drain pipe and filled low spots with gravel, making the trail passable even in wet weather.

If you come across fallen trees or limbs across a trail or branches threatening to fall, *do not cut them yourself*. Please call either John Hollowell (301-586-0545) or Sue Hamilton (301-586-1494) and they will see that the problem is taken care of.

—John Hollowell

News From the Outreach Committee

The first meeting sponsored by ACLT in the winter Public Library Series attracted 25 people. Carl Fleischhauer deftly directed the panel of four on "Southern Maryland Farm Culture." The second meeting in the series, "Forming a Land Trust," attracted a blue-ribbon group of 29 participants from Anne Arundel, Charles and Calvert Counties. Included were representative from three other Land Trusts, Charles County government, Maryland Environmental Trust, Nature Conservancy and at least four other citizen groups. Honest questions received substantive answers from the experts, including Ralph Dwan, Gary Loew, and Aileen Hughes.

Coming Up. Again we are offering scholarships to the Maryland Summer Centers for Gifted and Talented Students in any one of several environmental programs. A sixth grade class from Appeal Elementary School has been invited to visit the property because of their contribution to the ACLT from the proceeds of a recycling project.

On April 20th ACLT will host a booth at King's Landing in celebration of Earth Day. Contact Aileen Hughes (301-586-1749) to volunteer.

Wanted: It would be very helpful if we had a Action Chairman for Legislative Affairs so that we can keep abreast of important legislation affecting environmental issues in Maryland and possibly testify before appropriate legislative committees. Let us know if you can be of help.

—Elaine Cochran

Spring Time Line

A small band of local naturalists recorded their observations during their Spring hikes in the ACLT. Aileen Hughes has put these notes in a spreadsheet, so that we will be able to compare data from year to year. Please leave a note of your observations and don't stop with May. The following calendar has been created from last year's notes.

Third Week of March:

- Spring Beauties Blooming near streams
- Bluebirds Choosing Nest box
- Woodcocks Courting at dusk
- Spring Peepers Chorusing

Fourth Week of March:

- Tree Swallows and Purple Martins return
- Bloodroot blooms
- Mayapples sprout
- First butterflies appear

First week of April:

- Jack-in-the-pulpits coming up
- Bamboo sprouting
- Rue Anemone in flower
- Chipping Sparrows return
- Some early warblers can be seen (Parula, Black and White)

Second week of April:

- Cinquefoil blooming
- Fiddleheads up
- Mayapples blooming
- Morels pop up

- Kinglets flitting through the pine trees
- Palm warblers migrate through
- Ovenbird (also a warbler) returns
- Catbird is back

Third week in April:

- Strawberries in bloom
- Wood Thrush and Gnatcatcher return
- Many warblers back: Louisiana Waterthrush by stream edge, Common Yellowthroat by swamp, Prairie Warbler on edge of field
- White-eyed Vireo returns

Fourth week in April:

- Lady slippers bloom in pine woods
- Showy Orchis blooms by stream
- House Wren stops by
- Scarlet Tanager and Red-eyed Vireo advertise their presence
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird returns
- Great Crested Flycatcher calling

First week in May:

- Indigo Bunting, Kentucky Warbler, Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher back

Second week in May:

- Warbler waves migrating through
- Blue Grosbeak returns

Third week in May:

- Chuck-will's-widow, Whippoorwill, Yellow Billed Cuckoo

Fourth week in May:

- Wild Strawberries ready to pick!

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