



By Pat Morrison, Art for All Seasons Participant

Annual Report 2023

American Chestnut Land Trust

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Photo Credit: Robin Furth, ACLT Hiking Challenge Group

Land Acknowledgement & Pledge

Adopted November 2023

ACLT acknowledges that the land it stewards, including Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds, is the ancestral home of the Peoples of the Piscataway Confederacy and other Indigenous People. Further, we recognize the people of African descent, enslaved and free, who once worked on or owned the farms, the land of which is now stewarded by ACLT. We recognize the contributions made by these displaced and enslaved peoples in the face of injustice and inequity and acknowledge our obligation to maintain the land and educate the public in such a way that their spirit and heritage are not forgotten.

Accordingly, ACLT pledges to continue its fundamental mission of connecting all people to the land by providing equitable and inclusive access to the lands we steward, through ongoing research and education about the land's inhabitants and their history, and through outreach to all, particularly those most affected by societal inequities. As a leader in land conservation and preservation we strive by example to foster a feeling of belonging to this region and at ACLT for all its diverse communities with the hope of a more equitable and sustainable future in Nature for all.

Mission Statement

The American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT) preserves and conserves the natural and cultural resources of the Parkers Creek and Governors Run Watersheds for the benefit of this and future generations. We provide environmentally sustainable public access to managed properties for educational, scientific, recreational, and cultural purposes. We promote land conservation and preservation throughout Southern Maryland.

Vision for ACLT in 2028

ACLT is a recognized leader and advocate for land conservation and preservation. It has expanded the land it owns and manages in the Parkers Creek and Governors Run Watersheds, where it employs best management practices to conserve, protect and restore healthy, resilient ecosystems. ACLT connects people to the land by providing public access to its well-maintained trail system and through its broad range of recreational, educational, cultural, and agricultural activities. ACLT strives for diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that it does.

ACLT is a strong advocate for land preservation and conservation in Calvert County and Southern Maryland. It is a model for other land trusts. Robust and financially secure, it serves as a regional center for rural lands stewardship, research, or wildlife observation, appreciation, and protection. ACLT is a catalyst in forming alliances and partnerships with other nonprofit organizations, governmental entities, businesses, and the broader community to build a large network of permanently preserved land and to foster a strong and positive land ethic throughout the region.

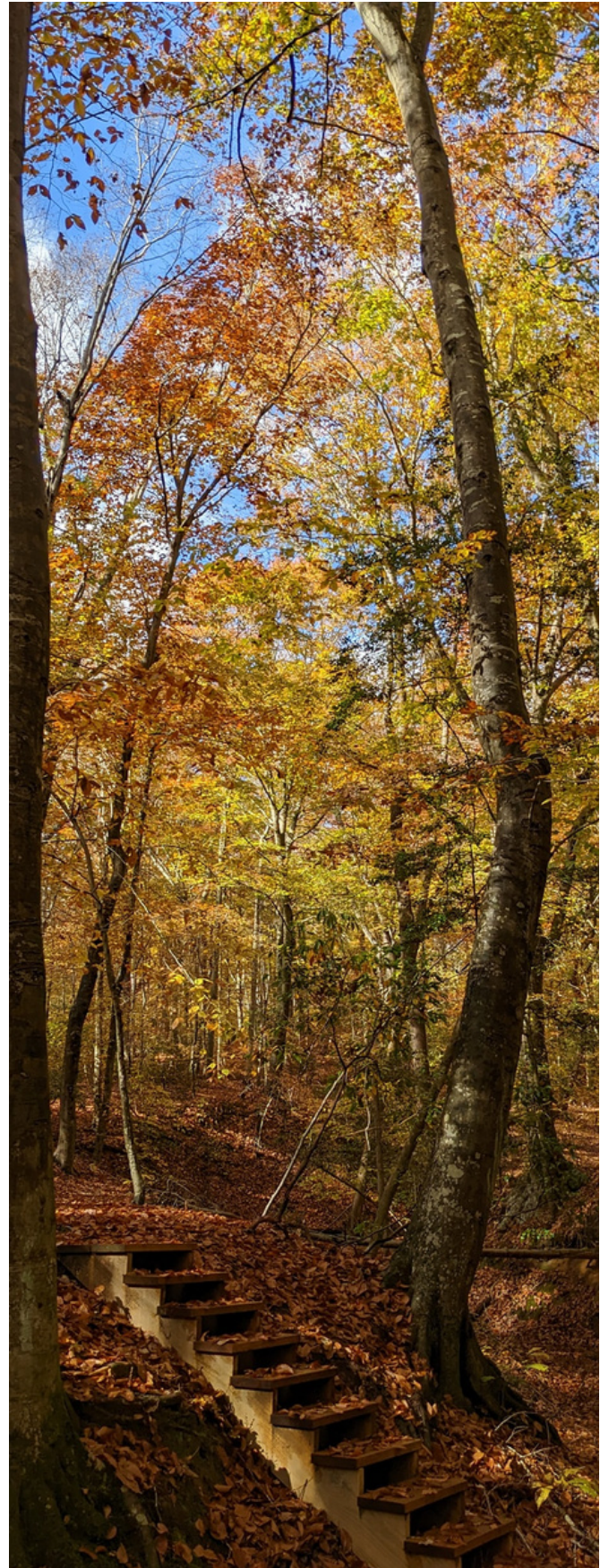


Photo Credit: Sharon Condor, ACLT Hiking Challenge Group

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT	1
LAND ACQUISITION & PRESERVATION	5
RESEARCH IN THE WATERSHED	9
MANAGING THE LAND	13
OUTREACH & MEMBERSHIP	19
ACLT BY THE NUMBERS	25
BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF	28
2023 ACLT COMMITTEES	29



Connecting People to
the Land Since 1986



Photos from ACLT's
Hiking Challenge
Group on Facebook

Executive Director's Report

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5-Year Plan Goal Re: Management of ACLT Operations - To retain an effective and efficient operation, guided by the Standards and Practices set by the Land Trust Alliance, with adequate operating and capital funding resources, to conduct the mission and to achieve the vision of ACLT.

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We Are The Change!

In the last five years, ACLT has been progressing through the implementation of its 2019-2023 Plan. Every year, we report on the progress in implementing the Plan. Following our Annual Meeting in March 2023, we surveyed our participants and the vast majority said that we were on the right track. The biggest initiative of the 2019-2023 Plan was to go regional. As the Board pondered over the preparation of a new 2024-2028 Plan, its members were pleased with the new direction and felt that it should carry forward another five years.

When planning on a ‘landscape scale’, it is easy to think of the five-county region as the landscape to conserve from an anthropological and ecosystems standpoint. When the Europeans traveled to the New World at the dawn of the 17th century, “the Piscataway was the largest and most powerful tribal nation in the lands between the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River.” (bit.ly/PiscatawayArticleDNR) Nearly all of the early colonies on the western shore of Maryland were in the five-county area (e.g. St. Mary’s City, St. Clements Island, Greenberry Point (now part of the Annapolis area). But also, the ecosystem itself could be viewed as one distinct area — a coastal plain of deciduous forests crisscrossed with freshwater streams flowing into tidal waters. Though a significant proportion of it has been removed for farm fields and residential development, much of the hardwood forest remains (see Figure 1).

