

Preservation News

A Newsletter about the Calvert County Land Preservation Program

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November 2004

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The
A American Chestnut Land Trust
B Battle Creek Nature Education Society
C Calvert Farmland Trust & Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust
S Southern Calvert Land Trust

of land preservation in Calvert County!



"It was the best of times . . ." Land preservation in Calvert is doing quite well, thank you, and our land trusts are leading the way. This newsletter is dedicated to the hard working residents in Calvert County who care enough to devote many hours as members of land trusts to preserve land in the County. Maryland Environment Trust has identified about 50 land trusts in the state, many of which have not preserved land. Calvert, the smallest county, has five that have preserved land.

What makes our conservation ethic so strong? Is it because we have lost so much? Is it because we value the resources more? Is it because our county government has provided the tools for preservation? Or is it all of these? Please read on to find out more about our local preservation heroes.

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Just the Facts:

Acres in APDs – 28,081
Acres Preserved – 22,694
TDRs Sold – 16,148
TDR value (2004) - \$5,200
Range: \$2800-\$8,000

American Chestnut Land Trust

Formed in 1986, the American Chestnut Land Trust membership has emerged as stewards of the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds, working with owners, holding easements, and managing the vast acreages under their management. Members are always on the lookout for properties that go up for sale in the watershed. Therefore, they were ecstatic when they signed a contract with the Trikas family to acquire the last remaining property on the main stem of Parkers Creek from its mouth to the Prince Frederick Town Center.

The 28-acre Trikas property is a wooded parcel that time has forgotten. The Trikas's have owned it for 30 years, but have rarely visited the property. Tall poplars, oaks, and hickory provide a canopy dense enough to shade out much understory growth. The thick leaf layer provides an excellent buffer to Parkers Creek.

The Trust's success in the last 18 years has been extraordinary. When the Trust was formed in 1986, no land had been preserved in the Parkers Creek to Governors Run area. Since then, over 3,800 acres have been protected by easements or land acquisitions.

In 1995, the Trust made a bold leap in acquiring the 140-acre "Michael Property, now known as Double Oak Farm. It was the first property protected on the north side of Parkers Creek with thousands of acres surrounding it under tremendous development pressure. Double Oak Farm was a recorded subdivision, but its owner was willing to sell to the Trust. One of several sources of funding for the acquisition came from the **County Open Space Revolving Loan Fund**.

That was when the dominoes began to fall and their preservation partners, **The Nature Conservancy** and the **Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources, Program Open Space** jumped in with their negotiating and financial strength to help. First, the Ward property, then the Somervell, Turner, another Somervell tract, the 800-acre Goldstein property, Plummer, Constantine, and Vlissades properties all contiguous and protected in perpetuity through strict conservation easements with development rights extinguished, not sold or otherwise transferred.

In recent years, the Trust has worked with the County and the **Rural Legacy Program**. The Trust holds easements on 334 acres of land and worked with the County for fee simple purchase of another 92 acres.

OFFICERS: Dr. Edward U. Graham, President; Alan E. Wilson, Vice President; Paul L. Berry, Treasurer; Col. Caroline E. VanMason, USA (Ret.) Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS: Barbara Benning, Paul M. Blayney, Dr. Marie Bundy, Dr. Andrea Clarke, Marcy Damon, Karen H. Edgecombe, Terry M. Farman, Dr. David F. Farr, James B. Greene, Jr. RADM,USN (Ret), Patrick, J. Griffin, Anne Cole Johnston, John Little, Peter N. Stathis, Harriet Yaffe

STAFF: Margaret L. Niland, Executive Director, Sammy-James Zambon, Land Manager, Seona DeGennaro, Administrative/Volunteer Coordinator



Trikas Property



Parkers Creek



Parkers Creek

Contact information: American Chestnut Land Trust, Post Office Box 204. Port Republic, MD 20676
Phone: 410-586-1570
Fax: 410-586-0468

www.acltweb.org
info@acltweb.org

Battle Creek Nature Education Society

Battle Creek Nature Education Society (BCNES) was incorporated in 1985. It was formed by citizens to provide support for the educational programs of Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Sanctuary, Flag Ponds Nature Park and Kings Landing Natural Resources Management Area in partnership with the Calvert County Natural Resources Division.

