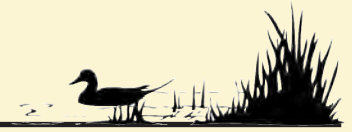


Watershed Observer



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT LAND TRUST - VOLUME 37 No. 3 SUMMER 2023

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COMING UP ON THE CALENDAR

JULY

Date TBD – Guided Early Morning
Hike at North Side Trailhead

AUGUST

26 Sat – Guided Evening Hike – Fare-
well to Summer (time TBD) at
South Side Trailhead

SEPTEMBER

10 Sun - Sip & Save (1pm-5pm) at
North Side Trailhead

See full calendar on page 8 and on
our web site:

<https://bit.ly/ACLTEvents23>

A Strategy to Harness Maryland's New Conservation Tools

By Mary Hoover

2023 is shaping up to be a pivotal year for land conservation in Maryland. With the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Land Protection plan on track for approval this year, the Service can soon pursue up to 30,000 acres of land toward a new National Wildlife Refuge in Southern Maryland. With the recent passage of the Maryland the Beautiful Act during the 2023 General Assembly, land trusts will soon have access to a revolving loan fund to assist the protection of critical properties. Finally, with the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance (SMCA) nearing its two-year anniversary, regional partnerships are ever-growing in strength and influence. The conditions are ripe for advancing the landscape-scale conservation needed to address climate change. However, to successfully utilize these tools and achieve Maryland's ambitious land preservation goals, we need an overarching strategy. In applying for the 2023 round of NFWF funding, ACLT devised a broad strategy to use and build upon our partnerships and resources to amplify conservation efforts in the region.

In brief, ACLT proposes a strategy for land conservation that forges partnerships with local communities by establishing watershed friends groups throughout the five counties of Southern Maryland. Such partnerships will bolster the USFWS and local SMCA land trusts' efforts to identify conservation properties, as well as undertake general watershed stewardship through water quality monitoring and report card preparation. This strategy addresses the dual aspects of land and water protection, confronting the inextricable relationship between land and water ecosystems in a much-needed holistic approach to conservation.

On paper this all sounds good, but how effective can these friends groups really be? To assuage any doubts about the efficacy of citizen action, look no further than ACLT's own friends groups. ACLT's current three friends groups have far exceeded the expectations we originally had for them, demonstrating the strength of local action to influence

environmental change. What started as an effort to coordinate community paddle outings on Calvert's creeks quickly turned into yearly water testing, lengthy water quality documents, reporting stormwater management failings to the county, testifying against town center expansions, installing highway signage for creeks, and much more. The success we've seen with the Friends of Hunting Creek, Friends of St. Leonard Creek, and Friends of Mill Creek may be unexpected, but it should come as no surprise. Who better to advocate for watershed health than those who regularly fish

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



Friends of Hunting Creek member Bob Estes assessing a failed stormwater management site in Prince Frederick. Photo by Ron Klauda.



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Published quarterly by the American Chestnut Land Trust. The ACLT is dedicated to the preservation of Calvert County, Maryland's Natural and Historical Resources. Since it was established in 1986, ACLT has preserved over 3,800 acres. We own 1627 acres, manage 1,810 acres owned by the State of Maryland, and hold conservation easements on 374 privately-owned acres. — Editors: Ellen and David Farr

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From the President's Desk ...

Success!

ACLT members deserve a big round of applause for our significant progress in land preservation and energy conservation over the last two years.

Accomplishments

Purchased two Properties (Yoe & GRDC)

Set Aside Stewardship Funds for Both Properties

Added Solar Power to Double Oak Barn

Maintained a \$50K Balance in the and Preservation Fund

Assisted with the preservation of Brown United Methodist Church (on hold pending grant)

The individual items listed above presented a challenge. Each required a different approach to fundraising. The Board, showing their unwavering confidence in the ACLT membership, decided to set a fundraising goal that would include all of the above items. Thanks to numerous donations from our generous members, Along with a \$100,000 grant from the France-Merrick Foundation, we were able to meet our goals. We succeeded!

I hope you were able to visit the Yoe property during the recent open house. The house's renovation is essential to our ongoing efforts to be a source of conservation leadership in Calvert County. Each year we have brought on board two Chesapeake Conservation Corps Members who have provided crucial help in our programs. But finding reasonable rentals for the interns is a problem. With the renovation of the Yoe house, we can now offer an attractive rental unit to entice the interns to work for us.

