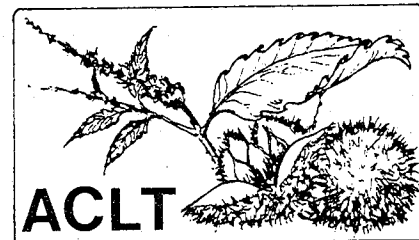


American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Post Office Box 204

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NEWSLETTER

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Editors: Ellen and David Farr

Spring 1992

ACLT Receives National Recognition

ACLT was honored on Capitol Hill at the *Saluting Success* Reception held February 26, in the Senate Caucus Room of the Russell Office Building. Over 150 programs from Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, received national recognition as part of Renew America's Searching for Success initiative. Receiving the award on behalf of ACLT was Aileen Hughes, president, who was accompanied by Sam Hughes and Ralph Dwan.

Searching for Success recognizes programs and projects that work and brings people and communities together to share and build upon environmental success. In cooperation with hundreds of state and local organizations, successful environmental programs from across the country are identified and verified as to their effectiveness, financial feasibility, and replicability. In turn, program information is made available to help governmental officials, business and community leaders, grassroots groups, and individuals take action to reproduce or improve upon these programs.

Featured speakers at the event included Senator Albert Gore; Representative Sherwood Boehlert; and Representative Constance Morella, a new member of ACLT. Searching for Success is coordinated by Renew America, a nonprofit environmental organization based in Washington, D.C., which identifies, rewards, and shares information on model environmental programs across the country.

ACLT will be listed in the 1991 *Environmental Success Index*, a directory of over 1200 nationally verified and recognized environmental success stories. Congratulations to everyone—you're a member of a winning team!

Message from the President

In February, I was honored to be appointed to the Calvert County Planning Commission by the County's Board of Commissioners for a five year term. I am sure my being considered for this position is directly attributable to my long-standing involvement with the American Chestnut Land Trust. I think, too, it also signals a recognition on the part of the County Commissioners and the Office of Planning and Zoning of our commitment, both mine and ACLT's, to the preservation of the rural landscape and our willingness to turn our energies and resources toward it. I was quoted correctly when it was said I considered this opportunity

to serve as "wonderful." I hope the ACLT membership join me in that assessment.

The County now stands at a crossroads. Intense pressures for growth are upon us, and unless we, the citizens of this County, engage in cooperative and thoughtful planning, we will be in danger of losing

forever too much of forest and farmland that has made our County unique and so desirable—a place to live, work and play. We have learned through the recent series of public meetings, climaxed by the County sponsored charrette (reported on elsewhere in this newsletter) that we are not alone in our desire to maximize green space by clustering homes, creating villages, increasing close-to-home recreational opportunities, directing growth toward town centers and recognizing the viable farm as a valuable economic asset to Calvert County. Achieving these visions for the year 2010 presents both a challenge and a positive goal. I do indeed think it is "wonderful" to be directly involved and even more so to be working in concert with so many others.

ACLT to Sponsor Kenwood Beach Cleanup-Rally on May 3

On Sunday, May 3, starting around 11:00 a.m., men, women, and children of the communities of Western Shores, Kenwood Beach, Governors Run, and Scientists' Cliffs are invited to help with the clean-up of the roadsides and trails of the ACLT Kenwood Beach property between Western Shores and Governors Run Road, east of the B G & E power lines. There will be bags provided for the collection of trash and pickup trucks to haul heavy stuff to the land fill. At an appropriate time and place where we can all assemble there will be hot dogs, sodas, and beer for the workers.

This will be a good opportunity to get to know one another and share visions for the future use of this land. Look for more details in the rally flyers soon to be distributed in your community. Signs to direct you to various rallying points will be posed. We need volunteers for logistics, head counts (for refreshments), and trash bag distribution. Bring the grocery variety along

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with you as you walk toward the collection sites. Call the ACLT office number (410-535-1570) if you can help. You may leave a message day or night. See you there!

Naturalists' News

Bird Survey

In January I started a "Point Count" to survey the birds of the ACLT. To do this I marked 15 spots on a two-mile loop walk, covering as many different habitats as possible. Since the best time for monitoring bird activity is early morning, I tried to start within an hour of sunrise. For those who might consider tagging along, this now means by 7 a.m. at the latest.

January's count started in snow, with the temperature just above freezing. Almost immediately I flushed a covey of quail, and, as I stood counting woodpeckers down by the swamp, a loud "Who cooks for you, who cooks for you-all!" advertised the presence of a Barred Owl. February's count was done on a cloudy day, enlivened by the piping of spring peepers. By March the Pine Warblers had returned from southern parts, so their rich trills emanated from every stand of evergreens. Spring Beauties and Toothwort were already in flower, and the green knobs of Mayapple were pushing through the leaf mold beside the trail. A Mourning Cloak butterfly flew slowly across the trail. (These butterflies over winter as adults, under bits of bark, so they can take advantage of warm moments in winter and sally forth.)