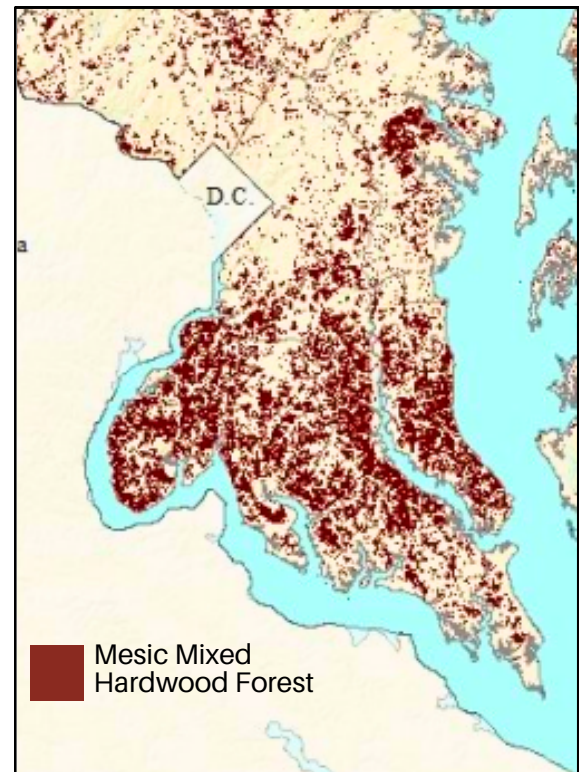
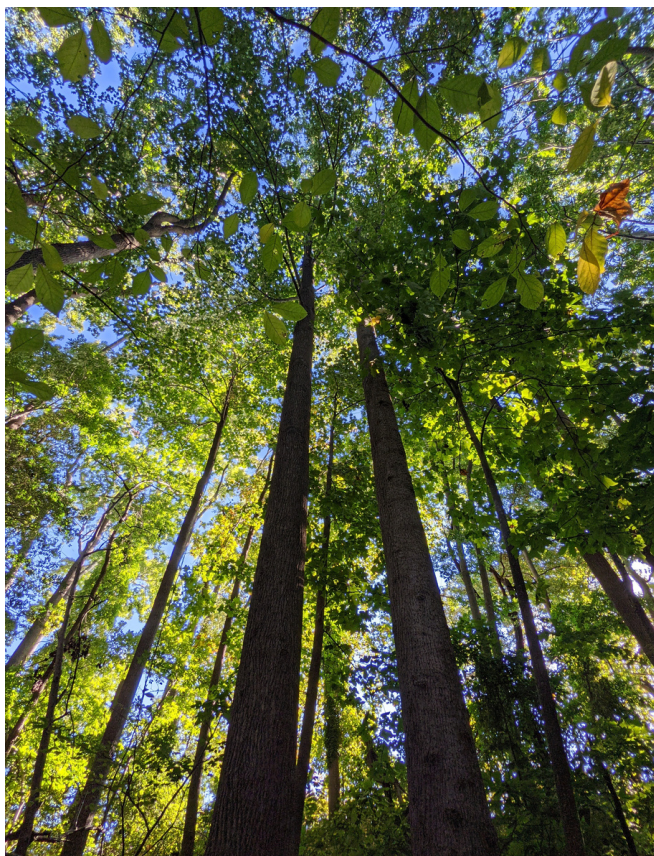


Figure 1: Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest in MD

Native Americans and colonists relied on the region’s temperate climate, rich soils, and the bounty from the rivers and Chesapeake Bay for food, clothing, and tradable goods. The larger the landscape area that we conserve, the greater the chance that we can retain and rely on the habitat, and therefore the species, that we hunt, fish, observe, and treasure.



Last year I reported that the best tool that enables ACLT to work at the landscape scale has been the Capacity Grant awarded to ACLT by anonymous donors in 2021. The 5-year grant allowed us to hire Clara Brill-Carlat, Assistant Land Manager, and Mary Hoover, Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance (SMCA) Regional Coordinator. This year, Clara has been helping to address the climate change impacts in our two watersheds and promoting improved walking, biking, and paddling opportunities for low carbon exercise, recreation, and ecotourism. This year, she worked with other organizations to form the Southern Maryland Active Recreation and Transportation Alliance (SMARTA) (<https://smdactive.net>), a new nonprofit alliance to support people-powered, climate-friendly, outdoor recreation and transportation in Southern Maryland.

Mary Hoover continues to work with the 50+ organizations dedicated to the SMCA mission and has made great progress in developing and implementing a strategy for land conservation in the region and using citizen scientists to protect and advocate for our region's watersheds.

This is the one-two punch needed to address climate change and loss of wildlife habitat. On December 14, 2023, Climate Forward (<https://climateforward.org/>) reported on a new study led by Laura Duncanson, a remote sensing scientist at the University of Maryland. It is entitled "*The Effectiveness of Global Protected Areas for Climate Change Mitigation*". (bit.ly/DuncansonStudy) Duncanson states that "Forests hold, on average, about 30 percent more carbon than what countries have previously reported. Keeping those forests healthy, and preventing their massive stores of carbon from being released into the atmosphere, is even more crucial than we thought."

A study based on data from NASA's Global Ecosystem Dynamics Investigation (GEDI) found that, in the last two decades, designating protected areas to prevent deforestation has prevented the release of about a year's worth of fossil fuel emissions. "It's lots of carbon, more carbon than we expected," said Duncanson.

At the Annual and Dinner Auction, Mary Hoover and Clara Brill-Carlat highlighted their work in addressing climate change by battling residential sprawl, seeking low carbon solutions to travel and recreation (i.e. promoting hiking, biking, and paddling), and monitoring and protecting watersheds. The hope is that the five-year grant period can be extended. This year's fundraising is very encouraging.

Facilities Committee

The documentation, maintenance, and construction of buildings has always been an ACLT activity. At first, the concern for buildings was a part of cultural resources management, with a focus on structures like historic barns and the former homes of African American farm families. Since ACLT's 1986 founding, two barns have been refurbished and two dwellings have been stabilized, along with other more modest efforts.

In the years that followed, ACLT has overseen the construction of two new service buildings. In 1998, a small barn was erected adjacent to the southside parking lot, and in 2012, a larger, timber-framed barn was built adjacent to the Double Oak Farm and subsequently named in honor of volunteer Jeff Klapper. Beginning in 2006, the Double Oak property also saw the phased transformation of a former dwelling into office and meeting space. All these buildings support ACLT activities, ranging from vehicle and equipment storage to administration and fiscal management to the operation of the Double Oak farm. Not surprisingly, productive buildings like these require ongoing renovation and maintenance.

The number of productive buildings in ACLT's care increased with the 2017 purchase of Holly Hill and the 2022 acquisition of the Yoe farm. Both properties included houses that, with improvement, serve as comfortable dwellings. Aware that many non-profit land trusts and conservation-oriented government entities put carefully selected assets into active use, the ACLT Board voted to make improvements to these houses. The buildings now provide a welcome revenue stream and housing for Corps members. As an added benefit, both houses represent aspects of Calvert's traditional built environment, connecting their role back to the ACLT's original focus on historic buildings.

The evident need for ongoing renovation and maintenance motivated the ACLT Board to establish a Facilities Committee, whose members are skilled project planners, contractors, and experienced practitioners of the building trades. Beyond simple maintenance, the committee seeks to respond to climate change, for example finding ways to reduce each building's carbon footprint. Today, the solar array on the Klapper Barn meets all of the electricity requirements for ACLT properties north of Parkers Creek, while a planned solar array for the Yoe house will meet all of that home's electricity needs.

In 2023 the Facilities Committee:

- Oversaw the completion of the restoration of the Yoe house and new doors on the garage
- Oversaw the installation of the solar array on the Klapper Barn
- Initiated a ground-mounted solar array for the Yoe house
- Installed new siding on the ACLT office with the help of a strong team of volunteers



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Land Acquisition & Preservation

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5-Year Plan Goal: To preserve land, according to our mission, in Calvert County through acquisition, easements, and partnerships.

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Parkers Creek, Governors Run, St. Leonard Creek, and Hunting Creek Watersheds:

We were able to wrap up the 2021 Land and Stewardship Campaign which preserved 240 acres of land in our two watersheds. High interest rates in 2023 had a negative impact on the development community throughout the country. This may be why none of the properties targeted by the Board for conservation in our two watersheds were on the market for sale. Staff took this opportunity to send postcards to property owners with land of more than 20 acres in size in our two watersheds and in the Hunting Creek and St. Leonard Creek watersheds, inviting them to online zoom meetings to discuss all land preservation options for property owners.