It is an exciting time for ACLT, and I am proud to be associated with such a vibrant membership.

David Farr, President



The Yoe House.

Around ACLT

Keynote Address at Bernie Fowler Patuxent River Wade-in

By Anna Killius, Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Program¹

***Note:** The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a regional leader in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It works with both legislative and executive branches of each Bay state. We were delighted when we learned that a graduate of our own Patuxent High school, and a participant in our school system's CHESPAX program, now serves as the Chesapeake Bay Commission's Executive Director. I think that you will be delighted too when you read her speech at this year's Wade-in.*

Greg Bowen, Executive Director ACLT

"It is a pleasure and honor to join you all today for the 36th Annual Patuxent River Wade In, here at Jefferson Patterson Park. Secretary Flora, thank you for the introduction. I thought I'd begin by sharing a bit about why this moment is, personally, such a special one for me. From kindergarten through sixth grade, I lived at the mouth of the Bay, in Hampton Roads, Virginia. We watched the tall ships sail into Norfolk for festivals, spotted fiddler crabs tip toe across mud flats and marshes.

But in seventh grade, my father got orders to the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, and my family moved here, to Calvert County. I found myself in a new state, a new school with all new classmates, and a curriculum with a funny name – ChesPax. Over thirty years ago, Calvert County Public Schools created the ChesPax environmental education program to provide hands-on experiences for K-12 students that connected them with their local waterways the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River. And when I was in 7th grade, Maryland was engaging schools and students throughout the state to help grow submerged aquatic vegetation, or SAV, that could be used to restore lost grass beds in the Chesapeake Bay.

I can remember the glow of the grow lights above the tubs of SAV in the back of our classroom. We tended to those grasses, taking careful notes as we watched them get taller. We knew that every little bit of growth brought us closer to the real highlight of our science lessons that year, a class canoe trip on a local creek where we would identify and measure the bay grasses below. When that day came, we split up into groups of three, donned our safety gear, and learned how to properly hold a paddle for the first time. I remember leaning over the gunnel of the canoe as we floated down the creek to drop in our Secchi disks, carefully recording the water clarity and the types of grasses we could spy. The information we collected that day is now part of a data set decades in the making and is used to tell the story of the Chesapeake, its tributaries, and our impact on the health of its native habitats. The grasses we grew were planted and are hopefully helping to change the story of our Chesapeake for the better, restoring

grass beds lost to pollution and poor water clarity.

That is the type of community-driven science that we celebrate today. But instead of secchi disks, today, and for over 30 years, Bernie used his sneakers to tell the history of our river and our watershed, of what it looked like long before we were born, and of how our actions could help turn

things around. For three decades, Southern Maryland and its leaders have been investing in and growing the next generation of stewards who understand that this water runs in our blood, it provides for our communities, and it needs to be protected.

And now, we're at a moment when that investment will be tested. This year, we mark the 40th anniversary of the Chesapeake Bay Program, the partnership of states and federal agencies working together towards a cleaner Bay and a healthy watershed. We're at a moment of generational change. A new cohort of leaders are tagging in for the next chapter in the restoration work.

I think of this moment as the changing of the guard, when the sentries on duty are relieved by new personnel. The old guard trusts that the ground they've gained will be protected. And the new guard feels the responsibility of what they inherit. As the person stepping into shoes of the Commission's long-time leader, Ann Swanson, wading into the same waters as Bernie Fowler, who served on the Commission for 37 years, I very much feel the weight of that responsibility.

When we reflect on the legacy of these leaders, the guard in relief, we have much to be grateful for. It is because of their courage and their vision that we've seen amazing progress in the face of strong headwinds. We've reduced nitrogen pollution by a third even as our population has grown by half. Farmers throughout the watershed are using cover crops, livestock fencing, and forested buffers to protect their local streams. Wastewater treatment standards are beyond what we knew to be possible when this work began, because leaders like Bernie expected more, expected better, and fought to make it happen.