By the beginning of April, protected ravine hill-sides should be covered with the large delicate blooms of the Bloodroot. Jack-in-the-pulpit and Dutchmen's Britches will follow, and, by the end of the month, Showy Orchis will flower by the stream edges. Ladyslippers can be found in the uplands, under the pines. At the same time, some of us will be out prowling the woods for morels, those delicious and ugly wild mushrooms. Most of the birds which spend the winter in South and Central America will return between April 15th and May 5th. During this time, too, some of those whose breeding grounds are in the north woods will also come through our woods. The colorful warblers are a challenge to spot, and every year I hope to find a species stopping here that I haven't seen before.

If you are interested in helping with the bird survey, please call (410-586-1494). No experience needed--its a good opportunity to learn the local bird calls.

—Sue Hamilton

May 9 Bird Count

The Spring Migratory Bird Count will take place on May 9 (all day). Contact Sue Hamilton (410-586-1494) for details

Butterfly List

John H. Fales, a retired entomologist living in Neeld Estate (Plum Point), has compiled a list of approximately 120 butterflies that can be found from the Western Shore of Southern Maryland northward to the Largo area in Prince Georges County and the South

River in Anne Arundel County. For a copy of this inventory, please call the ACLT office at 410-587-1570. A limited supply will be placed in the gate registration box at the ACLT parking lot this spring.

Mr. Fales has been surveying and collecting butterflies in this area for many years. Flag Ponds has a display of butterflies he has collected from the park and the Battle Creek Nature Center has a display of his Calvert County butterflies.

ACLT Creatures Featured in Maryland Calendar

Land Trust members who do not own the 1992 *Maryland's Rare and Endangered Species and Habitats* calendar produced by the Maryland Natural Heritage Program (a part of the State Department of Natural Resources) may not know that the ACLT's sweet pine-sap (*Monotropis odorata*) is featured for the month of November.

The photo was taken on ACLT land, which hosts the only known living population of this plant in the state. These exquisite Natural Heritage calendars are produced annually and feature photographs of Maryland's rare and endangered plants and animals. Also featured in the 1992 calendar (September) is the endangered Northeastern beach tiger beetle (*Cicindela dorsalis dorsalis*) which lives along the Calvert Cliffs shore just east of the present ACLT. The Natural Heritage calendar can be purchased from DNR.

Outreach Committee

There is good news and bad news from the Outreach Committee. The good news is that ACLT has awarded four \$50.00 U.S. Savings Bonds to Science Fair winners. The winners are Adam Cohee and Christopher Jones of Northern Middle School and Timothy Mortimore and Jonathan Carnahan of Northern High School. All four projects were in the field of environmental science.

Another piece of good news is that ACLT will sponsor a student to attend a week-long summer camp for area high school students at the Elms Environmental Education Center in St. Mary's County. The camp is sponsored by the Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Board; the Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Soil Conservation Districts; and local businesses. Students are screened by a committee comprised of an RC & D board member, a District board member, a Tri-County Council board member, and the science supervisor from each of the southern Maryland counties. Eleven students will be selected from each of the three counties. A student from Calvert will be sponsored by ACLT. The main curriculum is geared toward environmental consciousness. We look forward to hearing from a young participant in this program.

The bad news is that the summer program for Gifted and Talented students has been dropped for this year. The budget crunch has led to the curtailment of many programs in Maryland and this is one of them. We had planned to sponsor five students so this is a real

disappointment to us. Let's hope this program will be revived once the economy picks up.

—Elaine Cochran and Margaret Young

Worst Suspicions/Pleasant Surprises

Bombarded daily with bad news about social and environmental problems and burdened with our own backlog of experience, many of us have become conditioned to expect the worst. But sometimes this leads to pleasant surprises. Two vignettes involving birds and ACLT land illustrate this.

Last October I took Dr. David Brownlee, the Country Environmental Planner, on a canoe trip up Parkers Creek. On the way back down the creek, I caught sight of a prominent blob of white on the Russell Tract (ACLT) bank of the stream. A milk bottle, I thought disgustedly, or a chunk of styrofoam. But then, an instant later, the styrofoam attached itself to something brownish back and flapped into the air. It was a bald eagle!

It was already dark on Saturday, March 14, when I received a call from the Administrator of Scientists Cliffs. He had received alarming reports about numerous cars parked in the ACLT parking area. Troublemakers, perhaps, swilling booze and snorting coke? The police might have to be called, and think of the negative publicity! My heart sank. Then it occurred to me (and I called Carl Fleischhauer for confirmation): The cars belonged to ACLT bird enthusiasts, led by Sue Hamilton, eavesdropping on the Land Trust's woodcocks performing their bizarre mating dance in the dusky sky. Only the woodcocks were high!