More than 25 expressed interest and 6 attended one of the two zoom meetings, which were recorded. We then sent the recordings to all, including those who could not attend but expressed interest. We referred two of the owners with lands in areas of interest to Maryland's Program Open Space. Owners of a 40+ acre parcel in the St. Leonard Creek watershed reached out to ACLT about selling a rural legacy easement. Although we provided information, they decided to sell the land. Our Board of Directors decided to try the Buy/Conserve/Resell method and made an offer. However, another party was the highest bidder.

Calvert County:

Calvert has seen a pause in sprawl development outside town centers, but being only 35 miles from Washington, D.C., and having approximately 50,000 acres of lands not developed or preserved, a big rebound in development can happen at any time. Therefore, we were very pleased to see the Board of County Commissioners re-institute its Open Space Revolving Loan Fund established by Ordinance 99-16 for a county land trust to purchase and protect property. The amount approved for use is \$1,300,000, the most money that the County has ever made available to a land trust. The re-emergence of the Revolving Loan Fund could be very helpful for all of our land trusts.



Meanwhile, ACLT has been working with other land trusts to strengthen their capacity to preserve lands including the following:

- Assisting the Southern Calvert Land Trust in meeting its requirements to renew its Cooperative Agreement with the Maryland Environmental Trust.
- Collaborating with the Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust and establishing a Friends of Hellen Creek Group.
- Working with the Calvert Farmland Trust to show them how to use the Rural Legacy program with the buy/conserves/re-sell

Southern Maryland:

ACLT's greatest success in conserving land this year in conserving land was with the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance (SMCA), including land in Calvert County. Soon after meetings were held to establish SMCA, we reached out to the regional staff of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). A dozen years ago, FWS had begun a process to expand the Patuxent Refuge into Southern Maryland. However, efforts had died off due to the loss of support for the project.

With the formation of SMCA, FWS staff started up the process again by preparing maps of the most critical wildlife habitat areas in the five-county region. Its mapping identified over 500,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat. Roughly 70% of Calvert County's land shows up as critical wildlife habitat. In the spring of 2023, FWS held three listening sessions pertaining to the creation of a new refuge which would be one of the largest in the Mid-Atlantic region.

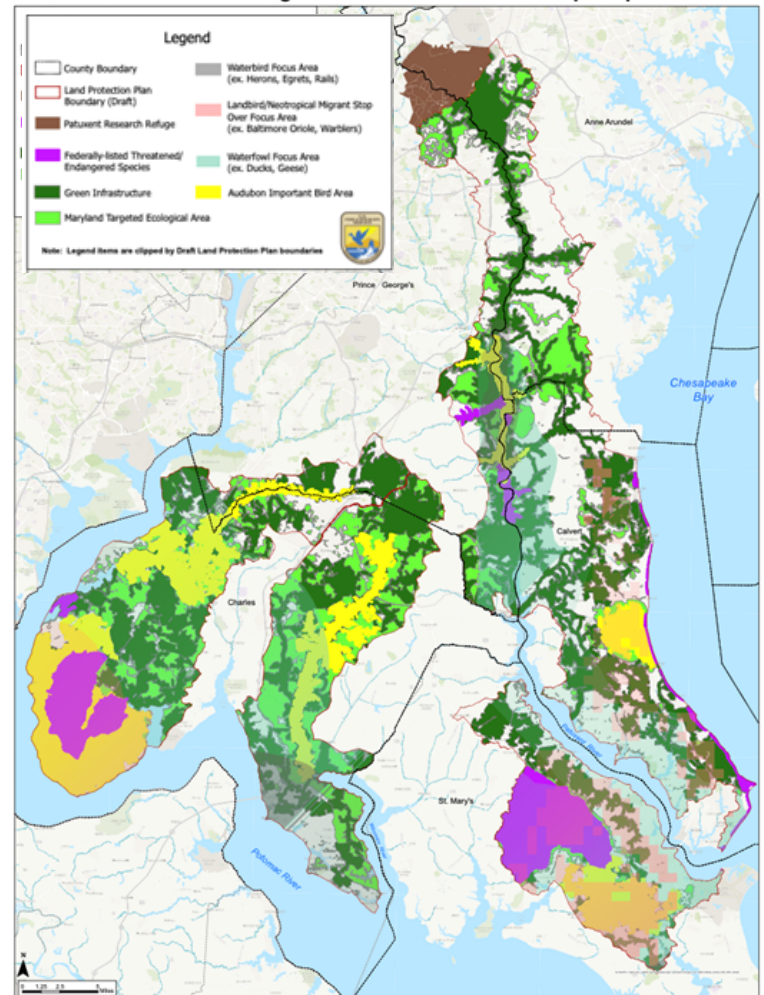
This new Southern Maryland Refuge would help to implement two of SMCA's goals:

- Identify, conserve, restore, and manage the vital network of working and natural lands and waters that support a diversity of habitats for native fish and wildlife, and maintain resilience in the face of future development and climate change for present and future generations.
- Help promote the economic well-being of the region's communities and residents. Also promote the region's natural resource-based industries and their positive impact.

These two goals complement each other. The prospects of ecotourism, agri-tourism, and heritage tourism are excellent due to the region's proximity to major urban centers, whose occupants are seeking all three. By adding economic value to natural lands, we place more emphasis on their protection.

To protect more lands faster, SMCA has bimonthly meetings with the core team to review all properties for sale in the designated critical lands areas of Southern Maryland. For each new property, we identify one of the land trusts to purchase the property or to find a conservation buyer who would be willing to work with SMCA to buy and protect the land. We also reach out to county and state agencies to see if they might be interested in protecting these properties. This collaborative approach has already proven effective in our first years of implementing the program.

*** DRAFT * Refuge Land Protection Plan Concept Map**



The new mapping work by the FWS will help us to establish more wildlife hubs and corridors as County Priority Preservation Areas and/or Rural Legacy Areas. We have already reached out to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners to expand the Calvert Creeks Rural Legacy Area to include Fishing Creek and more of the Hunting Creek Watershed. They have expressed a willingness to do so. If this initiative is approved, we are laying the groundwork for an eventual end to subdivision sprawl as we know it.

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Research in the Watershed

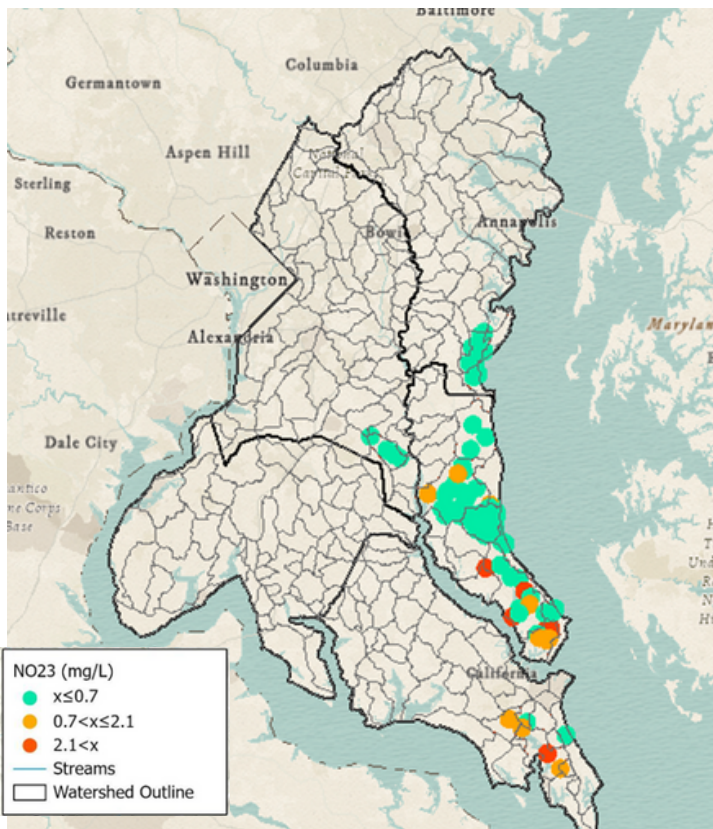
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5-Year Plan Goal: Serve as an advisory committee to the ACLT Board of Directors, Land Management Committee, and ACLT staff providing science-based recommendations for the best management of the Parkers Creek and Governors Run Watershed ecosystems as well as advocacy positions for Southern Maryland environmental issues.