Anna Killius.-
Photo by Fred Tutman

The challenges before us—hotter days, higher waters, heavier storms, and more development—those challenges will make our work much harder moving forward. Our estuary is one of the best studied in the world. But everything we know and have come to expect about our rivers and our ecosystems is quickly changing. Bernie Fowler was driven by a memory of what this river once was. The next generation can't know the Bay as it was. And that can't be what drives us, what energizes us in the next 40 years of our partnership. But we have expectations, instilled in us by Bernie, by countless Bay leaders who taught us to demand better and never give up. We don't have a memory of the Bay of the past, but we have a vision of the Bay of tomorrow. A watershed that sustains us, where our well-being and that of the living resources we rely on are indistinguishable. Because after all, we are one of the species that calls this watershed home and rely on its abundance to thrive.

Protecting this watershed is about protecting ourselves and meeting the needs of every community within its boundaries. Bernie knew the importance of community, of bringing everyone into the work of protecting our rivers and streams by making the message of clean water and healthy living resources personal, memorable, and relatable. The Patuxent River Wade-in carries that lesson forward. It reminds us to be welcoming because our efforts must include all and serve all to truly be successful. It reminds us to be accountable because it is our responsibility to protect these resources for folks we may never meet, whether they are miles downstream or years in the future.

And it reminds us to be joyful. This is serious work and it is hard work. And for Bernie, it was a lifetime of work. But the courage to take on such a tall and difficult task is only possible if we take joy in what we are protecting and in the friendships that we form. Thank you for inviting me to join you all, to celebrate Bernie Fowler's leadership, to mark this new chapter in our watershed's story, and to reconnect with a river that is so much a part of my Chesapeake journey."

¹ Anna Killius joined the Commission in 2023 as Executive Director. She previously served as Director of Advocacy for the James River Association and legislative counsel for Congressman John Sarbanes of Maryland, where she advanced his leadership as co-chair of the Congressional Chesapeake Bay Watershed Task Force. Anna has held appointments to the Chesapeake Bay Citizens Advisory Committee and the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. She is a 2021 graduate of the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute. She received a juris doctor degree from William and Mary Law School, where she was a member of the first class of the Virginia Coastal Policy Center, and a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Dallas with a concentration in Applied Mathematics.

Conservation Buyers Needed NOW!

By Greg Bowen Executive Director

New legislation enacted this year offers a big challenge and an opportunity for those who may be thinking about buying rural lands. The Maryland the Beautiful Act set a goal of conserving 40% of Maryland's land by 2040. It also authorizes the Governor to provide revolving loan funding for land trusts to buy, conserve, and resell lands to conservation buyers.

To date, approximately 29% of Maryland's landmass has been conserved as federal, state, or municipal parks, or through the sale or easement donations from private rural lands. However, roughly the same amount of land has been developed, and the race is on to see what happens with the remaining 2.6 million acres that has not been developed or conserved.

The next 20 years may be the test, as the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) predicts that roughly 70% of US farmland will change in the next 20 years. (<https://bit.ly/USDAFamilyFarms>). It notes that many family operations do not have a next generation skilled in or willing to continue farming. Nearly all lands conserved through county and state programs have been because of easement programs. It is rare that land trusts can buy properties on the market and conserve them. However, revolving loan funds give land trusts the opportunity to buy, conserve, and resell the lands.

This is why ACLT will be holding two public webinars to work on the development of a conservation buyers list for land trusts in the Southern Maryland region to use. We will be discussing how conservation buyers will be able to get an inside track on finding properties to purchase after they are conserved and therefore with the opportunity to be at a lower price and under the terms that they find acceptable.

This idea is not new. Calvert Farmland Trust was formed in the 1990s out of a concern that prime properties and farming communities were becoming developed. Calvert Farmland Trust developed a system that allowed them to outbid developers when critical farms were offered for sale. They also had developed a list of conservation buyers that they used whenever they purchased a property. We believe this model can be used again with the programs available today.

See below to register for our webinars. Note: they will be recorded and shared afterward.



ACLT's Hidden Food Web

By Clara Brill-Carlat, Assistant Land Manager

Earlier this summer, as I cruised up Parkers Creek on one of ACLT's guided canoe trips, the high schoolers paddling alongside me exclaimed excitedly each time a fish darted into view. For many of the students, it was their first time visiting Parkers Creek; for some, it was their first time in a canoe. Their enthusiasm encouraged me to take a closer look at the creek beneath us and reminded me how much life is teeming just out of sight in our watershed.

