

Watershed Observer



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST - VOLUME 35 No. 2 SPRING 2021

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BE SURE TO CHECK OUR WEBSITE, [HTTP://
ACLWEB.ORG](http://acltweb.org), TO VERIFY THE CURRENT
STATUS OF OUR EVENTS.

PLEASE VISIT OUR TRAILS! ALL TRAILS
WILL REMAIN OPEN AS USUAL FROM
DAWN TO DUSK EVERY DAY. RESEARCH
HAS SHOWN THAT COMMUNING WITH
NATURE IS GOOD FOR BOTH PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL HEALTH! PLUS, THE PLANTS
AND TREES EMIT A CHEMICAL THAT IS
THOUGHT TO BOOST THE IMMUNE SYS-
TEM!

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

PLEASE CALL US AT 410-414-3400

30 by '30 – We Can Do It

In the last century, humans have had an enormous impact on the flora and fauna of the earth. On January 11th, 50 nations, led by Costa Rica, France, and the United Kingdom announced a commitment to protect at least 30% of the planet by 2030. The initiative is called The Campaign for Nature. Our region should aspire to the same goal.

According to the Campaign for Nature media statement, scientists have documented that humans have severely altered 66% of our ocean and 75% of our land areas. They also note that “this loss of nature imperils our clean air and clean drinking water, the survival of wildlife, the prosperity of communities, and our ability to protect ourselves from the impacts of a changing climate. Once our natural world is gone, there is no way to recreate the \$125 trillion in economic value that it provides us each year, and it's clear our economies must change the way they do business.”

A similar observation could be made about the Southern Maryland region, and in our own county. Between 1973 and 2010, Calvert County lost 30% of its rural lands to residential sprawl resulting in a 30% decrease in ecosystem services. Over that period, approximately \$55 million per year of annual ecosystem services value¹ was lost according to Dr. Elliott Campbell, Maryland Department of Natural Resources.² Other Southern Maryland counties have seen more lands converted. Along major highways, some suburbanizing counties with weak planning programs continue to allow major shopping centers and residential developments along arterial roads where no towns previously existed, thus further congesting the roads, decimating farming and wildlife areas and adding more sediment-laden stormwater to the creeks and rivers. All customers have to drive to these centers. Former commercial centers in older towns are allowed to fail, with shuttered store fronts, broken sidewalks and potholes in the streets. Meanwhile species diversity and counts continue to decline.

We have to stem the tide, and we can, at the local, regional, national, and global level. A measurable goal is a great way to start. The good news is that the five Southern Maryland counties have already made a start, with 11% of the total acreage of all the lands protected by easement and another 11% protected by public ownership (parks, preserves, etc.). Therefore, 22% of all lands in the five-county region are permanently preserved.

What would it take to reach the 30% goal? Less than 1,000 acres per year over the next 10 years in each county preserved by easement and the same amount preserved by



Large clearing for Development west of south-bound MD 201. Google Maps.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)



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From the President's Desk ...

In spite of the continuing population increase in Calvert County, the open, attractive and relaxing landscape has remained thanks to the forethought of the county in restricting high density residential and commercial growth to the town centers. This policy has helped the county to maintain its open rural atmosphere; a landscape not scarred by endless strip malls that are such a common sight. This decision also demonstrated that economic growth can proceed without the degradation of the environment and concomitant emotional stress.

County planning consultants are now proposing a major change to the existing planning regulations—a significant increase in the population density of the Town Centers, particularly Prince Frederick. They are proposing to:

- Expand Prince Frederick 80% in size, much of which will be into areas with highly erodible lands with steep slopes,
- Increase the potential number of dwellings from 2,700 to anywhere from 9,000. One alternative would increase the number to 16,000 dwellings, and
- Reduce the developer requirements with respect to traffic studies and excise taxes for schools.

The Winter 2019 issue of the *Watershed Observer* (<https://www.acltweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/winter2019.pdf>) has a summary of the Calvert County quality of Life Survey. The citizens indicated that the single most important issue or challenge facing Calvert County is over-development/growth/sprawl. It is vital that the citizens of the county participate in this discussion on the future of development in Calvert County if they want to maintain the unique environment of Calvert County.

We always need to remember that developers do not have to deal with the aftermath of their work. The burden from unrealized projections by the developers, the possibility of poor design and/or construction shortcuts, inadequate stormwater management, increased traffic and parking needs and a general increase in the infrastructure costs fall on the citizens of the County.

On page 4 of this issue ACLT's Executive Director, Greg Bowen, takes an in-depth look at the costs and benefits associated with the proposed Prince Frederick expansion plan.

On a brighter note, see part one of Peter Vogt's series on ACLT and the Parkers's Creek Preserve—Future of the Organization, on page 8..

David Farr
President

Around ACLT

ACLT's Annual Meeting Wrap-Up

It's safe to say that this year's Annual Meeting was like none before – since it was held virtually! Although we were saddened that we could not gather in person, we were heartened by the fact that numerous out-of-state members were able to join us for the first time in years! We had attendees from as far away as Pennsylvania, New York, and even California! A special thanks to Board of Directors Member Robyn Truslow for helping us with the technical aspects (in addition to presenting the Administration and Fundraising Committee's Report).

