

# COMMUNITY

Maryland Independent | The Enterprise | The Calvert Recorder

## When being told to go take a hike is a good thing



Taking part in the American Chestnut Land Trust's 12 Hikes in '21 on Jan. 16 are Grayson Zurenko, left, Cody Zurenko, Casey Spalding, Ryan Spalding, Wendy Zurenko and Jeff Reid along with dogs Bailey and Bennie.

### Prince Frederick preserve ACLT hosts 12 Hikes in '21

By MICHAEL REID  
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The American Chestnut Land Trust has 22 miles of hiking trails and they want people to explore as many of them as possible during its 12 Hikes in '21 challenge.

During the challenge, hikers who take at least one hike per month throughout the year at the land trust in Calvert County can be entered to win prizes. The idea is based in part on last year's popular "Hit the Trails 22-mile Challenge."

"People loved our challenge last year," said Miriam Gholl, the community relations manager for the ACLT, "so we were looking for something to motivate people to get out on a regular basis."

Casey Spalding and her husband, Ryan, of Prince Frederick, completed the 22-mile event last year — they did 10 hikes and logged 42 miles total — and have already done a pair of January hikes for this year's challenge.

"We had never done their trails before [last year's] challenge, but we read something about it and my mom, Wendy, had been there a couple times so we decided to join the challenge and liked the trails," said Spalding, who works at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C. "It was during quarantine so it was a great opportunity to get outside and get some exercise and still be with our families in a safe way. It was just a fun way to be with our family."

The ACLT has 12 main trails and almost 20 sub-trails ranging in length from 1/10th of a mile to several miles in length, and rated from easy to challenging, on 3,400 acres.

"Absolutely I hike them as well," said Gholl, whose personal favorite is the Flint Trail on the south side of the property. "It's where you see the most water and it's just gorgeous at all times of the year. It tends to get pretty muddy but it's worth it."

"Each one is unique," said Spalding, who along with family and friends completed the Parkers Creek Loop and Griffin Meadow Trail on Jan. 9 and did the Parkers Creek Loop again last Saturday. "Some are easy and some are challenging."



Grayson Zurenko, left, Brooklynn Jimney and Gavin Zurenko prove that the ACLT 12 Hikes in '21 is for all ages.

### ACLT hiking trails

#### North side trails

##### PF2Bay Trail

Distance: 6.1 miles each way  
Level: Moderate to challenging  
Notes: There are also three one-way options ranging from 4.5 to 7.7 miles each way

##### Horse Swamp to Bay overlook

Distance: 1.63 miles each way  
Level: Moderate to challenging  
Notes: Shorter trail to see Chesapeake Bay and Parkers Creek

##### Double Oak Road

Distance: 1 mile each way  
Level: Easy  
Notes: One steep incline

##### Parkers Creek Loop

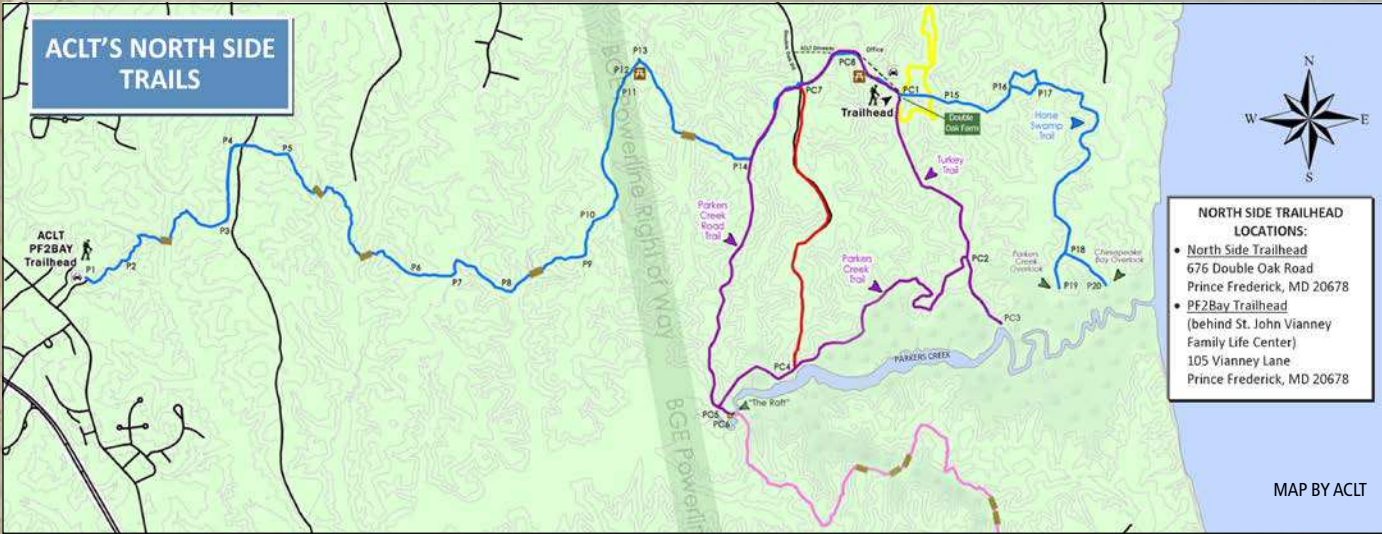
Distance: 3.8 miles  
Level: Moderate  
Notes: There are also four easy to moderate sub-trails ranging from 0.31 to 1.39 miles each way.