To begin to understand the complex ecosystem we live in, look no further than the trees and vegetation alongside our local streams. These riparian buffers provide organic matter that supports benthic macroinvertebrates (macros), which are small aquatic animals found on stream bottoms. They consume nutrients and debris in streams and are a key component of the food web (Stumpf et al., 2009). Macros are less mobile than fish, so their survival depends on the nearby food sources and habitat available to them. This is just one reason why protecting our waterways and riparian buffers from development is key to the health of our ecosystem (Luell, 2020).

Macros can be divided into four groups based on their feeding habits: shredders, collectors, grazers, and predators. When a leaf or piece of wood enters the stream from a riparian buffer, microbes in the stream begin breaking it down (Lauver, 2021). Next, "shredder" macros consume tiny pieces of the debris. As they eat, they produce even smaller scraps of organic matter, less than 1 millimeter in size, which are snatched up by "collector" macros. Meanwhile, "grazers" eat algae and vegetation growing within the stream, and "predators" consume other macroinvertebrate larvae. The ratio of macros groups in any particular stream varies depending on the size of the stream and the food sources available; for example, small streams that are enclosed within a canopy of trees typically have high proportions of shredders and collectors due to the steady influx of woody and vegetative debris (Stumpf et al., 2009).

A healthy macroinvertebrate population supports a healthy population of its predators: fish. Assessing the fish and macros populations at ACLT is an ongoing project, and in 2017, ACLT completed its first fish diversity survey to discover which species are present in our watershed. There were 25 species caught and identified in Parkers Creek and 9 in nearby tributaries. (You can read more about the results of the original fish survey in ACLT's spring 2018 newsletter: <https://www.acltweb.org/Spring18Newsletter>.) During last summer's monitoring, as staff and volunteers dragged a seine net through seemingly uninhabited shallows

of Parkers Creek, we came up with netfuls of small, native fish like pumpkinseeds and mummichogs.

Moving up the food chain, the birds in our ecosystem such as ospreys and bald eagles are major consumers of fish. On paddles up Parkers Creek, you can sometimes spot bald eagles perched in the trees, watching the water below. Walking on Parkers Creek Trail alongside the water, you may see osprey circling and intermittently diving to snag an unsuspecting fish. These eye-catching birds could not survive without the riparian vegetation, macroinvertebrates, and fish species present in our watershed, many of which go unseen or unappreciated. When we stir up a few fish with our canoe paddles, we truly are just scratching the surface.

Sources:

Lauver, Rebecca (2021). *Macroinvertebrate Menagerie*. Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. <https://bit.ly/MacroMenagerie>

Luell, Steven (2020). *The Importance of Macroinvertebrates in Freshwater Streams*. The Habitat Section of the American Fisheries Society. <https://bit.ly/MacrosInStreams>

Stumpf, S., Valentine-Darby, P., & Gwilliam, E. (2009). *Aquatic Macroinvertebrates - Ecological Role*. National Park Service. <https://bit.ly/MacrosRole>



A juvenile pumpkinseed found during the 2022 Parkers Creek fish survey.



A stonefly larva, which is a member of the "shredder" feeding group (Luell, 2020).

June—A Month of Celebrations & Events

By Miriam Gholl, Community Relations Manager

The month of June began with a celebration of good food, fellowship, and appreciation for the beauty of our land at the Dining in the Field event and the celebrations continued with not one, but two events on the same day—the Yoe Property Open House and the Juneteenth Celebration at Jefferson Patterson Park on June 17th. Space does not allow us to list all of those who contributed to the events nor all the photos, but you can view them here: <https://www.acltweb.org/June23Celebrations>.

Dining in the Field

“Magical”, “Fabulous”, “Incredible” are just a few of the words attendees used to describe The Dining in the Field (DITF) event held on June 1st at ACLT. Over 120 ACLT supporters and friends gathered in the field behind Double Oak Barn for a sumptuous meal consisting exclusively of locally sourced ingredients.

The organizers of Dining in the Field - Trish Weaver of Dream Weaver Catering, Sue Kullen, and Sue Dzurec - describe themselves as, “Three friends whose mission is to honor local farmers and food artisans who provided the ingredients for the meal – all to create an experience to raise money for a good cause.” The trio reached out to ACLT this spring to ask whether ACLT would host the fundraiser. They have held several such events throughout Southern Maryland, including a previous one at ACLT in 2019. Net proceeds are donated to local charities, and the June event raised approximately \$10,000 for ACLT!

