

**AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST, INC.  
Prince Frederick, Maryland**

**Annual Membership Meeting  
March 6, 2021 Minutes**

**Draft March 24, 2021**

**Call to Order.** The virtual ZOOM meeting was called to order by President David Farr at 10:03 a.m. on March 6, 2021.

**NOTE:** A video recording of the meeting on the ACLT Web Site, <https://www.acltweb.org/index.php/about-us/reports-and-publications/>. Accordingly, the meeting discussions and presentations will only be briefly summarized in these notes.

**Materials on the Annual Meeting webpage**

Minutes from the March 2019 Annual Meeting

Proposed slate of Directors, along with biographies.

2020 Annual Report

ACLT 2020 Annual Meeting Survey Form to obtain Members' Views

**Welcome and Introduction.** David Farr

David welcomed participants and thanked the Board of Directors, and staff, volunteers and supporters for another good year at ACLT. Then he turned the meeting over for Executive Director to introduce the keynote speaker Dan Murphy who serves as Chief of the Division of Habitat Restoration and Conservation where he oversees the Coastal, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and Environmental Contaminants Programs at the Chesapeake Bay Field Office (CBFO).

**Keynote Speech – Dan Murphy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Dan spoke about his work with the Delmarva Conservation Partnership, his work for the the Patuxent Waters Conservation Area Conservation Design Partnership, the importance of Large Landscape Conservation and his work with the new Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance. He also talked about the new federal legislation known as Chesapeake Wild and how it should add new conservation funding in the Chesapeake watershed

**Election of Board Members.** David Farr advised that the Board was recommending the election of six new members: Peter Daly, Darlene Harrod, Shirley Knight, Nate Novotny, Birgit Sharp, and Fred Tutman, and the extension of terms for 2 Board Members: Joy Bartholomew and Denise Breitburg. There was a **motion** to approve the Board recommendations. Members voted online to **approve** the slate.

**Next there was a series of presentations:**

- Dave Farr reported on the work of the Governance Committee and two land acquisition projects: GRDC-Yowell, 78 acres, and Yoe, 162 acres.
- Greg Bowen described the formation of ACLT 35 years ago as an action for the common good that carries on to this day and the role that the Parkers Creek Heritage Project will play in the establishments of new interpretative panels on the trails.
- Cheryl Place, Treasurer, reported on another good financial year for ACLT, with revenues well exceeding expenditures, despite COVID-19. She also noted how funding trends have shifted with members covering a larger percentage of the budget, as unrestricted grants continue to be hard to find. Finally, she reported that once again, over 80% of all income is used directly toward the implementation of our Trust's mission.
- Land Management - Autumn Phillips-Lewis, staff to the Land Management Committee reported on behalf of Chair Bob Field. Autumn reported that much work had been done to improve wildlife habitat including the continued monitoring of many different bird nesting boxes, the installation of pollinator habitat around the agricultural fields on Holly Hill, and invasive species control in the marsh, meadows, and forests of ACLT. She also noted many of the trail projects that had taken place throughout 2020 including the start of the installation of the new Holly Hill trail and many trail repairs that had to take place after tropical storm Isaias in August. The tropical storm washed 3 major ACLT bridge and boardwalk systems downstream from their proper locations, caused the raft cable to break and allow the raft to float away into the marsh of Parkers Creek and caused 22 trees to come down on the trails. Autumn mentioned that a new shed had been built on Double Oak Farm and that the garden had continued to donate much needed produce to the community in 2020. Autumn stated that ACLT had successfully hosted its 8th annual Master Naturalist class and noted that these volunteers were integral to completing the forest diversity survey in 4 new plots in 2020. Lastly, she acknowledged and thanked the Wednesday Woods Workers, Thursday Trail Adventures, and Chesapeake Conservation Corps Members for all of their work on land management projects throughout the year.
- Volunteer Awards - Autumn Phillips-Lewis, Land Manager, thanked all volunteers and especially those who had donated over 100 volunteer hours in 2020. Those volunteers were Sharon Brewer, Peggy Cook, Kevin Donahue, Kathy Ellwood, Bob Estes, Judy Ferris, Bob Field, Carl Fleischhauer, Cathy Foutz, Susan Helmrich, Dale Hutchins, Penny Moran, Pat Morrison, Ginny Murphy, Ken Romney, RT West, Chuck Whittington, Ron Wilson.
- Science – Denise Breitburg, Chair, reported that ACLT has benefited from the continued collaboration with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and the University of MD Chesapeake Biological Laboratory in Solomons. Working with ACLT staff, they have expanded the research being conducted. She provided examples of the exciting work.
- Outreach and Membership – Miriam Gholl, Community Relations Manager, presented the accomplishments of the Outreach and Membership Committee (O&MC) in 2020. Miriam described how the O&MC “pivoted” when the Covid-19 pandemic struck in March. Because outdoor activities were still deemed safe and even encouraged, the number of visitors to ACLT's trails skyrocketed to an estimated 68,000 in 2020. Most live events were cancelled, but the

Committee came up with numerous “virtual” events which were extremely popular. These included a virtual Earth Day 5K, a 22-mile “Hit the Trails” challenge, where participants hiked all 22 miles of trails, and the “Passport to Preservation” to replace the annual Sip & Save beer-tasting event. Facebook groups were created for participants in the virtual events and became a way for the community to connect through photos and shared experiences. A new outdoor event, ACLT’s October Celebration Weekend, replaced the annual Dinner and Auction and kicked off the fall appeal. Since it was deemed safe to hold outdoor events with precautions in place to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the Parkers Creek Challenge was held as well as the annual Wreath and Greens sale, both of which were highly successful. Miriam concluded by introducing the “theme” for 2021 – a celebration of ACLT’s 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. An event will be held in December to mark the anniversary of the signing of the documents forming ACLT in 1986.

- Admin and Fundraising - Robyn Truslow provided insight into ACLT’s very successful Fall Appeal and discussed the possibilities for a fundraising campaign for the GRDC property and the Yoe property.

**Adjournment.** David Farr concluded the meeting. There being no new business, there was a **motion** to adjourn. The motion was **passed** and the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.

Approved by Board of Directors May 15, 2021