##### Griffin Meadow

Distance: 0.95 miles  
Level: Easy  
Notes: Views of Double Oak Farm, blue-bird boxes and Food Forest.

##### North-South

Distance: 2.2 miles each way  
Level: Challenging  
Notes: Includes a raft crossing and six stream crossings.



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Hikers Linda Colvin, Diane Webb and Robin Gay pose for a photo during a recent hike during the challenge.

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Gholl said that as of Jan. 19 a total of 640 people had registered for the challenge and its Facebook page (ACLT's Hiking Challenge Group) had more than 500 members. She added that hikers scan their QR codes before and after completing a hike and are encouraged to share photos on social media with #actl12hikesin21.

"There are tons of health benefits to hiking and our primary interest is getting people out there to hike our trails [and] in particular to experience our beautiful Parker's Creek preserve and learn more about the ACLT and why we do what we do," she said. "And then there's the family time. People are cooped up still and they're desperate for things to do outside, especially with the kids, and this gives people something to do with the kids."

"Some people might not feel safe going into gyms right now with everything going on," Spalding said, "and this is a great way to get outside."

Gholl was asked if she thought the ACLT was a hidden gem in the county.

"Yes it is, but it's been discovered by many, many people this [past] year," she said. "But there are people who have lived here all their lives and don't know about it, but once they hike it once they usually come back again and again. We have seen



Linda Caballero stops for a photo during a recent hike on the ACLT trails.

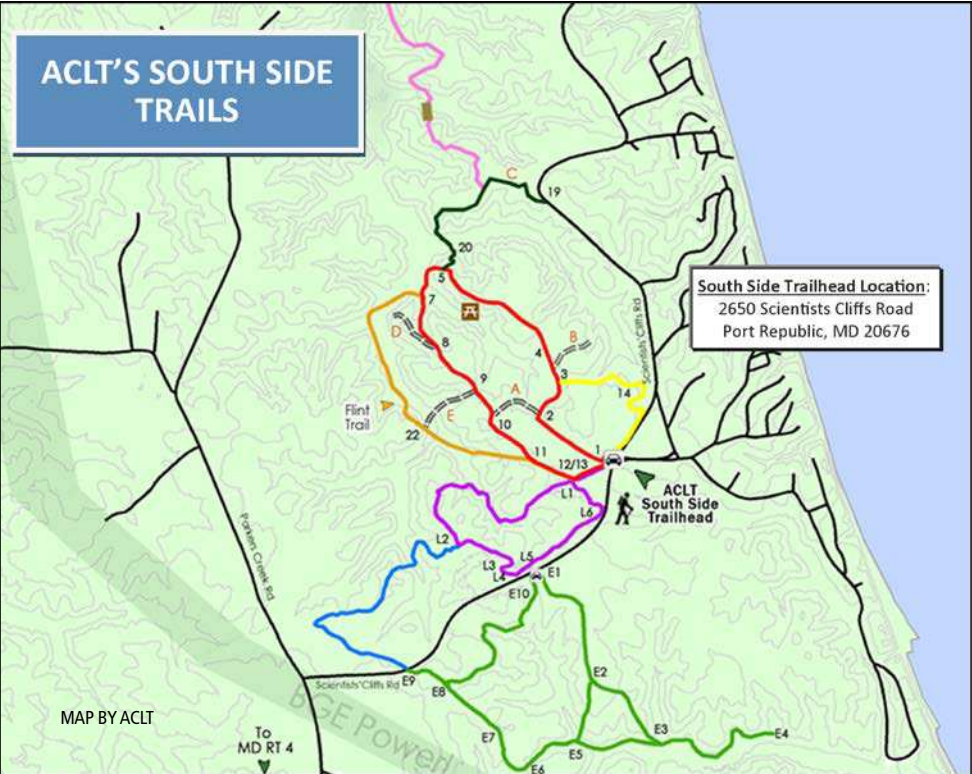
a huge increase in the number of hikers but still our trails are pristine."

