

**American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.**  
**Post Office Box 204**  
**Port Republic, MD 20676**

# NEWSLETTER

**Volume 8 – Number 1**

Editors: Ellen and David Farr

**Winter 1994**

## Annual Report

Most organizations issue an annual report which frequently is a slick and glossy review complete with graphs and pictures, so it seems that we should try to recapture ACLT activities in 1993 in some form. Since the newsletter is how we communicate with our membership at large, in addition to the annual meeting, I will give it a try and you will be the judge of its usefulness.

The year began with operations finally based in an office of our own, the refurbished Gate A house at the entrance to Scientists' Cliffs just across the road from the ACLT parking lot. Now we had a place to meet, to keep records, and to be available for those interested in learning about ACLT.

1993 also started with an experiment. Our administrator, Peg Niland, had been working half-time for us, which was difficult on both sides. She needed full-time employment and we realized that ACLT would soon no longer have a "full-time" volunteer president. The experiment involved her working for ACLT 40 hours per week in January through March and October through December, and then 20 hours per week April through September while she did a temporary assignment with the County. I don't know how she did it, but the experiment was by all accounts a success for both ACLT and the County. It also had an important side effect of building bridges between the private and public sectors of Calvert County.

By the end of the year, we could confidently report to the World Wildlife Fund on the efforts made under its grant establishing the Parkers Creek Project to contact landowners and share information on conservation options. While the only green space preserved in 1993 was the Wallace/Showalter tract, no small achievement after four years of trying, WWF was impressed with the groundwork done in the Parkers Creek Watershed and released the balance of the grant. The ACLT Board renewed its commitment to this project by adopting a 1994 budget to fund the Administrator's position on a full-time basis.

There were many significant events that occurred during the year, which have been reported in the previous newsletters, such as the four-community spring cleanup and picnic, the major progress made in

land management projects and the best ever annual meeting. But our participation in the workplace giving programs as a member of the Environmental Fund for Maryland deserves special comment. ACLT was one of the nineteen environmental organizations that joined together to establish the Fund, and we participated for the first time in the 1993 Combined Federal Campaign. We hope that this effort will produce a steadily increasing support base for ACLT, as well as the opportunity to educate the public about the importance of environmental issues and the work done by ACLT and other member organizations.

—Ralph Dwan, President

## Financial Report

This report is the work of the out-going treasurer, since David Farr and I agreed that it would be most fair that he assume responsibility at the beginning of a new fiscal year (January 1). Annie Moore has graciously agreed to maintain the payroll records and Joe Nisonger is willing to serve again as chair of the Finance Committee. Phelps and Rymer will perform the audit of the 1993 financial records. With this lineup, I am confident that we will continue the record of fiscal responsibility established by Gary Loew.

The accounts for 1993 printed below indicate that ACLT had an excellent year. Under a new County initiative, we were able to sell ten TDRs, which will be retired from the market. Another plus on the income side was an arrangement with BG&E to provide access for them to timber the area required by the third power line in exchange for the right to sell the wood. Besides those two income

### Board of Directors

Ralph H. Dwan, Jr., President  
Peter Vogt, Vice President  
Paul Berry, Secretary  
David Farr, Treasurer  
Stephen M. Bunker  
Carl Fleischhauer  
Florence W. Ford  
Ed Green  
Leslie Starr  
Charlene Sturbitts  
John Mark Switzer  
Caroline E. Van Mason  
June Whitson  
Margaret Young

items, income still exceeded expenses due to the level of contributions generated in large part by the pledge campaign which Aileen Hughes initiated in 1992. Membership dues also exceeded budget, thanks to the work of that committee, and progress was made in identifying additional sources for grants.

On the expense side, there will be some reduction when the cost of equipment (computer) is capitalized. The line-item for land management reflects major projects undertaken by that committee and a substantial outlay for forestry management. Most other categories were within budget, except for tractor repair costs and the annual dues for membership in the Environmental Fund of Maryland.

As we move into 1994, the ACLT Board is committed to paying operating expenses, as far as possible, from dues, contributions, and grants, so that unrestricted reserves, as well as funds so restricted and our "bank" of development rights, can be available for future land acquisition.