The best news is that the meeting was recorded and can easily be viewed by anyone who missed it! It's a quick 1 hour and 22 minutes long and is full of important information about all that ACLT achieved in 2020 despite the pandemic. You will also learn more about exciting opportunities for ACLT to acquire two critical properties that adjoin other lands within the Parkers Creek Preserve. View the meeting here:

<https://bit.ly/ACLTAnnualMtg2020>

In addition to the meeting video, the web page includes links to useful information from the guest speaker's presentation as well as the 2020 Annual Report. You can also read brief biographies of the six new members of the Board of Directors who were approved during the meeting.

The highlight of the Annual Meeting was our guest speaker, Dan Murphy, from the Chesapeake Bay Field Office of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Dan's presentation, "Landscape Scale Conservation Partnerships and Planning", was very timely in light of ACLT's goal of taking on "a leadership role in the long-term conservation and stewardship of watersheds not only in Calvert County, but all of Southern Maryland" (ACLT's 5-Year Plan) and in Executive Director Greg Bowen's involvement in the formation of the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance.

Immediately following the meeting, participants were asked to complete a short survey to provide feedback on the information presented. Below are the results:

Miriam Groll, Community Relations Manager

Survey Questions (answers rated on a scale of 1-10)	Average Score
Overall, how engaging was the annual meeting?	8.5
How would you rate the importance of the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance?	9.2
Dan Murphy's presentation: Relevant? – Either MOSTLY or DEFINITELY	9.3
How informative were the science committee updates?	8.9
Are you satisfied with the Land Management work this year?	9.4
How satisfied are you with the outreach and engagement efforts in light of COVID restrictions?	9.5
How important is it for ACLT to pursue the purchase of the 2 new properties (GRDC and Yoe)?	9.4
Is ACLT moving in a good direction?	9.5
How would you rate the pre-meeting communications, including emails, website and Facebook posts?	9.2

A Zest for Life – Remembering Leslie Starr



Leslie Starr. Photo
Credit: Joe Turner.

It is a pretty winter's day, 37 degrees, and Leslie Starr calls neighbors David and Paula Bohaska for permission to sit on their porch in Scientists Cliffs. She is on the hunt for a purple finch known to be in the area and needed for her 2021 Bird List. Of course, they welcomed her over and spent 6 and a half hours freezing with her on that porch waiting for the purple finch to arrive. It never did show its royal plumage, but that was okay. The three of them had time to catch up.

Leslie, who passed away in February, was a competitive birder, an accomplished professional musician and teacher, a strong person with a great mind. Fellow ACLT Charter member Don Dahmann remembers her as a "brilliant gem of a person, who always seemed to share with you her very best considered judgement".

She often led birding hikes for ACLT. According to Peg Niland, our first Executive Director, it was Leslie who introduced the Audubon Society to ACLT and from that meeting, the Parkers Creek Preserve was soon identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA). In addition, the Society was so impressed with Leslie's protocols for monitoring birds, that it adopted them. We use those protocols when we conduct our annual bird diversity counts.

Leslie was very active on ACLT's Land Management Committee for years. She and Joe have been dear friends and supporters of ACLT over its long history. Her energy, intelligence and zest for life will be missed by all.



Purple Finch-Photo Credit:
Steve Author

Greg Bowen
Executive Director

Prince Frederick Expansion – Costs and Benefits

This is a follow-up to our article from last Spring's Newsletter entitled, "Prince Frederick – Can It Expand Without Damaging Our Watershed?"

See: <https://www.actweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/spring2020.pdf>.

We are now one year into the Master Plan update and we are very concerned about the direction it is going.

Every Calvert County comprehensive plan since 1983 has advocated directing growth to town centers. We continue to support that approach as it uses less land in locations where local government has made public investments in infrastructure (roads, water and sewer, public buildings, etc. In addition, it allows for conservation of our rural landscapes. However, this expansion is different. First of all it came without public support. Citizens were not informed as to why Prince Frederick was to be expanded, and were not provided information as to the impact of the expansion on the environment and on public infrastructure. Therefore, they opposed it by large margins.

The consultants are now proposing from 6,000 to 13,000 more dwelling units than the 2,700 existing units in the Town Center without justification as to the need or impact. In early meetings on the plan, citizens raised concerns about the traffic impacts of the proposed development on roads and the environment. Questions have been raised as to the need for a large amount of high-density residential development.

The original plan consultants who started the plan in 2013, held a well-attended charette with the citizens. During the process, the consultants had raised concerns about the high percentage of 25% slope soils surrounding Prince Frederick and had recommended moving the town center boundary from the mainstem of the Parkers Creek back up the Valley formed by Sullivan's branch (the area in figure 1) to the current extent of development. For some reason not shared by the County, the consultants were terminated. Instead, the new consultants are proposing to develop the steep wooded valley in anywhere between four units per acre to 14 units per acre.

A forested valley generates almost no costs in county services, while it saves the county in ecosystem services such as attenuation of stormwater going into Parkers Creek, nutrient uptake, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, and so on. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources estimates that this valley saves the county about \$280,000 per year in these services. The County's Budget and Finance office informed the Board of County Commissioners in 2019 that each new household costs the county, on average, \$1,900 more in service costs than it generates in income. So, if Sullivan's Branch is developed, we replace \$280,000 per year in ecosystem services with almost \$1,000,000 in annual costs if say 500 homes are built there. Meanwhile, Parkers Creek is inevitability impacted.