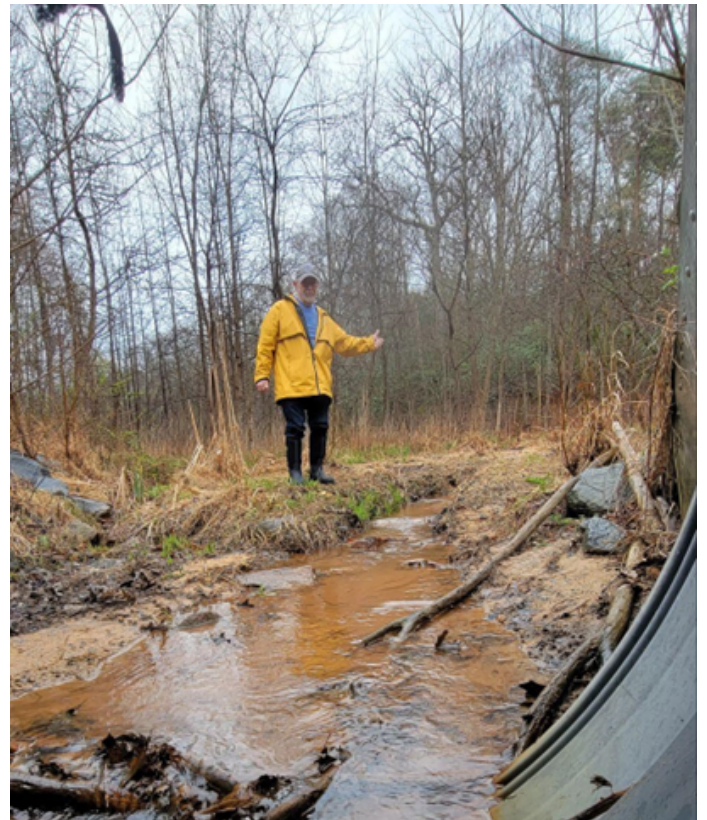
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ACLT continues to emphasize science both in and beyond the Parkers Creek watershed. In recent years, the annual Water Quality Blitz has been the primary method of expanding scientific reach beyond Parkers Creek. Before 2023, however, the Blitz remained entirely within Calvert County. 2023 saw the expansion of the Blitz beyond Calvert, with several Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance organizations taking part. ACLT coordinated the testing of 95 sites across Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties. The map on the left shows the nitrogen (NO₂₃) results for these 95 sites.

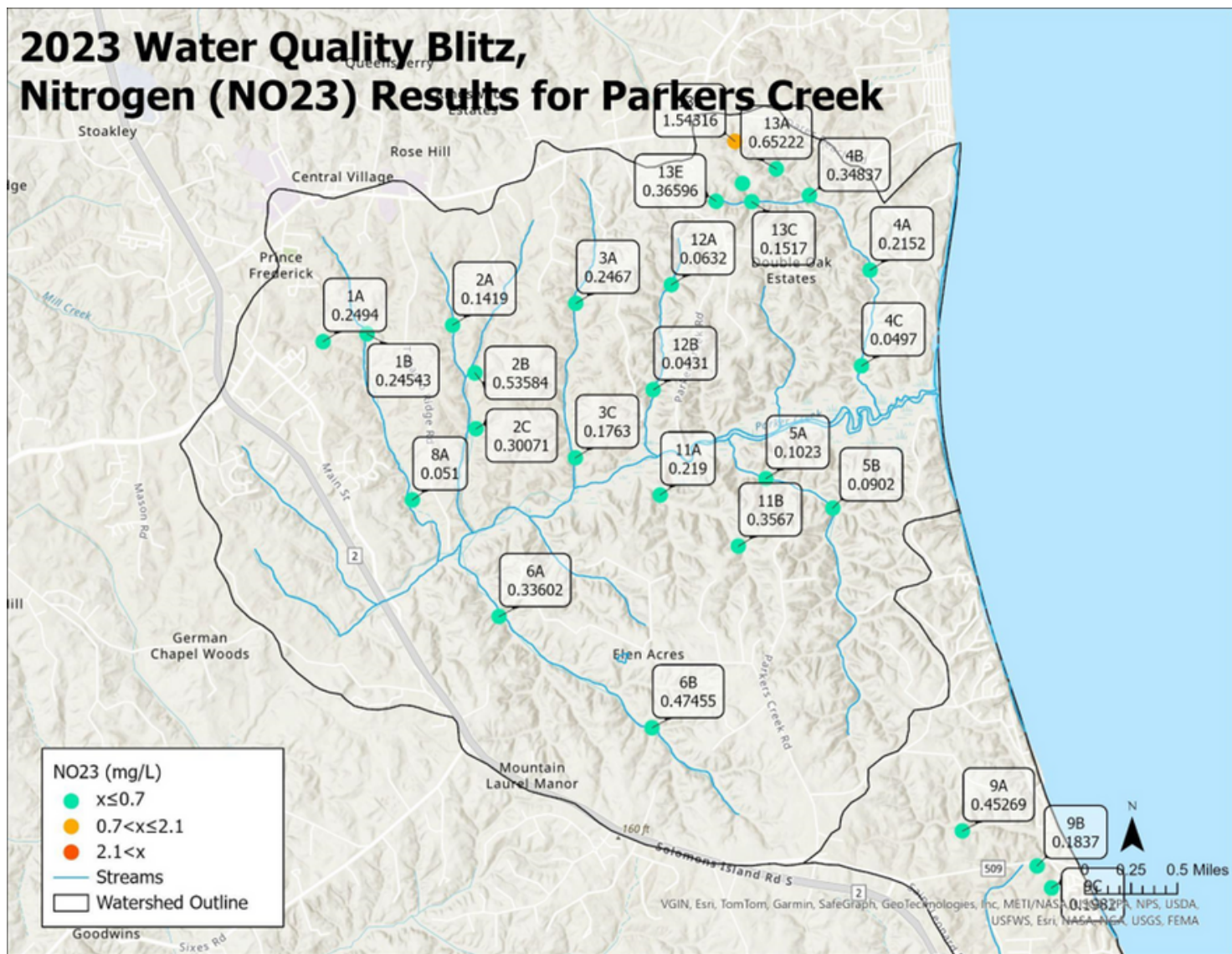
ACLT's various "Friends" groups maintained a major presence in the 2023 Water Quality Blitz. The Friends of Hunting Creek, Friends of St. Leonard Creek, and Friends of Mill Creek now have at least two years of water quality data for their respective watersheds. While not yet enough data for analyzing statistical trends, the Friends have nonetheless begun using their 2-3 years of data to deduce where there may be nutrient hotspots in their watersheds.



Map of Nitrogen (NO₂₃) results from the 2023 Water Quality Blitz



Friends of St. Leonard Creek volunteer Jim Levin during the Water Quality Blitz, posing upstream of his site.



2023 nitrogen (NO₂₃) results for the Parkers Creek watershed.



Friends of Mill Creek volunteer Ted Haynie collecting a sample during the 2023 Blitz.

2023 was the sixth year of Water Quality Blitz data collection for Parkers Creek, and the same 28 sites were sampled as in 2022. The streams surrounding Holly Hill have been the main area of water quality concern for Parkers Creek and remained so in 2023. However, only one of the two sites with elevated NO₂₃ concentrations in 2022 remained elevated in 2023. Monitoring nitrogen concentrations around Holly Hill is important to assessing the effectiveness of land management practices such as native meadow buffers.