#### ACLT ACCOUNTS 1993

##### Income

Membership Dues	8,725.00
Contributions	26,493.00
Interest Earned	3,929.00
Merchandise Sales	512.00
Timber Sales	4,028.00
Development Rights	23,337.00
Grants	16,800.00
Miscellaneous Income	<u>42.00</u>
Total Income	\$83,866.43

##### Expenses

Land Management	4,030.56
Land Acquisition/Preservation	0.00
Outreach	1,065.48
Land Purchase Cost	586.00
Land Survey	1,900.00
Legal	0.00
Accounting	1,600.00
Insurance	1,859.00
Meetings/Training	1,147.94
Printing and Publication	1,460.13
Postage and Shipping	1,110.35
Supplies	843.70
Equipment Maint. and Operation	2,998.90
Dues/Subscriptions	2,385.00
Fundraising	27.32
Bank Charges	217.02
Cost of Merchandise	473.70
Telephone	698.00
Taxes	45.31
Occupancy	1,653.26

Salary and Benefits	23,778.52
Misc. Expenses	<u>3,843.25</u>
Total Expenses	51,723.54

#### BALANCE SHEET (12/31/93)

##### Assets

CB & T Checking	1,490.80
CB & T Savings	55,397.55
Loyola Federal	8,360.74
Maryland National	9,375.94
Petty Cash	50.00
Equipment	10,752.19
Land	<u>499,961.38</u>
Total Assets	575,388.60

##### Liabilities/Fund Balances

Liabilities	0.00
Fund Balances	
Restricted	9,000.00
Unrestricted	<u>566,388.60</u>
Total Liabilities/ Fund Balances	575,388.60

#### Trail News

The ACLT trail system will be the focus of several projects this year. Perhaps the most ambitious of these is an undertaking to revise the map and trail guide. It is still undecided exactly what format the guide will ultimately take, as there is probably more information about the trail system than can fit on a single page of paper. Possibilities include having a map similar to the one currently in use but updated with more information, having a different map for each trail, and having a very inclusive and informative trail system guide book which would be offered for sale. Suggestions regarding the format of this map/trail guide are welcome. Especially welcome is information anyone would wish to contribute about the trails or features thereon, such as alternate trail or area names (Garbage Dump Trail, Ghost Hill), and historical or anecdotal stories about the land. Suggestions about this project may be sent to the ACLT office or to Mark Switzer or Leslie Starr.

Other trail system work will be physical, and visible even to those not availing themselves of the map and trail guide. Because the state suggests that property boundaries be marked in blue, what is now the blue trail will be repainted, probably purple. All of the paint blazes marking the different trails are in the process of being refreshed for better visibility.

Finally, the green trail, previously unmarked, is being established on the east (105-acre) tract. This trail will begin at the large oak tree adjacent to

Weems' Eastview Farm driveway and will following the existing path for awhile before diverging onto an old trace road. After meeting the Steve Easter Trail, the green trail will double back to a new trail through the woods just southeast of and parallel to Scientists' Cliffs Road. This quasi-boundary trail will roughly follow the property line behind three houses in order to close the loop without requiring travel on the road. A green trail spur will lead from the ACLT main entrance along the northwest side of Scientists' Cliffs Road to the trail head at the large oak tree.

Obviously, work on the trail system will never be complete, especially as we continue to acquire more property. It is hoped that the projects just described will facilitate use of the ACLT trails and enhance everyone's enjoyment of the land

### **Earth Day '94**

Plans are underway for the third annual four-community cleanup which will be held on Saturday April 23. This year there will be two large dumpsters—one on ACLT property on Scientists Cliffs Road and another at Governors Run. After the 9 a.m. to 12 noon cleanup, we will gather at the picnic tables at Governors Run for hot dogs, chips, cookies, sodas, and socializing. We look forward to perfect weather and lots of participation in this popular event. *Mark your calendars now for April 23.*

### **Hunting the Northernmost Cypress**

Fall is hunting season—even if the “game” is Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). I had heard some years ago that the Horse Swamp stream, the biggest south-flowing tributary of Parkers Creek, harbored a few of these fascinating “southern” trees. Last year Kenneth Michael had shown Peg Niland and me one large, old cypress on his 140-acre tract which adjoins Horse Swamp. Others were known farther upstream on the Turner-Somervell property. The fact that these trees are farther north than the famous Battle Creek Cypress Swamp made our search especially interesting, particularly since ACLT and other organizations hope the Horse Swamp stream watershed would someday become part of a larger Parkers Creek Nature Sanctuary. Of course we had the landowner's permission to “hunt” on their land.