Why should this happen? Who benefits? It certainly doesn't seem to be the county residents or the county taxpayers.

Likewise, a similar discussion is occurring in the Hunting Creek watershed. The land in the dashed figure south of Stoakley Road and west of MD 4 is zoned Rural Community District (RCD), with a base density of



Prince Frederick Boundary in Relation to Parkers Creek and Sullivan Branch.

one house per 20 acres. The land is proposed for rezoning to town center in the Comprehensive Plan, again, without justification as to why this land with steep slopes, highly erodible soils, and streams should be included in the town center. The largest stream drains through Hunters Ridge Subdivision.

The area is forested. Forests have the ability to absorb most rainfall events with only a minor increase in stream water flow. Cleared lands and impervious surfaces can significantly increase water flow. And in this case, most of the land is defined by the US Department of Agriculture as steep eroded land, with severe limitations for building. Likewise, this stream and another stream closer to the bottom of the figure drain along College Station and it is certain to impact the open space lands of that community.

Also, it could be said that the large Hunting Creek valley on the east side of MD 4 (that flows north to Plum Point Road) has never fully recovered from the poor stormwater planning for Fox Run Shopping Center and a major rain storm last August that washed out a subdivision road down-stream. More development is proposed there, north of the hospital.

It is a shame to see the potential impacts on Hunting Creek. As recently as 2003, "Hunting Creek had the greatest diversity of fish species among the streams surveyed" in the Lower Patuxent River Watershed Characterization, 2003. However, since then

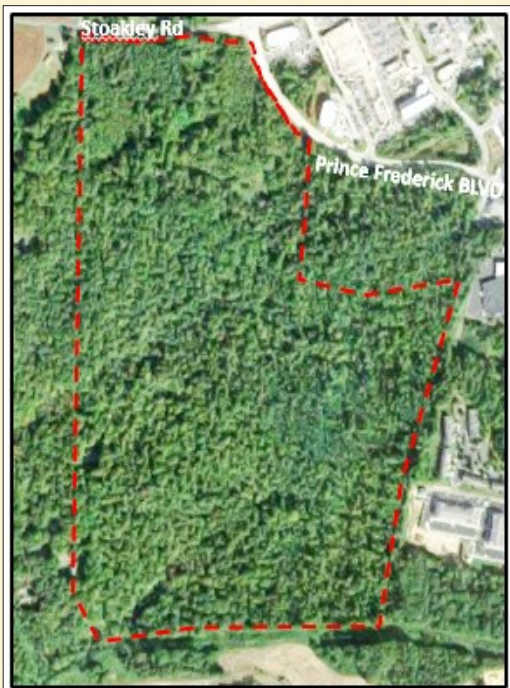
the creek has ticked up to 6% impervious surfaces. It is hard to maintain good water quality above 5% impervious surfaces, according to Maryland Department of Natural Resources. If we exceed 10% impervious surfaces, the watershed will be considered deteriorated.

Over the decades of ACLT's existence, the county government has been a great partner and supporter. It initiated a land preservation program that spurred the whole chain of land preservation across the landscape. It has supported our Rural Legacy applications. It has preserved, through acquisition, a key parcel that allowed the creation of the Prince Frederick to Bay trail. Prime farms west of Prince Frederick were protected.

We hope that the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners will ignore the consultant's cookie cutter high-density approach providing for up to a 400% increase in housing and scale down the potential development to prevent environmental degradation and the gridlock on MD 2/4 that will inevitably occur.

In the last six months, Parkers Creek has suffered two major sewage spills from Prince Frederick's existing pipelines, raising the question as to whether Calvert's commitment to stewardship of Calvert's "pristine watershed" with 22-miles of public access trails is still there. The latest spill occurred on January 16th when "staff were conducting a routine check on the bypass pump near 720 Main Street in Prince Frederick and discovered a slow leak. Investigation of the slow leak identified a sanitary sewer overflow". This resulted in a volume of approximately 34,200 gallons of sewer overflow discharged "approximately 60 yards north of tributaries leading to the Parkers Creek headwaters". This is yet another concern we have about the Prince Frederick expansion and the toll the proposed housing will have on Parkers Creek.

Greg Bowen.Executive Director



Sensitive Land Slated for Rezoning to Town Center

American Chestnut Land Trust Calendar of Events

All Dates Tentative and Subject to COVID Restrictions. For details, visit www.acltweb.org

April 2021

- All Month - Earth Day Virtual 5K Challenge - Run/Walk/Hike any 5K course in any location and on your own time
- 17th - Earth Day Highway Clean-up – 2 segments of highway adopted by ACLT
- 18th - Earth Day LIVE! 5K Challenge (Rain Date: 4/25)
- 18th-25th - Earth Day "Now You See It/Now You Don't" Community Clean-up Challenge & Photo Contest - clean up your neighborhood or local beach/park and post before and after photos to be voted on by public
- 22nd - 22-Mile "Hit the Trails" Challenge - Hike all 22 miles of trails to win an ACLT neck gaiter
- 24th - Earth Day-Themed Guided Hike

May 2021

- 29th - Mountain Laurel Guided Hike

June 2021

- 6th - TENTATIVE! Tails & Trails – A Fundraiser supporting CAWL and ACLT

July 2021

- 4th through Labor Day (September 6th) - Passport to Preservation - visit local breweries & wineries and get your passport stamped (receive discounts on beer and wine), enter to win prizes donated by venues.