ACLT may be a hidden gem to some, but not for Spalding and her family.

"We've hiked a lot of different places around the state and outside the state," she said, "and these trails are some of our favorite trails that we hike and go back to. It's just a really unique place to go hiking."

For more information or to register for the 12 Hikes in '21 challenge, go to [www.actlweb.org/index.php/12-hikes-in-2021/](http://www.actlweb.org/index.php/12-hikes-in-2021/).

**Twitter: @MichaelSoMdNews**



ACLT hiking trails

South side trails

- Frog pond**  
Distance: 0.52 miles each way  
Level: Easy  
Notes: Winds through a hardwood forest
- Ridge Loop**  
Distance: 2.70 miles  
Level: Moderate  
Notes: One steep hill known for its spring wildflowers
- Flint**  
Distance: 0.87 miles each way  
Level: Easy to moderate  
Notes: Follows a small stream
- Laurel Loop**  
Distance: 1.07 miles  
Level: Moderate  
Notes: Crosses field and through woods
- Karen's Trail**  
Distance: 0.6 miles  
Level: Easy to moderate  
Notes: Winds past grove of newly-planted American chestnut hybrids
- East Loop**  
Distance: 2.01 miles  
Level: Easy to moderate  
Notes: Limited parking available. Only trail on which off-road biking is allowed.

Landmarks and secondary trails

- Wallace Lane**  
Distance: 0.13 miles each way  
Level: Easy  
Notes: Site of the Lemuel Wallace House African American farm, which was operated from 1909 to the 1930s
- Chestnut Trail**  
Distance: 0.1 mile  
Level: Easy  
Notes: Location of ACLT's American Chestnut Tree, which blew down in 2006
- Cemetery Lane**  
Distance: 0.46 miles  
Level: Moderate  
Notes: Site of the Hance-Chesley Cemetery, which has headstones dating back to 1812.
- Hughes Trail**  
Distance: 0.12 miles (each way)  
Level: Easy  
Notes: Named for former ACLT President Aileen Hughes
- Less Traveled Path**  
Distance: 0.2 miles  
Level: Moderate

Author, pianist headline upcoming SMCM events

St. Mary's College of Maryland has two upcoming events that will feature an author and a popular musician.

Author Stephen Schottenfeld will read from his novels "Bluff City Pawn" and "This Room is Made of Noise" during a virtual event 8:15 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28.

In addition, musician-in-residence Brian Ganz resumes his online Piano Talk series.

The pianist will take music-lovers behind the scenes with great works of music. In Piano Talk #1 he will discuss and perform Chopin's Etude in E Major Op 10, No. 3, and Piano Talk No. 2 he will explore "Chopin's Creative Laboratory: Mining the Mazurkas for Experiments in Sound."

For more information on the above programs, go to [www.artsalliance@smcm.edu](http://www.artsalliance@smcm.edu).

Rec-tivity craft kits now being offered

St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks is selling Winter Rec-tivity Bags. Each kit pro-



**Between Two Rivers**  
  
Ellynne Brice Davis

vides 6 to 8 crafts projects and includes all the necessary art supplies.

The kits cost \$10 each and may be picked up between 9 to 11 a.m. or 5 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, or 1 to 3 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, at the Hollywood Recreation Center, 24400 Mervell Dean Road in Hollywood.

For more information or to reserve a kit, go to [www.recreation.stmarysmd.com](http://www.recreation.stmarysmd.com).

DNR announces turkey season, fishing awards

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources reminds hunters that winter turkey season will run through Saturday, Jan. 23 for those hunters who did not harvest a turkey during the 2020 fall season.

For more information, go to

[MDDNR@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:MDDNR@public.govdelivery.com).