The three Calvert County Parks are wonderful examples of the ecological diversity found in Southern Maryland Region. Flag Ponds protects approximately 500 acres of natural area on the Chesapeake Bay from beach to upland. Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Sanctuary protects 100 acres of one of the northernmost stands of bald cypress trees in the United States. Kings Landing protects over 265 acres of natural area on the Patuxent River including 4,000 feet of river shoreline and 50 acres of marshland. Each offers significant opportunities for outdoor learning and compatible recreation.

In the 1980's and 1990's Calvert County was the fastest growing county in the state. BCNES recognized the importance of protecting the park settings and their respective watersheds. Otherwise, their purpose and function as education/recreation sites could be greatly diminished.

When the respected ornithologist Chandler Robbins and his wife Eleanor decided to sell/donate their 164 acre property on Gray's Road in 1993, BCNES was ready to work with them and protect the property.

Likewise, when the **Rural Legacy Program** was developed in the Battle Creek area in 1999, BCNES was there as a full partner to hold easements from willing land owners. Already, BCNES is holding easements on over 300 acres. This participation has been a catalyst for the preservation of nearly 1,500 acres of land around the Cypress Swamp Sanctuary.

Board Members:

Mark Switzer (President), Lloyd Hepburn (Vice President), Julie Cornellier (Treasurer), Kathy Wood (Secretary), Carter Gray (Chairman, Land Management Committee) and John Jones.

Contact Information: www.calvertparks.org/membership

Phone: 410-535-5327



Easement property



Easement property

Don't Forget: Deadline for applications to sell to the PAR and Leveraging Programs is December 30, 2004.

Under the Purchase and Retirement (PAR) Program, an owner can sell up to 10 development rights to the County; these development rights are retired, rather than transferred to create lots elsewhere. The Leveraging Program is a great way to establish a retirement plan. The County buys and retires the development rights. The owner receives payment at the end of a term of 10 to 20 years. Meanwhile, the owner receives tax free interest on the value of the development rights.

Contact the Department of Planning and Zoning (410-535-2348) for an application.

Calvert Farmland Trust



Mackall Farm



Somervell Farm



Gibson Farm

On June 26, 1814, Joshua Barney backed his gun boats up to the Mackall property in St. Leonard's Creek to face two British frigates and assorted sloops and gun boats in formation just outside the mouth of the Creek. For hours, they blazed away in one of the biggest naval engagements ever fought with a foreign invader in American waters. Barney's flotilla was vastly outnumbered in gun power. That day though, Barney's flotilla prevailed and escaped north on its way to take its fighters to defend the capital.

One hundred and ninety years later, the Mackall farm faced a different kind of threat. Heirs of the Mackalls, no longer living in Calvert, put the property up for sale, thus threatening the cultural landscape of the region. The Mackall Road area has experienced some development over the years, yet it largely remains a patchwork of working farms. The Board of County Commissioners has designated this area as a **Rural Legacy area**, in the hope of protecting the rural character and farm community. This time it was the Calvert Farmland Trust that put up the fight for the Mackall property.

Formed just 10 years ago, the Calvert Farmland Trust is no stranger to land preservation. Trust members have held community meetings, counseled families, held preservation easements, and, when absolutely necessary, bought farms so that farm communities wouldn't be broken up (including the Somervell farm on Parkers Creek Road and the Gibson farm on Hunting Creek Road). They have been quite proactive, helping to save approximately 2,200 acres of land. The Trust's new goal is to preserve another 1,000 acres by 2008.

No doubt, without the Trust's involvement, the Mackall farm would have been purchased by a developer and on its way to being developed. The per-acre price set by the seller was the highest ever for a waterfront farm. Everyone said that only a developer could afford to pay for it-- everyone except Susan Hance-Wells, the President of the Trust. She kept urging the Board of Directors to look at options and ways that the property could be purchased. Eventually, the Board put together a contract for purchase. The first was rejected. Then they put together a second which prevailed.

Susan credits Sally Showalter for her work representing the Trust as agent. She also gives praise to Mark Davis for his work as settlement attorney. But the real credit goes to Susan and the Board for their energy and perseverance. First, they signed a contract on the property, giving them 6 months to secure the property. Then they secured easement funding from the State, through the **Rural Legacy Program** and also enrolled the land in a **County Agricultural Preservation District**, in order to preserve the option to sell development rights. Next, they hired a surveyor to divide the 140-acre portion of the property in three nice farms and went to their membership for contracts on the three farms.