August 2021

- 29th - Guided Evening Hike – Farewell to Summer

September 2021

- 11th - Sip & Save - Culmination of Passport to Preservation Event - beer-tasting festival featuring beers from local breweries

October 2021

- 16th - Parkers Creek Challenge - Triathlon including bike, run & paddle
- 23rd - Guided Hike – Fall Foliage

November 2021

- 6th - TENTATIVE - Annual Dinner & Auction
- 27th & 28th - Wreath-making Weekend (volunteers and their guests)

December 2021

- 4th - Annual Wreath and Greens Sale – Wreaths hand-made from greens gathered on ACLT lands
- 5th - TENTATIVE 35th Anniversary Celebration

Land Managers Corner

The Masked Bandit

Many people who know me well know that raccoons are one of my favorite animals. Something about their pointy ears and nose, beady eyes, big fuzzy rear ends, and the way they lumber around makes me so happy when I see them. Sometime over the past year, I saw a meme jokingly stating that raccoons were even the mascot for 2020 because they always wear a mask and they “wash” their hands! My love of raccoons, their unofficial “mascot of the pandemic” status, and a recent abundance of raccoon videos being captured by a game camera at ACLT made me want to write an article about our local masked friends and the role they play in our ecosystems.

While raccoons do have a masked appearance, their mask is around their eyes instead of their mouth and nose (which definitely would not do much to limit the spread of COVID-19!). They have black patches around both eyes and a bushy, ringed tail that is usually about 12 inches long. Their back legs are longer than the front giving them a hunched-over appearance. Raccoons are omnivores and can eat just about anything, one of the traits that make them so good at surviving pretty much anywhere. Naturally, raccoons prefer forested habitats near streams and it is common to find their prints in the mud of stream banks throughout the Parkers Creek Preserve. Aquatic animals such as crayfish, frogs, snails, and fish are some of their favorite food sources (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)). For this reason, it is not surprising that a game camera that was installed by one of our volunteers in stream area on ACLT property frequently records the nocturnal activity of some of our resident raccoons.

Raccoons are native throughout most of the US and though they are naturally found in wooded environments, they are also very good at surviving in close proximity to humans. They are attracted to pet food and trash cans that provide easy meals. They are also resourceful and can make their dens in many manmade structures such as attics, unused cars, and chimneys (WDFW). Due to their ability to live so successfully in such close proximity to humans, not everyone shares my love of raccoons. Their propensity for causing damage to people's homes and other property causes many to consider them a pest species. Unfortunately, they can also carry diseases which can be passed on to humans and pets. According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website, raccoons account for 60% of the rabies cases in Maryland and can also transmit distemper and parvovirus to dogs.

There are many actions you can take to reduce the likelihood of having problems with raccoons in or around your home. First, all trash should be secured in a container that raccoons cannot get into and grills and other outdoor cooking equipment should be cleaned and free from grease and food scraps. Additionally, pets should be fed indoors or, at the very least food should be brought indoors, along with pets, at night time. Pet food will attract raccoons and other wildlife to your front porch and raccoons that feel cornered by your pet may attack them. Pet food should also not be placed directly inside pet doors and pet doors should be locked at night (WDFW).



Raccoons also eat the eggs of many bird species and in some cases even the birds themselves. This may cause problems for poultry farmers or people who have installed wild bird nest boxes on their property, but it is key to remember that eggs are an important food source for raccoons, who are not particularly skilled hunters. To them, there is no distinction between eggs they “should” and “should not” eat from a human perspective, so it is our responsibility to make sure they are excluded from areas where they are not welcome. This means ensuring poultry are enclosed in a pen or house consisting of 1" chicken wire over a sturdy wooden frame and properly-fitted doors with secure locking mechanisms. Secure locking mechanisms are necessary for both poultry enclosures and garbage receptacles as raccoons are very dexterous and able to open many latches (WDFW). For wild bird boxes, the post that each box is secured to should have some sort of exclusion mechanism such as the metal cones that are around the bluebird, wood duck, and prothonotary warbler boxes at ACLT. Similar exclusion methods should be employed for other areas around your home that might provide a nice den for raccoons. Sturdy 1" wire mesh tightly secured around openings to chimneys or attics should keep raccoons from making dens in unwanted areas of your home (WDFW).

If a raccoon becomes an unwanted resident in your home, it may be tempting to try and relocate them to a more “wild” area. It may seem like you are doing both yourself and the raccoon a favor. However, raccoons are ubiquitous and common in every wooded area and moving a raccoon into a new area will mean that it will be competing with existing raccoon residents for food and nesting resources. This often leads to fighting between the existing and new raccoons which can lead to death (WDFW). Additionally, if the issues that attracted

the raccoon to your home in the first place are not addressed, a new raccoon will almost certainly fill the void left by the removed raccoon. Therefore, it is important to take all of the precautionary steps to avoid attracting nuisance raccoons to your home before resorting to relocation (WDFW). If you have a nuisance raccoon, you can call the Nuisance Animal Hotline at the number listed on the MD DNR website.