The Maryland DNR and the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission is currently accepting nominations for the Maryland Sport Fisheries Achievement Award.

The award recognizes an individual who has provided sustained efforts in habitat management conservation, education, research or other meaningful contributions that benefit fish and recreational fishing in Maryland. Nominations may be made by completing an online form and submitting a detailed essay describing the nominee's contributions to Maryland recreational fisheries.

For more information, contact 443-534-3627 or [paul.genovese@maryland.gov](mailto:paul.genovese@maryland.gov).

Recipe of the Week

**Just Ducky**  
Recipe idea by Ellynne Davis  
A precious gift of three eggs was given to me by my neighbor last week. But these were not just any eggs – they were duck eggs. And they were not just any duck eggs – they were laid by the neighbor's very own

raise-and-release ducks that she's been nurturing since last summer.

The four ducks have been entertaining the neighborhood for months now and have just begun laying eggs.

My first task was to consult the "Joy of Cooking" by Rombauer and Becker to see what it might have to say about cooking duck eggs. Disappointingly, the only reference I could find in the general discussion of eggs was "...don't expect the same texture or flavor from eggs of other fowl. In using off-beat eggs be very sure of freshness."

I knew the eggs were only a few hours old.

Not to be discouraged, I decided to stick with tried-and-true "recipes": eggs cooked-to-order either over easy, or sunny side up.

The eggshells themselves had a slightly greenish tint (due to the Mallard breed) and were harder to crack than regular chicken's eggs. They were about the same size as large store-bought eggs and contained about the same volume.

But both the yolks and the whites of the duck eggs seemed thicker, which proved to be a



plus for turning the eggs over easily as not one broke apart.

And the taste?; they were delicious! This was a simple breakfast made special by an unexpected gift.

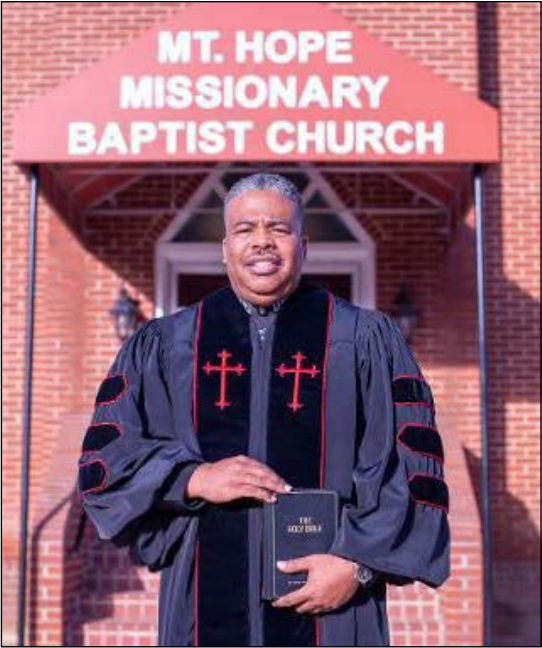
**Note:** the ducks-next-door had matured through the fall to be free-ranging and free-flying (returning home each night to be fed) but are now safely penned up until duck-hunting season ends in a few more weeks. They were ordered online from [www.mypetchicken.com](http://www.mypetchicken.com) and were delivered to the local post office where the neighbor picked them up.

Please continue to send your news items and recipes to [LynnieBDavis@gmail.com](mailto:LynnieBDavis@gmail.com). Thank you!



**SIYC ensures smooth sailing for SMILE**

The Solomons Yacht Club recently donated a check for \$7,890 to the food bank at SMILE Ecumenical Ministries' food bank in Lusby. The food pantry, which is open 9 to 10 a.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays, assisted more than 29,000 families this past year. From left is Solomons Yacht Club Commodore Michael Stanton, SMILE President Bill Brier, food pantry store manager Sally Hamilton and food pantry co-coordinators Kathy Mazur and Anna Tillack.



Swann named new pastor at Mt. Hope Missionary Baptist

Mount Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Inc. recently announce that the Rev. Sterling R. Swann Jr. was installed as its 13th pastor on Dec. 6. The service was held virtually and live streamed on Facebook. Mount Hope was organized in 1867 and is historically known as the first African American Baptist Church in Charles County, Maryland. The church is located at 8705 Gilroy Road in Nanjemoy. For more information, call 301-743-5353 or go to [www.mthopembc.org](http://www.mthopembc.org).

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