The weather was ideal —no clouds or bugs! The setting was serene—the (very) long table was set up so that diners had views of the meadow on one side and the flower garden on the other. Speaking of which, the “Flower Girls” (ACLT members Judy Ferris, Jan Degeneffe, and Liz Laher) provided beautiful freshly cut bouquets for the centerpieces. Sue Dzurec, who has decorated ACLT’s Dinner/Auctions for the past several years, created stunning decor, including hand-stenciled napkins featuring ACLT’s logo, Mountain Laurel flowers, and Christmas Fern leaves. Long-time ACLT member Sue Kullen concocted a special signature drink for the evening —the “Rhubarb Gin Gin”, which consisted of juice from fresh local rhubarb, gin, ginger, and prosecco.

In addition to all of the work the DITF ladies did before, during and after, the event would not have been possible without the support of local businesses, sponsors, and volunteers. Read the full list and view more photos here: <https://www.acltweb.org/June23Celebrations> If you missed this year’s event, no worries—the DITF ladies have already begun planning next year’s dinner and hope to hold it at the Yoe Farm.



Raising a Toast and Appetizer Table.-Photos by Izzy Gholl

A Celebration at the Yoe Property

On June 17th, ACLT supporters gathered to celebrate the completion of the Yoe house renovations with an open house and guided tours of the property. The event was a celebration of the success of quite an ambitious campaign that began back in 2019 when the Yoe family approached Executive Director Greg Bowen about the possibility of ACLT purchasing the family farm. Read all the details about the acquisition here in the Summer 2022 Newsletter here: <https://www.acltweb.org/Summer2022Newsletter>. Space does not allow us to list all who contributed to the open house and all the photos, but you can read the full article here: <https://www.acltweb.org/June23Celebrations>.

Since ACLT settled on the property in June 2022 the house which was built in 1918 has been under renovation by local contractor, Gerry Neal. The house had sustained extensive water damage in recent years, resulting in cracked plaster, peeling wallpaper, and sagging ceilings. But the house has “good bones” and with lots of TLC, has been restored and upgraded where needed. Rather than replacing most of the plaster walls and ceilings, they were repaired. Compared to drywall, plaster is a more solid, thicker material, so it provides better sound dampening, insulation, and fire protection. Other improvements included new kitchen cabinets, refinished floors, and repair of the windows to make them functional again. To make the house more energy efficient, the oil burner was replaced with a high efficiency SEER 20 HVAC system, and R-38 insulation was installed in the attic and R-19 in the crawlspace.

The Yoe house will be rented out to the two Chesapeake Conservation Corps interns who work for ACLT for one year beginning every August. To prepare for their arrival and for the open house, a “Procurement Team” was assembled, consisting of Board Members Randi Vogt and Cheryl Place, who were also responsible for designing



Yoe House Entryway. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.



Yoe Siblings (L-R): Jim Yoe, Beth Yoe Fiddler, Ruth Yoe, Margie Yoe, and John Yoe. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer

the kitchen, suggesting other treatments such as the wallpaper in the blue bedroom. Volunteer Tom Dugan was also part of the team and hauled and refinished several of the furniture pieces, including a beautiful dresser for the blue bedroom, the dining room table, and several other pieces that had been stored in the barn.

A very special moment came when the Yoe siblings arrived just prior to the Open House for a “big reveal” to see all the work that had been done since the sale of the property. They were very pleased and those present enjoyed listening to them reminisce about the many days they spent at the house with their grandparents. The siblings stuck around for the remainder of the event and were happy to speak to other attendees – both inside the house and elsewhere on the farm, happily sharing the history of the farm and family. We are very grateful for their participation!

Another big part of what made the Open House event special was the property tours. Board Member/Land Management Committee Chair Bob Field, staff, and volunteers had created a 3/4-mile trail and several volunteers were trained to lead guided hikes,

explaining along the way the significance and history of several outbuildings.

The 3/4-mile hike was a perfect distance with enough stops for children, old and young, to enjoy it. And, when a Yoe family member was in the hiking group, what interesting and historical stories were told! The painted rocks were sought after on the trail and coveted when found.

Attendees who wished to take the tour were directed to meet by a split rail fence that had been an Earth Day volunteer project for a group of Boy Scouts.