—Peter Vogt

[*Ed. Note: Ten ACLT members found the woodcocks plentiful. Carl Fleischhauer reported seeing woodcocks as early as February. They might still be seen at dawn or dusk in the area near the ACLT parking lot.*]

Free Trees Now Available to Critical Areas Landowners

If you or someone you know are owners of land within Calvert County's critical area—that is within 1000 feet of the tidal waters of Chesapeake Bay, the Patuxent River and their tributaries—you may be eligible to have native Maryland trees and shrubs of your choice planted free of charge on your property through your participation in the Calvert County Critical Areas Reforestation Evaluation program (CARE). Applications are available from the office of Environmental Planner David Brownlee in the Office of Planning and Zoning, 535-2348, in the Courthouse Annex. For more detailed information, call Kenneth Jolly, Project Forester, 535-1303. New trees planted under the CARE program replace trees in the critical area that are lost through construction of homes and commercial property, decks, patios, pools, tennis courts, driveways or roads. The Committee's goal is 100% replacement of lost trees. The critical areas landowner who must remove trees and is unable to replace them on his own property, must pay a pro-rated amount into the refor-

estation fund to allow for an equivalent number of trees or shrubs to be planted elsewhere in the critical areas. For this first planting season twenty-six acres of free trees are now being planted. CARE is an on-going program with plantings scheduled for both Spring and Fall each year. The trees are nursery stock, professionally planted by the local nurseries awarded the contracts through accepted County bidding processes. Standard nursery guarantees for survival are in effect. The landowner is asked to provide reasonable care and to allow the trees to grow undisturbed for at least ten years. John Axley, our Forestry Management Chair, is the ACLT's designated representative on the CARE Committee.

The Charrette

"Charrette." Its not a word many of us know, and now ACLT has been involved in one. No, we were not in a cart, which those of you who know French might be thinking. We were part of an "intensive brainstorming session involved in defining problems and coming up with solutions." Nine hours of one, and glad to be a part of it too.

At the invitation of Calvert County's Department of Planning and Zoning, ACLT sent representatives to a charrette on Saving Calvert County's Farmland and Rural Character, held on 27 February 1992 at the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center. Convened under the auspices of the Board of County Commissioners and the County Planning Commission, the charrette's function was to define a vision for the future of Calvert County's countryside; begin to address problems in achieving that vision; and to suggest acceptable solutions to achieving the vision.

What a task! But what a group to tackle it! Professors from the University of Maryland's School of Architecture served as neutral third-party facilitators. The county's planning staff, Environmental Protection Committee, and consultants knowledgeable both in Calvert County's situation and in steps taken by other localities to manage population growth and rapid change, made top notch presentations defining the county's current-and prospective situation. Interest groups within the county were represented by citizen's associations, developers, land trusts, Commissioners present and past, farmers, low-income housing, the press, you name it—a total of about 100 persons I would judge.

What did we do? We listened to background material; we discussed; we talked to each other; we listened to position papers; we made suggestions; and we talked some more. We talked in small groups that the facilitators from the University of Maryland kept on track. These discussions often became emotional, with perhaps the strongest emotions coming from life-long citizens; those who have experienced the largest quantity of changes. We talked in large groups. We talked straight through lunch—a nice buffet set up out of doors. We talked straight through coffee breaks—with wonderful Scandinavian breads. For nine hours we did this.

At the end of an exhausting but seeming not so very long day, a strong consensus opinion was reported from the entire group—the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Commission were charged with preserving the rural character of the county, which is threatened by both current and prospective effects of a rapid increase in the number of residents and their distribution.

The challenge of managing the expected increases in the number of new residents while maintaining the county's rural character is tremendous, but participants spoke with essentially one voice in saying that the attempt must be made. Perhaps the most amazing thing about the charrette was not the conclusion, which I would not have anticipated before hand, but the extraordinary unanimity among participants on preserving, in one way or another, as many surviving elements of the county's rural countryside as possible.

Developing and implementing the means to accomplish this task for the entire county is up to others, on other days. For the one day of the charrette, it was inspiring enough to hear others commend ACLT for its successful and visionary effort in the larger task. It was also inspiring to learn just how many people are working hard to achieve a common vision for the county's future. What a charrette! If you are every asked to participate in one, I highly commend the experience. May this one have a lasting impact!

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Another perspective on the charrette may be gained from a Washington Post article, "Calvert County Focuses on Growth, Land-Use Issues," which appeared on Saturday 21 March 1992. It was written by Roger K. Lewis, who was one of the event's facilitators. We will keep you posed as this process evolves.

—Donald Dahmann for Peter Vogt and
Gary Loew, ACLT Representatives

Photo Contest Applications Available

Photo Contest applications are being made available through the public schools, libraries and other public meeting places throughout the County as well as the ACLT office (410-586-1570). Submissions should "capture an essential aspect of the County." There are three categories: The Natural Landscape, The Historical Landscape, and Pictures by Young People.