Water quality in the Holly Hill streams has been a focal point of ACLT research for several years. Macroinvertebrate research continued in 2023, with Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member Grace Mayer leading the charge. A total of 8 sites were tested in 2023, with 7 of them near Holly Hill. One Holly Hill site was added in a stream section where beaver dam analogs may be installed within the next couple of years. Beaver dam analogs are a method of low-tech stream restoration, and the added macro site is part of an effort to gather pre-restoration data to benchmark the anticipated post-restoration water quality improvements.



CCC Member Grace Mayer conducting macroinvertebrate studies with a D-net.

Assistant Land Manager Clara Brill-Carlat has also been collecting pre-restoration data to track changes in water and sediment levels. In 2023, Clara installed several marked PVC pipes and cameras throughout the stream to track water levels before and after rainfall events. Data collection and evaluation remains central to ACLT's active land management.

Other Work:

- Dr. Lora Harris' lab at the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory continued to monitor tidal water quality throughout Calvert County, including Parkers Creek. The Harris lab also monitored marsh surface elevation relative to sea level rise.
- Water quality data continued to be collected on a quarterly basis for the main stem of Parkers Creek. ACLT staff prepared a spreadsheet of all traceable mainstem data from 1998-present for analysis.
- Scientists from the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center completed a study testing strategies to assist native plant regrowth after phragmites removal.
- The Chesapeake Bay Program has released data in the form of the Chesapeake Healthy Watershed Assessment 2.0 as well as high resolution land use and land cover data, both of which will be useful for updating the Parkers Creek Report Card.
- ACLT staff and volunteers carried out a nighttime invasive fish survey, using visual counting and bow-hunting methods. Few snakeheads were seen, and no fish were caught.
- A forest diversity study was conducted on two plots on the Yoe property. This brings the total to 24 plots across ACLT land, and analysis is now underway.

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Managing the Land

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5-Year Plan Goal: Manage all of the lands, structures, and waters for which we are responsible in an environmentally sustainable manner by which their natural and cultural resources are preserved, sustained, and enhanced to the maximum extent possible.

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Land Stewardship and Monitoring:

ACLT's Land Management staff and volunteers are dedicated to stewarding 3,500 acres of forests, meadows, marshes, and farmland in the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds. Throughout 2023, we worked to improve habitat for wildlife, maintain sustainable public access via our trail network, and monitor and address issues on the land. With the assistance of trained volunteers, ACLT completed property monitoring visits on each of our 19 fee simple and 5 conservation easement properties and compiled current condition reports to maintain Land Trust Alliance accreditation. We also re-marked all of ACLT's property boundaries that were in need of additional paint and signage to guard against trespassing and poaching.



Volunteers checking an owl box on Warrior's Rest



CCC member Emily Dunsmore monitoring the GRDC/Yowell Property (Photo Credit: Mark Smith)



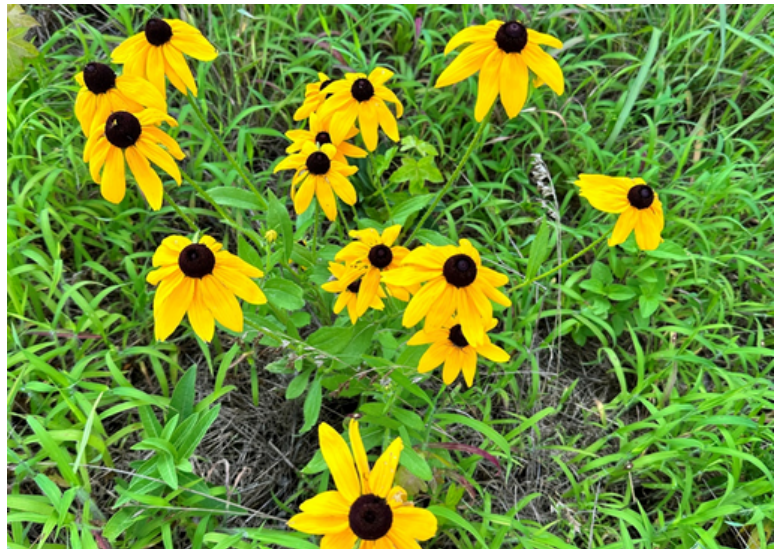
CCC member Grace Mayer clearing a tree

Trails:

Throughout the year, staff and volunteers designed and constructed the new Oriole Trail, which opened in January 2024. The 1.7 miles of trail are accessible to both hikers and bikers, and they extend ACLT's trail system to our southernmost properties. The trail includes four bridges and a hillside platform with some beautiful views of streams and ravines. In the spring of 2023, ACLT also added a short spur trail that connects the end of Parkers Creek Road to the North-South Trail and creates a shorter, more accessible route to the raft. Along with these new additions to the trail network, we continually monitored ACLT's existing 24 miles of trails and addressed issues such as erosion, fallen trees, and aging bridges and boardwalks.

Meadows:

ACLT made significant progress toward its goal of creating permanent, native meadow habitat for pollinators and wildlife. We planted a small patch of meadow grasses and wildflowers near the Holly Hill barn and another on the Yoe property. We continued to prepare larger field sites near the North and South Side trailheads for upcoming meadow plantings, and we also began testing the efficacy of organic herbicides on combating invasive Chinese lespedeza in the meadows near Double Oak Farm. To facilitate our efforts, ACLT signed a contract with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to receive \$12,000 over the next 10 years in support of meadow establishment.



Flowers in one of the Holly Hill meadow buffers



CCC member Grace Mayer testing organic herbicides on Chinese lespedeza in the Double Oak meadows



Yoe grade stabilization project before & after

Yoe Grade Stabilization Project:

On the Yoe property, ACLT hired a contractor to regrade and stabilize a highly eroded stream channel that receives runoff from Route 4. Stabilizing the channel reduced the amount of erosion at the stream's head cut and also enabled equipment access to the eastern side of the property for meadow management. ACLT received state and federal cost-share funding to implement the project.

Invasive Species Control:

Our staff and volunteers worked hard to protect ACLT's lands from invasive species including bittersweet, lespedeza, tree of heaven, and autumn olive. We removed approximately 13,000 square feet of invasive phragmites from ACLT's marshes and solarized these areas to kill the phragmites rhizomes underground. We mapped infestations of wavyleaf basketgrass to track its spread and target our removal efforts, and we cut and pulled this highly invasive plant throughout the summer and fall to limit seed spread. ACLT also used grant and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funding to hire licensed herbicide applicators who treated the densest areas of the wavyleaf basketgrass infestations. As a result of our invasive species removal efforts in 2023, ACLT received an additional \$10,992 through a Conservation Stewardship Program contract with NRCS. ACLT also updated its Invasive Species Control Plan, which will guide and prioritize control efforts over the next 5 years.



Volunteer Dale Hutchins cutting tree of heaven and bittersweet on the Yoe property

Double Oak Farm and Food Forest:

Double Oak Farm and Food Forest had yet another productive year and continued providing weekly harvest donations to the St. John Vianney Interfaith Food Pantry in Prince Frederick. Approximately 3,600 pounds of a wide array of fresh produce, including kale, cabbages, peppers, figs, and broccoli, were harvested and donated. The farm also contributed produce and flowers to the Dining in the Field event at ACLT and the Yoe Open House. Throughout the year, staff and volunteers engaged school groups and scout troops in farm projects such as weeding, mulching, and harvesting.

Chesapeake Conservation Corps:

ACLT hosted two Chesapeake Conservation Corps members through a Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) program. The Corps members greatly expanded ACLT's capacity for managing invasive species, maintaining trails, and operating Double Oak Farm. Throughout their year here, the Corps members successfully applied for grant funding to upgrade farm equipment and improve ACLT's meadow habitat. They also received a grant to host the other Corps members in their program for a workday at ACLT, during which the group assisted with farm operations, removed wavyleaf basketgrass, and helped build a bridge on the Oriole Trail.