The acquisition of the Yoe property was a win-win for ACLT and the Yoe family. The ability to offer housing to prospective interns makes ACLT an attractive choice, and the Yoe family was able to sell their beloved house and farm knowing it will be cared for and permanently preserved by ACLT. Special thanks to Beth Yoe Fiddler for creating a flyer outlining the history of the Yoe farm and family, as well as a more detailed blog that can be read here:

<https://www.acltweb.org/index.php/history-of-yoe-property/>

All of this would not have been possible without a grant from the France-Merrick Foundation and the generous donations from ACLT members and supporters. Thank you!

Juneteenth Celebration

Juneteenth, the annual celebration of the end of slavery in the United States, was marked by the Calvert County Chapter of the NAACP's annual event at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum on June 17th. ACLT attended the event and shared information with attendees about the ongoing Parkers Creek Heritage Trail (PCHT) project.

The PCHT project team is researching the prehistory and history of the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds, including the important role and contributions made by African Americans. To date, the team has assembled a wide range of materials, summarized in a publication entitled "African American Community of Parkers Creek, circa 1800-1960", which is a work in progress. Download a PDF copy here: <https://bit.ly/PrkCrkCommBook>.

Members of the PCHT team – Lead Researcher Carl Fleischhauer, ACLT Board Member Darlene Harrod, and Historian Kirsti Uunila – were on hand to discuss the project with attendees. Board Member Penny Moran, CCC Intern Cassandra Patrick, and Summer Intern Gabe LaCount also assisted at the ACLT booth.

We recognize that there are many more stories and much more information to add to the PCHT for the benefit of all. We are eager to hear about any material that should be added. We would also like to know about people who might share their stories, photographs, or documents relating to life in the Parkers Creek area. If you would like to share such information, please call the office at (410) 414-3400 or email gbowen@acltweb.org.

The Parkers Creek Heritage Trail project is being carried out by the American Chestnut Land Trust with support from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, part of the Maryland Historical Trust in the Maryland State Department of Planning.

Read more about the PCHT in an article in the Fall 2022 Newsletter:

<https://bit.ly/ACLTFall22NL> and the Winter 2022 Newsletter:

<https://bit.ly/ACLTWinter22NL> and on our website:

<https://www.acltweb.org/PCHT>

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)



Google map showing hiking Trail Created for Yoe Open House. Created by Bob Field

ACLT 2023 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July – October 2023

Please check website for up-to-date information.

<https://bit.ly/ACLTEvents23>

JULY

Date TBD – Guided Early Morning Hike at North Side Trailhead

AUGUST

26 Sat – Guided Evening Hike – Farewell to Summer (time TBD) at South Side Trailhead

SEPTEMBER

10 Sun - Sip & Save (1pm-5pm) at North Side Trailhead

OCTOBER

8 Sun – Annual Dinner & Auction (4pm-

African Americans of Parkers Creek

The following is an excerpt from the Parkers Creek Heritage Trail display used at the Juneteenth Celebration.

From the early 18th until the mid-20th century, Calvert County was majority African American. Blacks began to move out of the county after the Civil War, when other areas offered greater economic opportunity and social mobility.

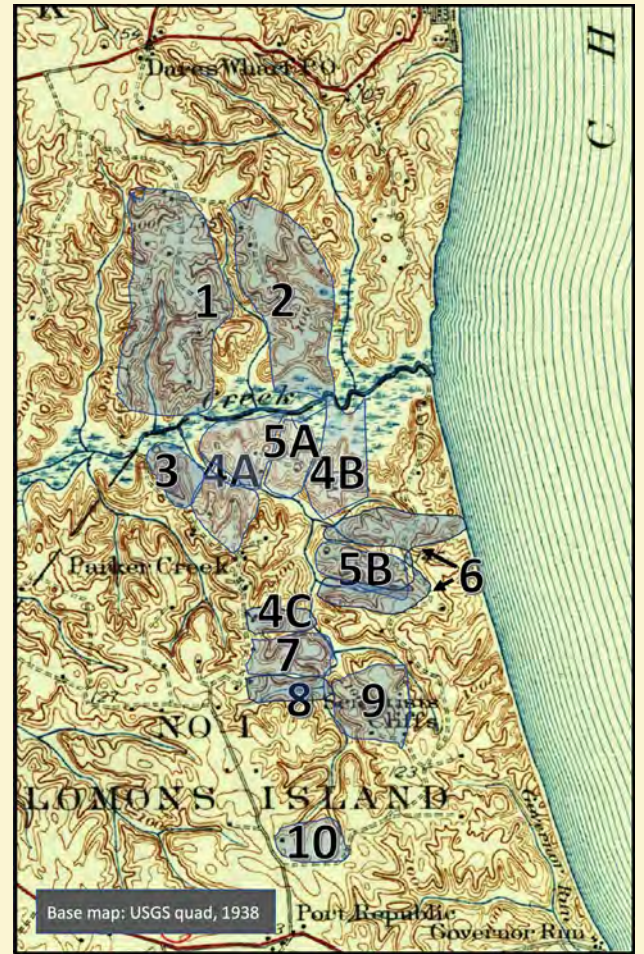
Many African American men enlisted for service in the Civil War; more than 200 African American men from Calvert County enrolled in the US Colored Troops. Some, like Joseph H. Wallace of Parkers Creek, were free at the time they enlisted. Others were enslaved, and the people who held them in bondage applied for a cash bounty to free them for enlistment.