Raccoons usually breed from the end of January through mid-March and give birth to 2-5 live young called kits after a gestation period of 65 days. The kits stay in the den until they are about 7 weeks old. At 8-10 weeks old the young raccoons begin to leave the den with their mothers and begin to forage for their own food, leaving the den for a few nights at a time by the time they are 12 weeks old. The kits stay with their mother throughout their first winter and find their own territories the following spring. Adult males are always solitary and play no role in raising the young (WDFW).

In addition to eating the aquatic animals and bird eggs mentioned above, raccoons also eat fruit including dogwood berries, wild cherries, wild grape, and apples in addition to nuts such as acorns, hazelnuts, and beechnuts and they will even eat dead animals (MD DNR). Coyotes are the only natural predator of adult raccoons in our region, though in other parts of the country their predators include cougars and bobcats. Large owls and eagles will also prey on small raccoons and young raccoons can succumb to starvation because they lack sufficient fat reserves to get them through a cold winter when natural food sources can be scarce. The main causes of death for raccoons are diseases and being hit by cars (WDFW). The average life span for a raccoon in the wild is 2-3 years but they can live up to 20 years in captivity (Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Nature).

Raccoons have nonretractable claws and long digits in their hands and feet and, like squirrels, they can rotate their back feet 180 degrees so that they can descend trees head first (WDFW). They have established “toilet areas” that are located away from nesting areas. Their scat is 3-5 inches in length though it is usually broken up into smaller pieces. Their scat is flat-ended and is about 1/4" in diameter (WDFW).

As mentioned above, raccoons are known for frequently “washing” their hands. In fact, their scientific name is *Procyon lotor* and lotor translates to “one who washes” (MD DNR). As you might suspect given that they eat dead animals and leftovers out of dumpsters, this habit does not have anything to do with sanitation (sorry internet meme). Wildlife



Photo from pixabay.com.

biologists now think that the wetting of the raccoon's hands stimulates the nerve ending on the palms of their hands and makes them better able to feel what they are grabbing. As they try to find food in streams or other bodies of water, it is thought that they actually feel what they are grabbing with their very sensitive hands rather than seeing it as they have poor vision (MD DNR). Raccoons are also considered very intelligent and some studies conducted in the mid-to-late 20th century found that raccoons could remember solutions to tasks for up to three years (PBS Nature).

The adaptability and intelligence of raccoons has allowed them to thrive in many habitats across a broad geographic range, despite the widespread impacts of human disturbances. They play an important role in our ecosystem and have an inherent right to live on this planet with us. It is up to humans to act responsibly to reduce interactions and conflicts between raccoons and humans, as well as with our pets and livestock. With a little bit of effort focused on the prevention of these conflicts, we can continue to live alongside our masked fury friends and take joy catching glimpses or trail cam videos of them in their natural habitat.

Autumn Phillips-Lewis, Land Manager



Raccoons crossing a stream in Horse Swamp. Photo Credit: Ian Messant

Information for this article was gathered from:

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

“Raccoon” webpage: https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants_wildlife/Raccoon.aspx

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

“Raccoons” webpage: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/species/procyon-lotor#conflict>
<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/raccoon-nation-raccoon-fact-sheet/7553/>

Quo Vadis, ACLT and the Parker's Creek Preserve?

Part I Future of the organization

As Doris Day once sang, *"The future's not ours to see: Que sera, sera."* Maybe so, but we can make predictions, some more confidently than others. Let's start with the likely future of the ACLT as an organization—based on the histories of land preservation and the present status of preservation tools. Although its officers, crew and passengers change over the decades, I predict the good ship ACLT will maintain its course towards our vision for a great future.

The next newsletter will make predictions on the environmental future of the Parkers Creek Preserve (PCP). This future will depend on how local nature responds to climate change and sea level rise, but also on future ACLT management efforts. The PCP is a tiny part of a continuum from the Parker's Creek / Governors Run watersheds on up to the entire planet. We are urged to 'think globally but act locally'.

While geology teaches that the '*present is key to the past*', we predict the future based partly on what we know of the past. Anything that *has* happened *can* happen. And more. Predicting the future of land preservation at scales from Parkers Creek up to the US depends on applying and expanding tools developed in the last two centuries and particularly the last 50 years. Their history may inform how they stand the test of time.

Starting with US Federal land preservation, I am optimistic that most or all the lands so far preserved will remain so. While the US has led the world in suburban sprawl, we have also led the world in saving large and unique tracts of natural lands for the public. Whatever those preserved lands are worth today, that worth will just get bigger with time. The same holds for lands preserved by State and local governments and by land trusts. *Sustainability, ecosystem services, wildlife corridors, ecological integrity, landscape complexity, landscape conservation, and resiliency* have entered our vocabulary in our new world of rapid climate change and habitat loss. As part of nature preserved, we connect with it by *research* and *recreation*, inspired by *viewsheds* and *scenery*.

Too bad this effort began too late to save large natural pristine mostly wooded landscapes here in eastern North America. But while we are limited by that legacy, the East has pioneered. Already in 1634, what may be the world's first urban park was created - Boston Common. The 'Common' has survived for 387 years and I am sure hell would have to freeze before those 50 acres are developed.

According to Global Footprint Network, the rate the US is using its renewable resources is twice that which is sustainable. Thinking globally is a sobering exercise. Simple numerical goals are important, such as limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius or 2 degrees Celsius or preserving 30% of the Earth's surface for nature by 2030 (the '30x30 plan'). *What are ACLT's land preservation goals? What can we learn from other trusts and the Land Trust Alliance?*

ACLT is in the process of evolving into a similar regional land trust—while at the same time focusing on the remaining

undeveloped tracts in the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds.