Master Naturalist Class:

For the 11th year in a row, ACLT served as a host site for the Maryland Master Naturalist Program. The program covered a broad range of topics, from geology to ornithology to the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay. The 2023 class produced 17 graduates who have joined ACLT's volunteer workforce.



Weekly produce ready to be donated



CCC members building an Oriole Trail bridge



Master Naturalist class herp hunt

Land Management Volunteers

ACLT could not accomplish its land stewardship goals without the help of all our generous, hardworking volunteers. From harvesting fresh produce year-round to combating invasive species across ACLT's lands to maintaining and expanding the trail network, volunteers make our work possible. Thank you!



- Group photo before side-ledging the Oriole Trail
- Fixing the Horse Swamp Bay Overlook platform
- Earth Day trash cleanup

- North-South (formerly Cemetery) Trail boardwalk replacement
- Moving grass clippings on the farm
- Replacing the Horse Swamp Creek Overlook bench

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Outreach & Membership

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5-Year Plan Goal: Optimize our outreach programs to serve ACLT's mission throughout Southern Maryland; encourage and support strong growth in ACLT's membership, supporter, and volunteer programs through enhanced communications, programs and activities; and elevate our efforts to reach underserved and underrepresented populations, particularly those impacted by societal inequities or those which have not traditionally been engaged in nature.

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One positive aspect of the pandemic was an increase in visitors who were seeking respite from being cooped up at home. Once the pandemic finally ended, our goal was to keep the momentum going and to keep visitors coming back to ACLT. In 2023, the Outreach and Membership Committee (O&MC) employed several strategies to achieve this goal.

Encouraging Use of Our Trails:

One of the best ways to gain support for ACLT is to share the beauty of our lands and waters by encouraging use of our trails. The 12 Hikes Challenge that was started during the pandemic continues to grow every year along with our Facebook Hiking Group, where members share gorgeous photos, adventures, and a mutual love of our trails. The enthusiasm is unparalleled. The annual “Hike for Your Heart” activity in February also brings people to the trails, hunting for seed-paper hearts and Valentine’s-themed painted rocks. The fact that February is National Heart Health month provides us with an opportunity to stress the health benefits of hiking. Rocks painted by an O&MC member bring joy to those who are lucky enough to find them and the photos shared online help spread the word to other groups unfamiliar with ACLT’s trails. Guided hikes throughout the year as well as athletic events such as the Parkers Creek Challenge are other opportunities to expose people to our beautiful lands.



Photo Credit: Al Scroggs



ACLT-HOSTED EVENTS

Reaching Out to the Local Community and Beyond:

Hosting events is another great way to expose the local community to all that ACLT has to offer, and we hosted several in 2023, including the Annual Meeting and Leprechaun Hunt in March. Unfortunately, one of our most popular events – the Annual Sip & Save Beer-Tasting Event in September – had to be cancelled due to the weather. The Wreath Sale at the end of the year has become a tradition for many supporters. This year, we sold out of the 55+ handmade wreaths within the first hour of the sale.

Attending off-site events gives us the opportunity to reach audiences from other areas within Southern Maryland who may not have even heard of ACLT. In 2023, the O&MC and other volunteers attended nine off-site events. Events that are hosted annually by popular organizations such as Insectival at Annmarie Gardens and at Children's Day on the Farm at Jefferson Patterson Park attract thousands of visitors. These events also give us an opportunity to network with other non-profits in a mutually beneficial way.



OFF-SITE EVENTS

In 2023, a brand-new audience was introduced to ACLT through the Art for All Seasons year-long plein air event. Artists from all over Southern Maryland were invited to participate. A kick-off event was held in August, where staff shared ACLT's mission, goals, and ongoing projects. It was also an opportunity to explain and discuss the "rules" for participating. The orientation concluded with a guided tour of Double Oak Farm, one of many ideal sites on ACLT's properties for creating art. Thirty-five artists are participating by painting and sculpting scenes from all over ACLT's lands throughout all four seasons of the year. The event will culminate with a public exhibition from **September 28, 2024 through October 13, 2024** at Annmarie Gardens, who has graciously agreed to host the exhibition – with no charge to ACLT – and has agreed to split the commission of any artwork sold.



Examples of Artwork Submitted Thus Far



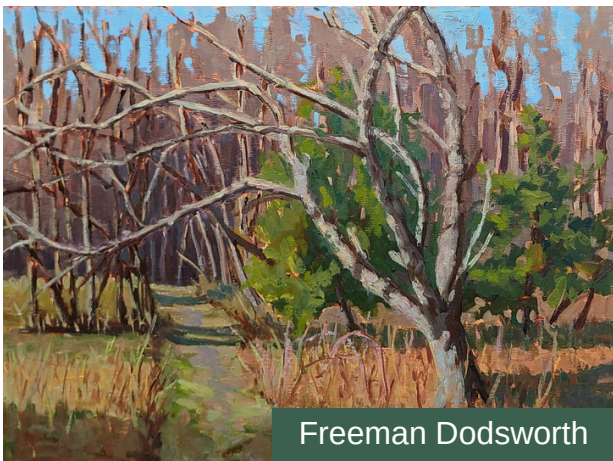
Kara Macek



Pat Morrison



Nicole Stewart



Freeman Dodsworth



Mary Pat Collins

Fundraising and Showing Appreciation to Our Members:

The backbone of ACLT has always been its membership and we constantly look for ways to show our appreciation for their support, beginning with the Annual Meeting held on the first Saturday of March each year. This year, we added a Q&A period after all the presentations and an optional hike after lunch – both of which were very well received by the 100+ attendees.

Two events catered toward ACLT members were held in June – Dining in the Field and a reception at the newly-restored Yoe house. Dining in the Field offers an elegant evening of dining al fresco and celebrates local chefs, farmers, watermen, vintners, distillers, and other producers from the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. It has been held numerous times throughout the last several years – each time benefiting a specific charity. The organizers chose ACLT to be the benefactor this year, and the 125 attendees helped raise over \$10,000.

We were extremely excited to open the Yoe house for members and supporters to see the amazing transformation of the old farmhouse. The 230+ guests were given the opportunity to meet the Yoe siblings who sold the property to ACLT and were also treated to tours of the farm and guided hikes around the property.

While some O&MC members worked to ensure that the Yoe open house ran smoothly, other volunteers represented ACLT at the NAACP's Juneteenth celebration at Jefferson Patterson Park – another off-site event attended by over 1600 people. It was a terrific opportunity to display information about the ongoing Parkers Creek Heritage Trail project and make connections with community members who may be interested in sharing their and their families' history and ties to the Parkers Creek area.

Of course, the biggest event of every year is the Chili Cook-Off and Auction. This year's event was held in October at the pavilion at Jefferson Patterson Park. Long-standing ACLT members made up the majority of the over 200 attendees and helped to raise over \$60,000 through auction items and experiences and a paddle raise.



Dining in the Field



Yoe Open House



Chili Cook-Off/Auction



Enlisting the help of top-notch volunteers:

Finally, we could not do any of this without our volunteers, who show up whenever we need them and do whatever we need them to do – from the Earth Day highway clean-up to the wreath-making workshops and every event in between. Besides planning ACLT events and representing ACLT at both on- and off-site events, O&MC volunteers help maintain the posters in the kiosks and various signage, continue to spruce up the barn porches, clean out sheds, and this year, they even got our Monarch Mobile golf cart running, which is used not only to haul supplies for events but to transport guests who struggle with walking. In December, we held our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, where we handed out custom-made coffee mugs filled with candy – a very small token of our appreciation.