There were few African American landowners before the end of slavery, but opportunities for ownership expanded following the Civil War. The map shows some Black-owned properties near Parkers Creek from about 1880-1930. The area is still home to several African American landowners today.

Parkers Creek has also been the home for churches, schools, and fraternal and sororal organizations like the Grand Order of Galilean Fishermen, the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, and the Household of Ruth.



Parkers Creek Heritage Trail Display at Juneteenth Celebration. Photo by Penny Moran.



Properties near Parkers Creek owned or formerly owned by African American families (selected examples)

This map with rough approximations of boundaries is a work in progress: active research continues as part of the Parkers Creek Heritage Trail project. In order to determine accurate boundaries and ownership history, we plan to carry out more deed research and to confer with members of these families.

1. Joseph and Arabella Wallace property
2. John W. and Sarah Scales property
3. Alonzo and Dina Bell property
- 4A, 4B, and 4C. William H. Commodore properties
- 5A and 5B. David and Jimmy Parker properties
6. John Cephas Wallace and descendants' property (in part)
7. Major and Susie Commodore property (in part)
8. Cornelius Harrod property
9. Lemuel Wallace property
10. Clarence and Henrietta Commodore property

upon the meandering streams in their backyard? Who better to notice declines in water quality than those who frequent the creeks for kayak excursions? Who has more passion for a watershed than those who directly benefit from it? Those who live, work, and play in a local watershed are some of the most attuned to the changes and needs of that watershed, making them a critical, yet largely untapped resource for conservation advocacy. ACLT proposes to further tap into this resource to help actualize the landscape-scale conservation envisioned by SMCA

As stated briefly above, the newly formed friends groups will help SMCA address the dual aspects of land and water protection. With respect to land protection, we envision the friends groups as “watchdogs” for conservation properties in their communities. This responsibility helps seize one key conservation opportunity coming to Southern Maryland within the year: the USFWS Land Protection Plan (LPP). Once the LPP is approved by the USFWS director this fall, the Service may begin pursuing up to 30,000 acres of land from willing sellers within the plan’s 500,000-acre acquisition boundary. Finding 30,000 acres of prime conservation land within a 500,000-acre expanse is no small task, and the Service will need all the help it can get from partners to target potential conservation properties. Thus, the new friends groups will become watchdogs for such properties. Real estate websites like Zillow can only go so far in notifying buyers when properties go up for sale. Some potential conservation properties might never even make it to a website, rendering word-of-mouth as the primary means for identifying such properties. This is where friends groups are useful. As previously stated, those who live, work, and play in a local watershed are some of the most acutely aware of happenings within that watershed, like which neighbors are considering selling their land. Therefore, friends groups composed of watershed residents with local intel will be an indispensable resource for land conservation pursuits by the USFWS as well as land trusts operating in their region

SMCA envisions both landscape-scale protection *and* restoration of Southern Maryland. The property scouting responsibility of friends groups primarily addresses the protection aspect of this vision, but we also need a strategy for restoration. To restore, we must be able to identify where restoration efforts should be focused, and to identify priority locations, we must monitor. Consequently, the other main responsibility of the friends groups will be to monitor their local ecosystems. Friends, being some of the most aware of their watershed’s needs, are encouraged to pursue whichever avenue of monitoring they see fit. However, all groups should partake in water quality monitoring, like how ACLT’s friends groups participate in the yearly water quality blitz. Blitz-style monitoring for nitrogen concentrations in non-tidal streams is an easy and cost-effective way to estimate average nitrogen concentrations throughout a watershed and target hotspots for restoration. ACLT hopes to see this type of monitoring become more ubiquitous throughout the region due to its accessibility and effectiveness. One of the limiting factors in spreading these water monitoring efforts throughout the region, however, is the mere volume of boots on the ground to collect samples, and friends groups are a perfect way to resolve this shortcoming