Accompanying me and Peg Niland on this almost hot November day was Dwight Williams, chief of Calvert County's Natural Resources

Division—which includes Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Sanctuary. Dwight parked his pickup near the highest point on the old Turner farm (Holly Hill), just south of Dares Beach Road. Holly Hill, owned by Mrs. Virginia Turner Somervell, straddles an “interfluve,” with rain falling on the northern part of the farm draining northward across Dares Beach Road and into the headwaters of Calvert's largest stream, Hunting Creek, and thence into the Patuxent. Rain falling on the south of Holly Hill Farm drains into the Horse Swamp stream, and thence via Parkers Creek into the Chesapeake Bay.

Following the latter “rainwater route” we first passed an ancient log barn and then crossed Holly Hill's largest field, farmed in recent years by Wilson Freeland. We then descended through the woods into the Horse Swamp stream valley. Working our way down this narrow, flat-floored wetland valley, we scanned the woods for that familiar shredded, reddish-brown bark, the feathery, still-green canopy, and the unique knees which easily distinguish this tree from all others. Among the many interesting trees we discovered enroute was an old beech, with the faded inscription “WEF Jr.”, on the Freeland side of the stream valley. Only a month later the man who long ago inscribed the initials, Victor E. Freeland, was to lose his battle with cancer, so the old beech tree can now serve as a poignant memorial to a man whom the ACLT honored just last year for preserving his bay front “Whitecliff Farm” for the ages by TDR sale.

Every ACLT member knows about the Battle Creek cypresses just a few miles west of the land trust. This stand is one of the northernmost in the US, barely edged out by a stand on the Eastern Shore. But are the Battle Creek trees the northernmost in our area? Some Bald Cypresses grow on Theodore Roosevelt Island in DC, but we won't count trees known to have been planted. The current ACLT also harbors a few cypresses at the old “Frog Pond,” but these ca. 40-year-old trees were likewise planted—by the land's previous owner, G. F. Gravatt, who was instrumental in helping The Nature Conservancy make Battle Creek one of its first preserves.

Two hours of bushwhacking finally turned up three widely separated Bald Cypresses—two in the east-trending upper portion of the Horse Swamp stream valley (Turner-Somervell property), and the Kenneth Michael tree farther downstream. While acknowledging the difficulty of “dating” cypresses, Dwight estimated one of the specimens in the 50–100-year range, and the other two perhaps 200 to 250 years, comparable to the older Battle Creek

trees. Off the beaten path, the Horse Swamp cypresses looked like they had sprouted there naturally, although the work of some long-dead “Johnny Cypress Seed” can never wholly be discounted. (As Mitzi Poole pointed out, we can’t even *prove* that the Battle Creek trees aren’t descended from some brought in by Indians!)

Three cypresses don’t make a cypress swamp, but the Horse Swamp trees, located near 38°33' N do beat out their Battle Creek cousins in the latitude race. There is one old Bald Cypress farther north, off Lottie Fowler Road in the Hunting Creek watershed, but this tree is close to the road and therefore more likely planted. Call ACLT or the Cypress Swamp if you know of any other old cypresses farther north in our area. Such botanical outposts are more than curiosities—they may harbor special genetic adaptations (in this case to colder climate), and therefore contribute to biodiversity.

—Peter Vogt

## Outreach Programs

ACLT will participate again this year in the Calvert County Science Fair on Saturday March 5 with several members volunteering to judge. Four \$100.00 savings bonds will be awarded to winners in the Environmental Science category. This type of community/school cooperation has been extremely valuable to students and very satisfying to ACLT members.