The Trust also obtained a loan from the **County Open Space Revolving Loan Fund**. The Howards, owners of the Brewhouse which was divided off the Mackall farm years ago, graciously agreed to hold the Trust celebration at their home.

2004 Officers and Directors: Susan D. Hance-Wells, President, Peter G. Baker, Vice President, John C. Prouty, Treasurer

Directors: Shannon B. Campbell, John T. Crane, Bryan K. Dowell, T. Barton Ewalt, Richard Fischer, V. Wilson Freeland, Patrick W. Furey, Philip T. Goldstein, Darrell E. Ireland, David R. Lewis, W. Michael Phipps, James Shepherd, Henry Trentman, and Hal Vaughan

Advisory Committee: Young D. Hance, John A. Prouty, J. Allen Swann, and Albert W. Zahniser

Contact Information: P.O. Box 3448, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 Phone 410-414-5070, email: cft@chesapeake.net



Trust Welcomes New Owners

Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust

The Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust, Inc. was formed in 1994. The preservation of approximately 800 acres at Cove Point in the mid-1970s resulted from an agreement by Columbia (now Dominion) Liquid Natural Gas, the Nature Conservancy and the Sierra Club, with the easement held by the Maryland Environmental Trust.

The Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust was established for the purpose of preserving and protecting the Chesapeake Bay, its shoreline, wetlands, and ecologically sensitive areas, in the vicinity of Cove Point, including:

- to acquire undeveloped land for conservation;
- to acquire undeveloped land for the purpose of restoring it to a natural condition;
- to manage acquired properties;
- if appropriate at a future time, to accept title to and manage the land comprising the Cove Point site, as described in the Agreement, located at Cove Point, Maryland, in accordance with Section 6.09(b) of the Agreement, dated September 21, 1994, among the owner of the Cove Point LNG Company, Limited Partnership, the Sierra Club, and the Maryland Conservation Council, Inc.;
- to assist in the management and preservation of the Cove Point site if and after it is transferred to The Nature Conservancy or a similar organization pursuant to said Agreement; and
- to further scientific study and education.

The Trust has been supporting numerous environmental studies in the Cove Point area. The Trust has also sought out properties to protect. The Trust holds an easement on a lot in Cove Point Subdivision. It owns a 40.2-acre tract on the south side of Helen's Creek adjacent to the Hemlock Reserve (both are outlined –right).

Board of Trustees 2004-2005: Ewing Miller, Chairman of the Board, Robert J. Boxwell, Executive Director, Mildred F. Kriemelmeyer, President, Arlene Ripley, Vice President, Michael D Frederick, Treasurer, Armin Behr, Secretary, Michael E. Gardner, and Peter Vogt
Contact Information: 410-414-3311
www.covepoint-trust.org/about



What is the Tax Savings Resulting from an MET easement?

The State of Maryland has its own Land Trust, which has accepted easement donations on over 100,000 acres. Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) now has a Conservation Easement Tax Savings Estimator. Landowners can enter a few numbers and estimate the approximate tax savings they will obtain by donating a conservation easement. Phone toll free: 877-514-7900. www.dnr.maryland.gov/met

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board
C/O Board of County Commissioners
175 Main Street
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Southern Calvert Land Trust

In the early to mid 1900's, developers were drawn to Calvert County to speculate on development of vacation/ weekend housing along the Bay cliffs and river shores. Over the years, these developments have created unique, attractive residential communities with waterfront access. However, the lots were recorded with little regard for the topography or health facilities. Further, storm water management was not addressed. Construction of new homes on small lots creates more impervious areas and more runoff, often over existing improved lots.

Residents in several of these communities have been concerned about over-development and its impact on the environment. Three years ago, they formed the Southern Calvert Land Trust to accept donated lots, on which the Trust records restrictive covenants.

The County has helped the process in two ways. First, the County does not charge County taxes on the lots with recorded covenants which prevent development of the lot. Second, the County has waived special tax district charges against these lots. When the Trust accepts a donated lot, the owners can take a tax deduction for the appraised value of the lot. The Trust has been working very hard to inform owners of the advantages of lot donation, and thus far, they have 32 lots, varying from 6,500 sq. ft. to 35,000 sq. ft. for a total of about 15 acres.

Board members shown at right: Mabel Kimrey, Judy Larsen (Vice President), Carole Purcell, Nancie Hillsman (President), Kenneth Spring (Secretary), Char Frost (Treasurer) {Note Char Frost died on November 7, 2004}. Missing Curt Larsen