Preserving lands scattered throughout the County in dozens of smaller parcels would have been valuable, but would not, by a long shot, support the biodiversity, resilience, and recreational value as one contiguous tract.

Land preservation in Calvert began with *The Nature Conservancy* (TNC), today a global flagship conservation trust, founded in 1951. Still a fledgling in 1956-7, TNC preserved the hemlocks along Hellen Creek (1956) and some of the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp (1957). *Expansion from small preserved nuclei is a common pattern at all scales*—other Calvert examples include Flag Ponds and Battle Creek Nature Parks and the ACLT, now managing ten times the area it first did. Yellowstone National Park is a national example.

TNC's first presence in the Parkers Creek watershed was in the form of a 1967 land donation by gemologist Jewell Glass—the 5.13-acre mountain laurel preserve on Scientists Cliffs Road. However, for the next twenty years it didn't nucleate local land preservation but remained the only preserve in the Parkers Creek watershed.

Forty years later—and around twenty years after a Parkers Creek nature preserve was first proposed (1974)—TNC was a major player in preserving the DNR lands around lower Parkers Creek—today managed by ACLT. TNC negotiated the key land purchases and resold the land to the State. TNC's 'conservation footprint' remains today in the form of deed restrictions. By the 1990s, it had become more about preserving watersheds, and Parkers Creek was special mainly because it was still mostly pristine, the 'last best of its kind'.

Besides government and regional nonprofits, future ACLT preservation success will continue to depend on private donations to ACLT and how much land owners will charge. Some owners of ancestral acres may favor preservation, considering their land both as a priceless family antique and great retirement income. There is a wide possible range from land or easement donation to bargain sale—both with tax benefits and up to a top dollar price. ACLT must maintain a cordial dialogue with landowners to inform them of options. Waiting for a 'for sale' sign may well be too late.

ACLT would not have succeeded so far without the generosity of many hundreds of donors. The ancient Greeks (e.g., Aristotle ca. 330 BCE) already noted that most people only think of their own good, scarcely ever of the common good. Maybe, but not everyone thinks the same. Land trusts such as ACLT bring together like-minded generous supporters to pool their resources and restore a bit of the rich natural world seen by our predecessors. We donors can hike on, paddle in, or just drive by the results of our contributions. Are we donating to a charity or rather buying something we love? As for the "Helper's High" there is a "Giver's High." Preservation for the indefinite future has no sunset clause. The success of local

land trusts exemplifies American ‘cultural DNA’, noted already 1840 by the French aristocrat de Tocqueville: our penchant for creating associations.

There seems little reason to fear that ACLT won’t still be around a century or more from now. The history and success of ACLT shows how (happily in this case) wrong predictions can be. Much depends on what happens during brief critical times, which are generally followed by the relative stasis of a “New Normal.”

The expansion of ACLT further into the Parkers Creek watershed also could scarcely have been predicted. Lady Luck dealt the infant ACLT two great cards—the Russell Tract, directly on the lower creek, was not developed as first planned by the owners because the owner of nearby Warrior’s Rest denied access via Scientists Cliffs Road. Development via Parkers Creek Road was much more difficult, so the heirs sold the 70-acre Russell Tract to ACLT in 1990. Due to an unforeseen doubling of TDR values, ACLT had a cash surplus, enabling purchase and preservation. Fiscal prudence might have instead motivated ACLT to use TDR sales for an endowment to support operations. Together with the 137-acre Michael Tract (Double Oak Farm, 1994), the Russell Tract was a risky, unpredicted, but priceless investment that led the way to the present Parkers Creek Preserve.



The Russell Tract-a jewel in the Preserve.

So, what is a good land preservation goal for ACLT? After the two properties that we are currently pursuing in the watersheds, we’d like to work with landowners to protect at least another 400 acres which we have identified as priority properties in our Five-Year Plan. But why stop there? In his Call to Action, Andrew J. Bowman, President and CEO of the Land Trust Alliance, laid out a bold strategy for land trusts to do more, faster. Read more here: <https://www.landtrustalliance.org/news/call-action-land-conservation-america>

While we praise as essential ACLT’s mission of expansion into outdoor recreation, education and advocacy, the primary goal of land trusts, and the metric for their success, is preserving land for the future. We can hopefully predict that will be the case for the ACLT until there is no more land here to preserve. Only then we can relax a bit and enjoy just being good stewards and caretakers.

Peter Vogt, Charter Member

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

public purchase, or a combination thereof. By doing so, we protect species diversity and hopefully wildlife corridors. We also protect and enhance the possibility of rural economies (farming, forestry, agritourism, ecotourism, heritage tourism, etc.) which already are worth approximately \$3.2 billion to the state economy, according to a 2018 BEACON Report.

Not only are there environmental and economic benefits, but there are also obvious human benefits as the COVID-19 pandemic has made evident. When faced with isolation due to protocols to save lives, thousands have sought out nature at even a higher rate than before. Walks/hikes have always been the preferred option for access to nature.