The Envirothon is another program for young people to which we contribute each year. This is sponsored by the local Conservation District. We believe there are no more rewarding programs for outreach than those where we can reach out to the young people of our community.

ACLT was brought to the attention of many county and state residents as members tended the tables with our maps and display at the County Fair in September and PRAD in October. We plan to do it again this year with our new colorful 4 by 8-foot banner, “Calvert County Land Trusts” on display.

Some of our members have been guest speakers at various programs. If you are a member of a group that would be interested in what ACLT has accomplished, please contact our office (410-586-1570).

—Margaret Young

## Please Sign In!

Many of our members take advantage of our trails through daily walks, weekends only or just occasionally. Some walk strictly for health reasons,

some to see birds, wildlife or the variety of growth in a forest and others just for peace and quiet. Whenever you visit, for whatever reason, we need to know who you are, where you’re from and how often you “take to the trails.”

Why? Our request is not to be intrusive but to give us the information we need for some very important reasons:

*Future trail planning.* The number of visitors and their place of origination assist us in placement of future trails. The reason you walk and the sightings you report helps us select the terrain, length of trail and level of difficulty.

*Maintenance.* Certain trails require more rest stops, stream crossings and erosion control. Some specific maintenance can only be done certain times of the year.

*Grant Proposals.* Funding for many of our programs and projects comes from foundations that want to know the number of our visitors and the geographic regions we serve.

So you can see, reliable and verifiable information is essential to us. In addition, the sign in sheets give you a quick method to let us know of problems on the trails and advises other visitors of sightings of interest to them. *Please help us to better serve you — sign in!*

## Revised Rules and Regulations

After six years of land management experience, the increase in our land holdings to 647 acres and the growing popularity of our trails, have prompted the Board of Directors to approve the following revised ACLT Rules and Regulations. Please familiarize yourself with the changes and share them with your family and invited guests. The most notable change is that we must now require all dogs to be kept on leashes.

1. **All visitors are requested to please sign in at ACLT main trail entrance.** Access to ACLT property is limited to a) individuals or small groups (10 or fewer persons); and b) larger groups for educational field trips upon prior written permission from ACLT.
2. Property is closed from dusk (1/2 hr. after sunset) to dawn (1/2 hr. before sunrise) except for camping (see 3).
3. Camping is permitted only through the ACLT Camping Program. Contact ACLT office for Camping Program details (written permission required).

4. Hunting is permitted only through the ACLT Deer Harvest Program. Contact ACLT office for Hunting Program details (written permission required).
5. No firearms, explosives or flammables on property. No hunting, camping or fires except as individually approved above (see 3 & 4).
6. No possession or consumption of alcohol or other drugs on property. No one under the influence of alcohol or other drugs permitted.
7. No trail bikes, snowmobiles or other motorized vehicles allowed.
8. No motorized vehicles are permitted beyond designated parking areas with the exception of emergency vehicles and ACLT-sanctioned work crews.
9. No dumping or littering. No introduction of plant or animal specimens or species without written permission from ACLT.
10. No collecting or removal of anything including firewood without written permission from ACLT.
11. Dogs may not run loose; they must be on leash at all times.
12. Stay away from wells, dumps and structures, abandoned or not, unless specifically involved in an approved Land Management Committee project.
13. Please stay on trails and minimize noise.
14. Report violations to ACLT office (586-1570) or police (dial 911).
15. All persons visiting ACLT property do so at their own risk.
16. While visiting and *after* you leave ACLT property, be sure to take precautions that will protect you from harmful tick bites.

### Welcome New Members

Since our last published list of members in our summer newsletter and the start of our membership drive, 42 new names have joined our rolls. We welcome you all and thank you for your support!