**7,776
Volunteer
Hours**



Earth Arts Day



Monarch Mobile in Clean Shed



Wreath-Making



Volunteer Training



Porch Spruce-Up



Volunteer Dinner

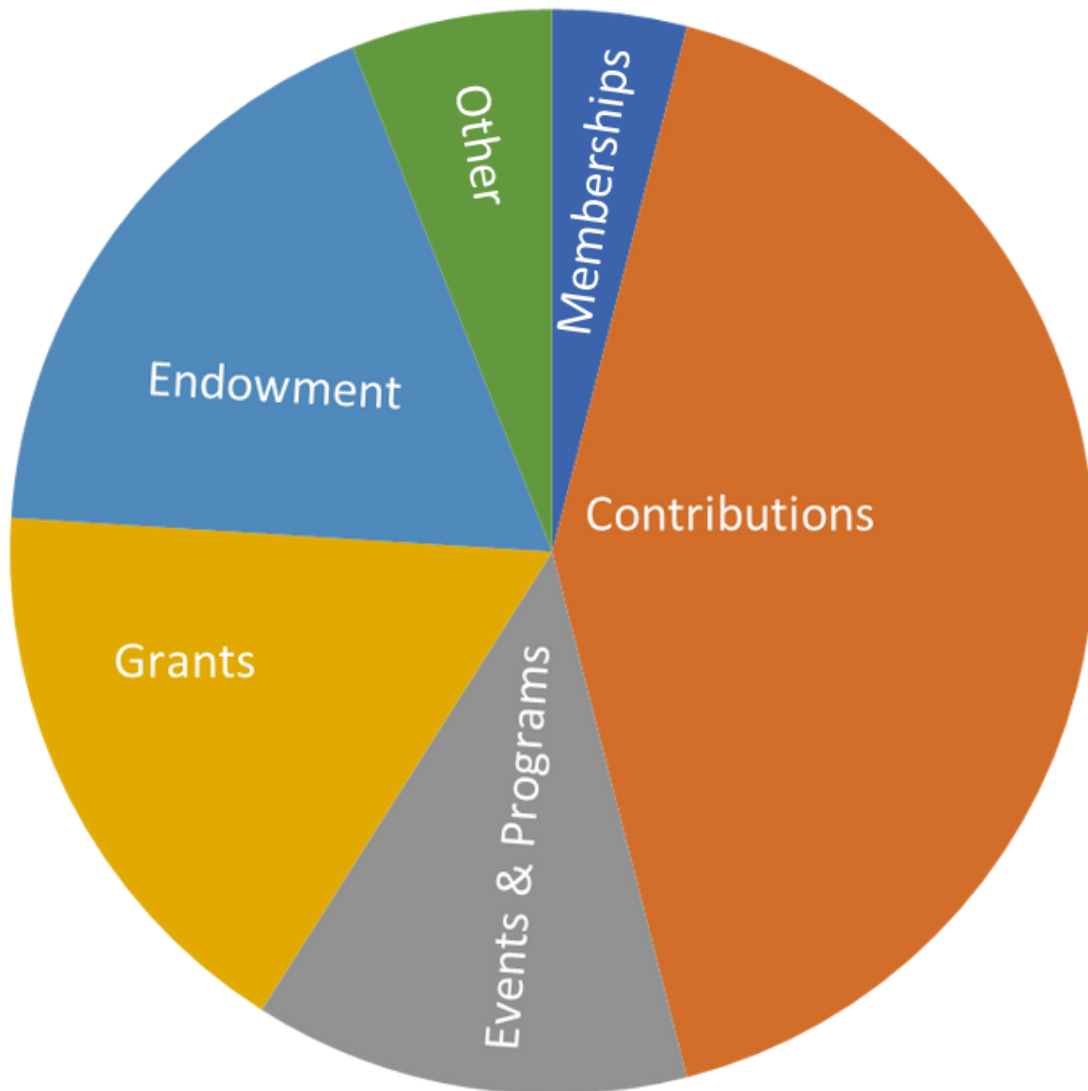


Trash Clean-up Crew

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ACLT By The Numbers

Annual Financial Report



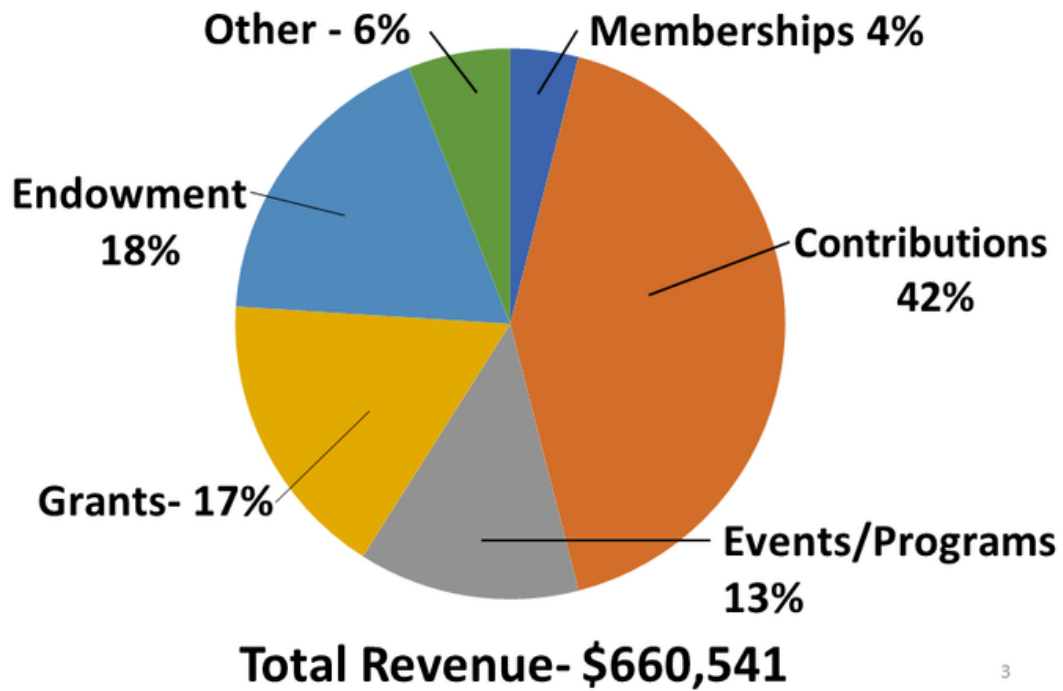
Summary of Financial Status for Years 2022 and 2023

Operating Income	2022	2023
Memberships	\$34,485	\$26,795
Contributions & Memorials	184,324	280,021
Grants, General	116,165	114,736
Events Income	45,688	84,360
Endowments	145,800	116,299
All Other	23,500	38,330
Total Income	549,962	660,541

Operating Expenses	2022	2023
Land Acquisition and Pres.	\$87,882	\$61,901
Land Management	173,014	182,135
Outreach and Member service	144,653	160,116
Admin. and Fundraising	80,397	81,076
Total Expenditures	485,948	485,228