Land conservation continues to have strong bipartisan support in Maryland. A new poll just commissioned by Partners for Open Space, revealed that “90% of Maryland residents support Program Open Space, up 3 points since a similar survey conducted 5 years ago. In addition, 76% of Maryland residents think preserving natural areas is extremely or very important and nearly 80% of Maryland residents think protecting agricultural land for locally grown food is extremely or very important.

In an executive order issued on January 27th, President Biden committed to protecting 30% of US land and seas by 2030. We can do this, and by doing so, we will help to save the Bay and the Patuxent River, we will help to conserve our rich cultural history and our rural lands, and we will be combating climate change.

¹Air pollution removal, carbon sequestration, nutrient uptake, groundwater recharge, stormwater attenuation, and biodiversity/wildlife habitat.

²Presentation to the Calvert County, Environmental Commission, Prince Frederick, MD on January 30, 2017.

Greg Bowen
Executive Director



Overlooking Hunting Creek and the Patuxent River-Photo Credit: Jack Thornton via drone

Changing of the Guard

At the March 6th Annual Meeting, participants voted favorably for a slate of six new members to ACLT's Board of Directors (BOD). We are pleased to welcome them:

Peter Daly
Darlene Harrod
Shirley Knight
Nathan (Nate) Novotny
Birgit Sharp
Frederick Tutman

Two BOD current members were confirmed for another term:

Joy Bartholomew
Denise Breitburg

BOD President David Farr paid tribute to the outgoing members and thanked them for their service:

Peter Stathis (2000-2021)
Gary Loew (1986-1992, 2010-2021)
Karen Edgcombe (1998-2006, 2015-2021)
John Little (2003-2021)
Steve Kullen (2008-2021)

At its March meeting, the BOD elected the following officers:

David Farr, President
Dawn Balinski, Vice-President
Cheryl Place, CPA, Treasurer
BL Johnston, Corporate Secretary

Interested in joining ACLT's Board of Directors? A nominating committee convenes every year to consider possible candidates. Contact Executive Director Greg Bowen for more information. Email: gbowen@acltweb.org or call the office: (410) 414-3400.

Thank you for your support

New Members

ACLT would like to welcome the following new members since the Winter 2021 Newsletter:

Derek Anderson
Martin Berlett
Judy Bradt
Mark Brennan - *In memory of Caleb Clark*
Jeremy Bruckhart
Mary Chamberlain
Mikaela Clark
Alex & Mary Coltery
Margaret Corl
Lisa Elliott
Mary Fey
Lisa & Joshua Grossman & Family
Zachary Hartley
Jessica Howard
Renea & Frank Huebel & Family
Cheryl Kerwin
Jackwelyn & Steven King
Mindy Krupp
Shawn Kyle
George Landman
Diana Lawless
Zak Lellis-Petrie
Nicholas Libra
Dawn Lister
Tom Litke
Kate McGowan
Sue Morris
Steve Moss
Sue Muller
Trisha Pellegrino
Allie Reinert
Jake Rupard
Alice Thomas
Vecchione Family
Thomas Ward
Francine Watts
Richard Wilder

Memorial Donations

Thank you to the following who made a memorial contribution since our last newsletter:

In memory of **Robert Jaeger**:
Joy Bartholomew & Mark Edmondson
Daniel Boesz
Paul & Diana Dennett
Jane Head
Randi & Peter Vogt

In memory of **Vera Macer**:
Daniel Boesz

In memory of **Fred Sheldon**:
Kathleen McGahey

In memory of **George Sliker**:
Kathleen & Charles Bailey
Margaret & Dennis Barre
Jonathan & Sanya Chapman
Joy Bartholomew & Mark Edmondson
David S. Bruce
Marie P. Hombs
Cheryl Monroe
Elizabeth Sasscer
Amber B. Slabe

In Honor of Donations

Thank you to the following who made an "in honor of" contribution since our last newsletter:

In honor of **Joy Bartholomew**:
Mary Edmondson

In honor of **Laura Berg**:
Ronald & Carol Berg

In honor of **Daniel Boesz** & In memory of **Tina Boesz**:
Patricia D. Peak

Gift Memberships

Thank you to the following who donated a gift membership since our last newsletter:

Robert Berlett
Jane Head
Nancy Klapper
Mark Thomas
Mary Watts

General Contributions and Designated Gifts

Double Oak Farm Program
Gary & Susan Dzurec

Fall Appeal

Jerry Adams & Harriet Yaffe
John & Kitty Bailey
Leah Miller & Ralph Balestrieri
Joy Bartholomew & Mark Edmondson
Sylvia Batong - *In memory of Bob Jaeger*
Gordon Bernhardt - *In honor of Don & Judith Dahmann*
David & Paula Bohaska - *In memory of Bob Platt*
Bob Boxwell
Sarah Boynton - *In honor Mary Ellen Boynton*