Dr. and Mrs. James W. Axley  
 Rev. Msgr. John B. Brady  
 Mr. and Mrs. Randolph F. Caldwell, Jr.  
 Mr. and Mrs. Carl Clewlow  
 Ms. M. Susan Cole  
 Mr. and Mrs. Gautum Datta  
 Mr. and Mrs. Rex Davis  
 Mr. and Mrs. Reed Dixon  
 Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Ebenreck  
 Mr. James A. Edmonds  
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael Ellwood  
 Mr. and Mrs. David T. Fedderly  
 Mr. and Mrs. Martin Firth  
 Mr. and Mrs. P. M. Hildebrandt

Mrs. Helen Hornby  
 Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Ireland  
 Ms. Diana F. Jacquot  
 Mr. Freeman Johnston  
 Ms. Elizabeth L. Johnston  
 Mr. and Mrs. William D. Johnston, III  
 Gay Ludington and Bill Seabrook  
 Ms. Marian G. MacLeod  
 Mr. and Mrs. Eugene McHugh  
 Mr. Johnathan A. McKnight  
 Lee G. McKnight  
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Menefee  
 Mr. Don Mighell  
 Mr. and Mrs. Mark J. Ostrowski  
 Mr. and Mrs. John C. Parker, Sr.  
 Ms. Mary C. Plaine  
 Lieut. Brett N. Raynor, USN  
 Mr. Alistair E. Ritchie  
 Mr. and Mrs. James Samaschin  
 Mr. Richard E. Simpkins  
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Simon  
 Mr. Donald A. Steiner  
 Nancy Gardner and Jim Switzer  
 Mr. and Mrs. Shahram Taginya  
 Ms. Nancy R. Vesper  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wyant  
 New Corporate Members:  
 Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Porter  
 Writing Consultants & Applied Decision Resources  
 Kenneth A. Michael  
 The Michael Companies

### Our Special Storm Relief Thank You

During the recent ice storm that struck Calvert County, the ACLT office, like many of our members' homes, was without power, heat, telephone and water. We offer our special thanks for helping us stay in business during this difficult week to the following:

- The Calvert County Office of Planning & Zoning, especially Roxanna Homer and Eddie Dichter for sharing their office and the use of a computer and Tamara Blake for communication coordination.
- The office of the Friends of Annmarie Garden, Denny Murray, Jennifer Draxton and Dwight Williams, for a warm place to work and use of a telephone.
- Bob Pfeiffer for tree limb removal and power updates.
- Flo and Skip Ford for safety and technical advice.
- The crews of Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative and Northern Virginia Electric for their diligence and hard work in restoring power.

ACLT joins all southern Marylanders in thanking Representative Steny Hoyer, Commissioner Hagner Mister and Commissioner Pat Buehler for

touring the area with the Director of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency to determine if Federal Relief funds could be used for restoration and utility company assistance.

### **Parker's Creek Watershed Task Force Moves Toward Watershed Plan**

In September of this year the Board of County Commissioners appointed 16 individuals to the State funded Parker's Creek Watershed Task Force. David Brownlee, County Environmental Planner (and ACLT member), outlined the potential goals the Task Force might work toward—addressing cumulative impacts on the watershed, protection of wetlands, developing a State certified watershed plan and possibly establishing a citizen stream monitoring effort.

Philip Goldstein was elected President and Peter Vogt elected Vice President. Philip has done an excellent job leading the group through setting its visions and identifying issues of concern to this diverse group. Presentations to the Task Force have been made by Peg Niland on ACLT; Kirsti Uunila, State Archaeologist, regarding an Archaeological Survey of Parker's Creek; Peter Vogt showed slides

of Parker's Creek and Calvert Cliffs; and Glen Eugster, Environmental Protection Agency, spoke to us regarding the process of river conservation.

Studies have begun by the engineering firm of Dewberry and Davis which include a functional assessment of non-tidal wetlands and identification of potential mitigation sites. Other studies will involve water quality, habitats for rare, threatened or endangered species and a floodplain study by the Army Corp of Engineers. Dave Brownlee, assisted by Paul DiNunno, County Watershed Management Intern, will compile all the information resulting from the studies and the Task Force and prepare a Draft Watershed Management Plan to be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources.

Members appointed to the Task Force are: John Axley, Thomas Axley, Paul Berry, Arthur Cochran, Wilson Freeland, Philip Goldstein, Daniel Hamilton, Samuel Jett, Jr., Joseph Showalter, Leslie Starr, Joseph Turner, Robert Ulanowicz, Peter Vogt, Jonathan McKnight, and Peg Niland.

—Peg Niland

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