2023 thus far has been a breakthrough year for land conservation in Maryland. We are finally seeing a desperately needed surge in the number of conservation tools required to confront climate change. To make use of these tools, however, SMCA needs a strategy. By establishing friends groups to identify critical conservation properties and conduct watershed monitoring, SMCA will be better equipped to employ the conservation tools at our disposal and propel Maryland toward its bold conservation goals.



Join a Friends Group!

ACLT welcomes new members to its current Friends Groups and is planning to form additional groups based on property owner interest.

- **Step 1:** Find Your Watershed. Type in your address in the County's Interactive Map to determine which watershed your property is in. Visit: bit.ly/CalvertWatershedMap
- **Step 2:** Email Mary Hoover, SMCA's Coordinator, at mary@acltweb.org or call (410) 414-3400

Calvert County Watershed Map - Calvert County Technology Services Dept.

Thank you for your support

New Members

ACLT welcomes the following new members since the Spring 2023 Newsletter:

Susan Buckalew & Dan Davis
Matthew & Brittany Colip
Rachel Hexter Fried
Jesse Howe & Amanda Witte
Paul & Amy Impelluso
Angela & Evelyn Kershner
Larry & Francine Lamson
Katherine Lawrence
Hugh & Katherine Philipp & Family
Stephanie Richards
Catherine Saunders Wilson & Mark Wilson
Kathie Sulick

Memorial Donations

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

In memory of **Margaret (Margot) Caldwell:**

Jane Head
Ellen McAvoy

In memory of **Robert W. Davis, Jr.:**

Annette Davis & Family

In memory of **Daniel Head:**

Julie & Rob Dallen

In Honor of Donations

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

In honor of **Miriam Gholz:**

Jamie, Franzie, Charlie & Lias Elliott

In honor of **Susan Helmrich:**

Esther Allen

Gift Memberships

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

Barrie Howard
Dorothy Howe
Patrick & Ginny Murphy
Liz Orlandi

General Contributions and Designated Gifts

Facebook Fundraisers

Thanks to the following hosts of Facebook fundraisers and to those who contributed!

Mike Cunningham
Leon Drumm
Chris Riollano

General

Ellen and Richard Berry & Family
Fisher Foundation
Amy Plummer
Precise Systems – Reggie Young
Susan Skow
Wannderbirds Club

Land & Stewardship Campaign

Angela Bollich & John Williamson
Charity & Matt Humm
Judith Kay

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Coates-Adams-Gorman Family
Ronald & Kathy Klauda
Shirley Knight & Bonnie Carter
Jody Longhill & Jim Borell family
Cheryl Place
Randi Vogt
John and Cindy Yoe
Yoe family

Friends Forever Society

Thank you to the following donors for remembering ACLT in their estate plans:

Dan Boesz
Peter Daly
Kathy Daniel & David Braun
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Millicent Gay*
James Green, Jr.*
Robert Jeager*
Steven and Jackie King
Jane Klemmer*
Shirley Knight & Bonnie Carter
Gary Loew
Robyn & Eric Truslow
Caroline Van Mason*

*Deceased

Please contact us if you wish to be added to ACLT's Friends Forever Society



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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!

Help Us Grow!

Thanks to your support, ACLT has grown into a vibrant land conservancy with a bright future. As demonstrated in this newsletter, we are making progress on several fronts - preserving more land - fighting climate change - staying engaged with the community - plus lots of exciting projects underway! We want to share our good news with everyone - current and new members and donors alike! We're asking for your help by ...

- talking us up to your friends and family - tell them why you support ACLT
- inviting them to hike with you or attend one of our many events
- inviting them to volunteer with you at ACLT
- following us on Social Media and sharing our posts or sharing your own photos of the beauty of ACLT with friends and family
- Giving the gift of an ACLT membership (go to www.acltweb.org/membership)



Help us continue our mission! Please donate by scanning the QR Code above or mail a check made payable to ACLT to: P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Or donate online at www.acltweb.org/donate



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.