Judy Bradt
 Denise Breitburg & Mark Smith
 Frederick Bumgarner
 Steve Bunker & Mary Gabis-Bunker
 William & Cynthia Bushnell
 John Butterfield - *In honor of Daniel Boesz*
 Calvert Internal Medicine Group
 Mary Carr
 Karen Wallace-Chambers &
 Edford Chambers
 Jessica & Ty Clark
 Susan Cleary
 Nicole Cline
 Doug & Kathy Cochrane
 Christa Conant
 Peter Daly
 The Deeny-Locraft Family -
 In memory of Dan Head
 Paul & Diana Dennett - *In memory of*
 Dr. R.C.F. & Vera Macer
 Tim Dow - *In memory of Kezer Dow*
 Sue Dralle
 David Drzewicki
 Samuel & Barbara Dyer -
 In honor of Margaret Dunkle
 Alice Edmondson
 Kathy & Mike Ellwood
 Marie Bundy Estabrook & Randy Estabrook
 - *In honor of John Little*
 David & Ellen Farr
 Tony Fazio
 Grace Fleming
 Prasad Gerard & Ann Oliva
 Miriam & Robert Gholi
 William Glascock
 Richard Gray & Kimberley Von Paris
 Patrick & Abbey Griffin
 Jef Haesloop
 Julie Hall
 Barbara Harris
 Daniel & Justina Head -
 In memory of Dan Head Sr.
 George & Rosalind Helz
 Jessica Howard
 Dale, Kara & Willow Hutchins
 Jane Jamieson & Chris Conroy
 Patricia Jones
 Christopher & Deborah Keene
 Thomas & Mary Kirby
 Barbara Klapper -
 In memory of Jeff Klapper
 John Koelbel
 Patricia Koscinski
 Mark & JoAnn Kushner
 Alex Levin
 Greg & Linda Locraft -
 In memory of Dan Head
 Gary & Sandra Loew -
 In honor of Daniel Boesz
 Amanda Machen
 Charles Martin & Ms. Helen Cummings

Keith Matlack
 Kathy McGillicuddy
 Frank McPhillips
 James & Eileen McVey
 Joe & Trudy Mihalcik -
 In memory of Bob Jaeger
 Laura & John Milgram
 Kathleen Miller
 Gregory Minnick
 Penny Moran
 Alberta Moran - *In honor of Penny Moran*
 Yvonne Navalaney -
 In memory of Edwin P. Johnson III
 Steve Nelson
 Susan Noble
 Edwin & Monica Noell
 Carrie Pendleton
 Cheryl Place
 Amy Platnick
 Pam Platt
 Warren & Carol Prince
 Jeffery & Michele Quesenberry
 Brett Raynor -
 In memory of Don Mighell & June Whitson
 Bill, Andria & Jackson Rebeck
 John Reed
 Christopher Reynolds -
 In memory Margaret Reynolds
 David Rice
 Dawn Riley
 Mark Rinaldi
 Joseph Ruff & Stacey Hann-Ruff
 Carol Russell - *In memory of Lee Russell*
 Adam Sampson
 Daniel Sampson
 John & Betsy Saunders
 Herb Sheppard
 Mary-Stuart Sierra
 John Sillers
 The Souza & Family
 Dave Spencer -
 In honor of Sharon & Kevin Smith
 Penn Staples
 Joseph & Joanne Steller
 Chris Stomberg - *In memory Jane Stomberg*
 Crawford Feagin Stone
 Sandra Sullivan
 Sherman Suter & Mary Parrish
 Louis Tacchetti -
 In memory Nancy L. Tacchetti
 John & Joan Thorp
 Joseph Turner & Leslie Starr
 Marcia Van Gemert & Tay Vaughan
 James & Emily van Zee
 Maurice Walters & Mary Jean Pajak
 Patricia Weaver - *In honor of Sue Dzurec*
 Linden & Judith Welch
 David Williams
 Julia Yansura
 John Yoe - *In memory of Betty & Alvin Yoe*

Theresa York
 Debra Zanewich
 Leonard & Karen Zuza

General

Douglas Bailey, Jr.
 Ellen Berry
 Linda & Jim Bodycomb
 Jessica & Ty Clark
 Chesapeake Garden Club of Calvert Co
 Kathy Daniel
 Martin Ferenczi
 Lillian Folts
 Dennis & Mary Jo Ireland
 Sandra Jarrett
 Corinne Pearce
 Matthew Schneider
 Wayne Sexton
 Nancy Smith
 Elaine Strong
 Paul Vetterle
 Keith & Geetha Waehrer
 Gerard Walles
 Jim Weiner

Holly Hill Donations

Thank you to the following, who made a donation to the Holly Hill campaign since our last newsletter:
 Fran Armstrong

Workplace Giving

Tim Dow
 Susan Oakley
 Jackie Price

Check us out on
 Facebook.

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 AmericanChestnutLandTrust/](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanChestnutLandTrust/)

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Prince Frederick, MD 20678

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Why does it say "Or Current Resident" in my address?

In order to use your donations as efficiently as possible, we use USPS Bulk Mail and this statement is now required in the address. Thank you for understanding!

Come Join Us!

Detach and Mail to: The American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc., P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Name _____ **e-mail** _____

Address _____

Phone _____ **I (we) learned about ACLT from** _____

Regular Membership

___ Land Saver—\$35.00 ___ Habitat Protector—\$500.00

___ Land Protector—\$60.00 ___ Trustee of Land—\$1000.00

___ Land Conservator—\$150.00 ___ Sustaining—\$5000.00

Corporate Membership

___ Land Saver Corporate—\$150.00

___ Land Protector Corporate—\$250.00

___ Land Conservator Corporate—\$500.00

The American Chestnut Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. A copy of the current ACLT financial statement is available on request. Requests should be directed to the American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc, P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 or call (410) 414-3400. For the cost of copies and postage, documents and information submitted under the Business Regulation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland are available from the Secretary of State.