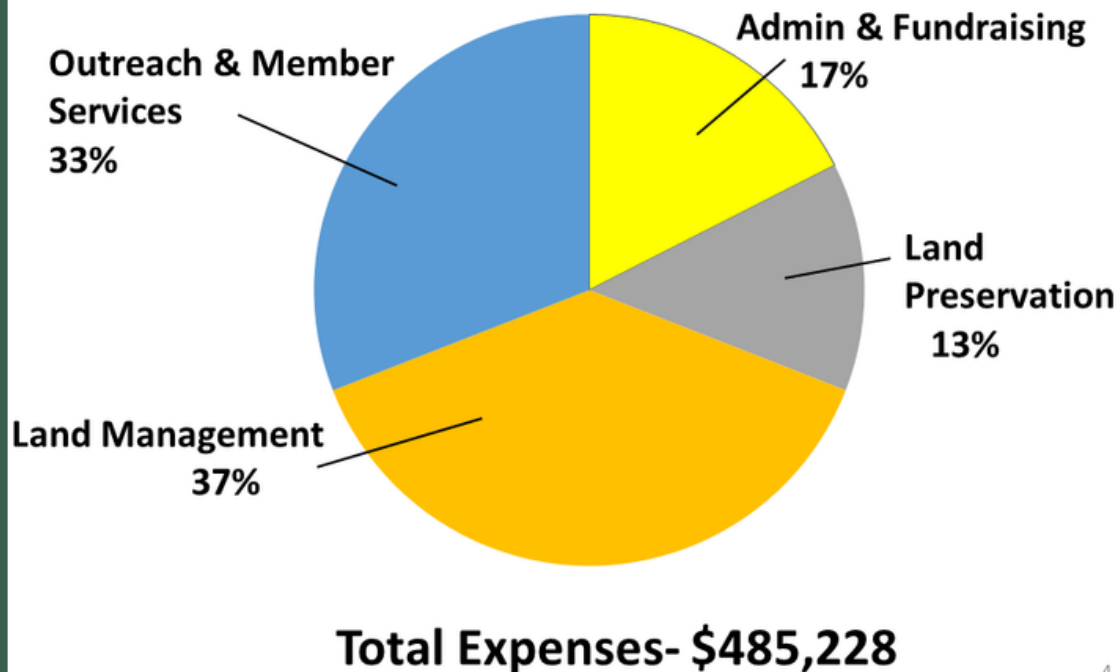
Year-End Special Fund Balances		
Funds	2022	2023
Land Management Endowment	\$2,312,287	\$2,532,924
Forever Endowment	831,647	1,013,283
Land Acquisition	216,828	190,328
Legal Defense	50,000	50,000
Building	14,424	6,336
Easement Monitoring	15,000	15,000
Repair and Replacement	28,930	23,443
Restricted Grants Carryover	7,463	11,106
Undesignated	190,000	250,000
Capacity Grant	64,959	53,010

Treasurer's Report – 2023 Revenue



3

Treasurer's Report – 2023 Expenditures



4

ACLT 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

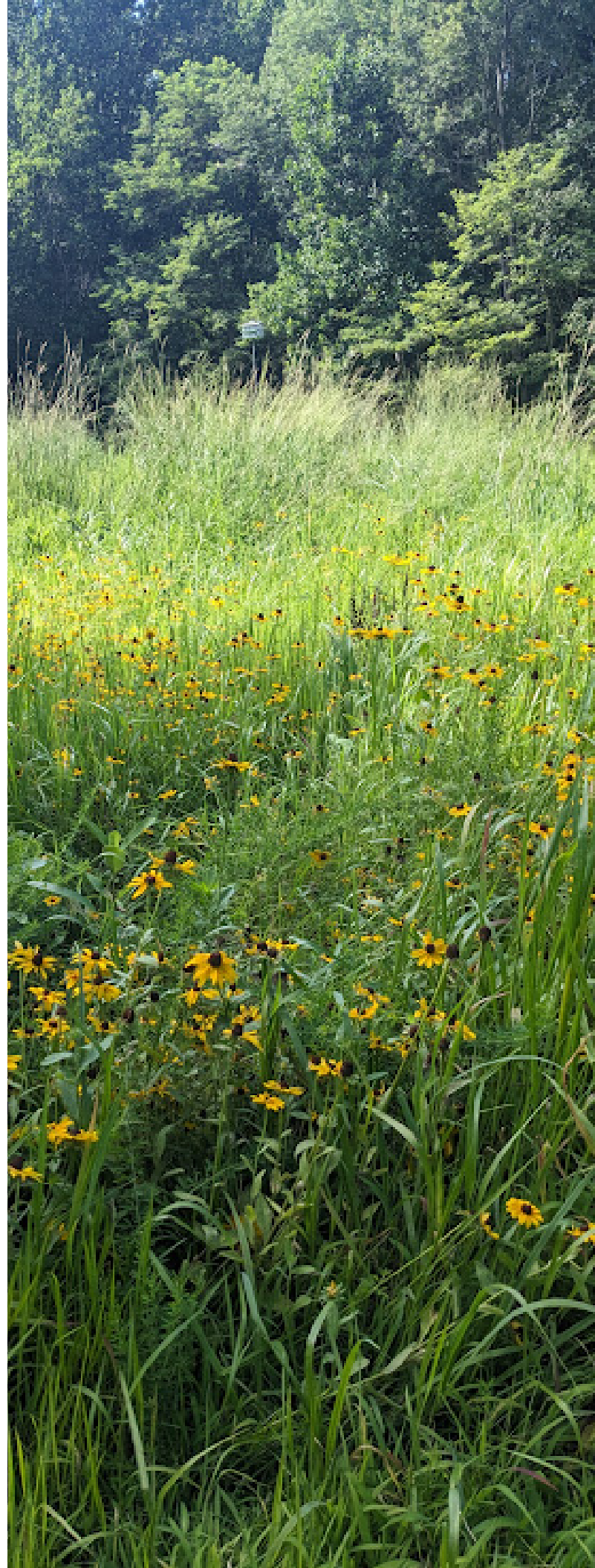
David F. Farr, President
Dawn Balinski, Vice President
B.L. Johnston, Corporate Secretary
Cheryl L. Place, CPA, Treasurer
Richard Aldrich
José R. Ballesteros
Denise Breitburg
Steven P. Cloak, Jr.
Peter Daly
Jan Degeneffe
Bob Field
Darlene Harrod
Ron Klauda
Shirley Knight
Penny Moran
Nathan Novotny
Birgit Sharp
Robyn Truslow
Fred Tutman
Randi Vogt

ACLT STAFF

Greg Bowen, Executive Director
Autumn Phillips-Lewis, Land Manager
Clara Brill-Carlat, Assistant Land Manager
Miriam Gholl, Comm. Relations Manager
Mary Hoover, SMCA Coordinator
Janel Young, Office Coordinator
Brian Spinner, CCCC Intern (8/23-8/24)
Emily Dunsmore, CCCC Intern (8/23-8/24)

VOLUNTEER STAFF

Virginia Murphy, Membership Coord.
Susan Helmrich, Membership Coord.



2023 ACLT Committees*

Budget & Finance

Richard Aldrich, Chair
Staff: Greg Bowen
Dawn Balinski
Nate Novotny
Cheryl Place
Peter Stathis

Donor Relations

Robyn Truslow, Chair
Staff: Greg Bowen
Dawn Balinski
Jessica Clark
Peter Daly
Pat Hofmann
Cheryl Place

Facilities Committee

Steve Cloak, Chair
Staff: Greg Bowen
Richard Aldridge
Gary Loew
Darrell Roberts
Randi Vogt

Governance Committee

Dave Farr, Chair
Staff: Greg Bowen
B.L. Johnston
Penny Moran

Land Acq. & Preservation

Dave Farr, Chair
Staff: Greg Bowen
Peter Daly
Wilson Freeland
Darlene Harrod
Shirley Knight
Dawn Riley
Peter Vogt

Land Management

Bob Field, Chair
Staff: Autumn Phillips-Lewis,
Karen Andersen
Paul Blayney
Denise Breitburg
Jan Degeneffe
Kevin Donahue
Mark Edmondson
Carl Fleischhauer
Dale Hutchins
Bruce Hudson
Jeanette Kaufmann
John Little

Nominating Committee

Reconstituted Annually

Outreach & Membership

Penny Moran, Chair
Staff: Miriam Groll
Jose Ballesteros
Jan and Jim Degeneffe
Liz Laher
Keith Linville
Beth and Ralph Nolletti
Liz Orlandi
Saroja Raman

Science Committee

Denise Breitburg, Chair
Staff: Autumn Phillips-Lewis
and Greg Bowen
Joy Bartholomew
Walter Boynton
Bob Boxwell
Lora Harris
Ron Klauda
Melissa McCormick
Geoffrey Parker
John Parker
Chris Rowe
Birgit Sharp
Fred Tutman
Peter Vogt
Dennis Whigham

*Board President
and Executive
Director are Ex
officio members of
all committees.



Land Management Committee