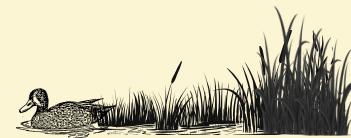


# Watershed Observer



Newsletter of the American Chestnut Land Trust - Volume 40 No. 2 Spring 2026

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## COMING UP ON THE CALENDAR

### APRIL 2026

11<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> – Earth Day–Themed “Story Walk”

(all day) at Griffin Meadow Trail

19<sup>th</sup> Sun (No Rain Date) – Earth Day 5K  
Run/Hike (9am) – Parkers Creek Loop

### MAY

9<sup>th</sup> Sat – Migratory Bird Guided Hike (8-11am) Griffin Meadow, Turkey Trail & Spur

16<sup>th</sup> Sat – Mountain Laurel Guided Hike #1 (10am-12pm) Laurel Loop

19<sup>th</sup> Thu – Mountain Laurel Guided Hike #2 (6-8pm) Laurel Loop (tentative based on bloom time)

30<sup>th</sup> Sat – Double Oak Farm Garden Tour (9-10:30am) at Double Oak Farm

30<sup>th</sup> Sat – Guided Canoe Trip (2-5pm)

### JUNE

6<sup>th</sup> Sat - Parkers Creek Heritage Trail  
Launch on National Trails Day

(9am-3pm) North Side Trailhead

20<sup>th</sup> Sat – Guided Canoe Trip (7-10am)

27<sup>th</sup> Sat – Full Moon Guided Hike (7:30-10pm) Double Oak Rd & Parkers Creek Rd

Full calendar: [www.acltweb.org/events](http://www.acltweb.org/events)

## Winds of Change: Extreme Weather and Climate Change in Calvert County

By Addy Dunbar, 2025-2026 Corps Member & Farm Manager

Snow, wind, heat, oh my! The last few months in Southern Maryland have been a whirlwind of weather events, and I'm not just talking about the tornado watch a few weeks ago. We had a winter of long-lasting icy snow, nick-named “snow-crete” by some and sticking around in some parts of the county for up to three weeks. Next, an unexpected week of 70-80°F weather in early March got many of our hopes up for spring, only to be let down (and quite confused) by a sudden snowfall after a 70°F morning. Most recently, extreme winds blew through our county, taking down several big trees at ACLT and causing many to shelter in anticipation of a potential tornado.



Frozen Parkers Creek. Photo by Christa Conant

Being new to Calvert County, this is not the kind of weather that I expected to encounter this year. But as I have gathered from conversations with long-term Calvert residents, the weather seems to be outside most people's expectations for this year. Perhaps we have just had an irregular year, and we are experiencing our fair share of strange and unpredictable weather patterns. Or maybe there is a larger pattern of increasingly extreme and unpredictable weather across the globe.

Scientists have concluded that extreme weather events like those in Calvert County this year are made more frequent and more extreme by climate change. Further, organizations like NASA and NOAA affirm that many weather events made more frequent by climate change are exacerbated by human activity. Unfortunately, this upward trend will continue to cause damage to our infrastructure, ecosystems, and social services. Here at ACLT, we've had downed trees in the windstorms, rutted roads and erosion after snowmelt, and confused ecosystems from temperature swings. All of this is costing us more: more volunteer time spent on repairs, more money for those repairs, and more frequent postponements of events and programs, such as our Maryland Master Naturalist classes. According to the World Economic Forum, the cost of climate change damage globally will be between \$1.7 and \$3.1 trillion by 2050. (cont. pg 3)



The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.



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The Watershed Observer is published quarterly by the American Chestnut Land Trust. ACLT is dedicated to the preservation of Southern Maryland's Natural and Historical Resources. Since it was established in 1986, ACLT has preserved just under 3,500 acres. We own 1,640 acres, manage 1,810 acres owned by the State of Maryland, and hold conservation easements on 374 privately-owned acres.

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Adelaide Dunbar

## From the President's Desk ...

First, an introduction is in order. In January, I was elected President of the ACLT Board of Directors to succeed David Farr. Dave has done an outstanding job as Board President, and I will try to live up to his record. I'm simultaneously honored and humbled by the confidence the Board has placed in me to carry on the tradition of solid leadership. Please also welcome Nate Novotny as our new Vice-President, succeeding Dawn Balinski. Nate and I are very grateful to Dave and Dawn for agreeing to remain on the Board to help us get started.

So, a little bit about me: I'm a native of the Parkers Creek watershed, having grown up on the Yoe Farm acquired by ACLT a few years ago. During the acquisition process, I quickly became friends with Greg Bowen, and how fortunate I was that occurred! Greg later recruited me to join the Board, and again, I was honored to do so. It was a way of giving back to the organization that has come to mean a lot to me. Similarly, when I was asked late last year to consider running for Board President, I agreed to do so because it represented giving back to ACLT more significantly.

I'm retired from the Department of the Navy after a forty-year career. In retirement, I've been keeping busy with volunteering and home improvement projects for my family and friends. Those interests led me to serve on the ACLT Facilities Committee which I've chaired for a while and expect to continue doing so for at least a while longer.

I've come to think of ACLT as a place of opportunity no matter your interests. Whether it's a closer connection to nature in a wide array of activities anchored by hiking, or supporting behind the scenes work in facilities or working with our members, there is a place for everyone at ACLT. I'll take a deeper dive into this thinking in future messages.

I'm very happy to start my term coincidentally with the start of Autumn's time as our new Executive Director. We are very fortunate to have such a smart and dynamic person at the helm, and I hope she will be with us in this role for many years to come.

I've been asked to describe my vision for ACLT. I believe that first, we should strive to be good stewards of what we are already responsible for and pay respect for the forty years of work performed by so many to make ACLT what it is today.

Second, we should take good care of our people, especially our staff and volunteers. They work diligently to deliver the experiences we love.

Third, Greg left us a legacy of thinking beyond what we already have and challenged us to do more, wherever and whenever we can. With finite resources, we must balance that with managing what we have but we should always be looking for ways we can sustainably grow.

What do you think? Please take our Feedback Survey, available here: [www.acltweb.org/survey-26](http://www.acltweb.org/survey-26)

John W. Yoe, President

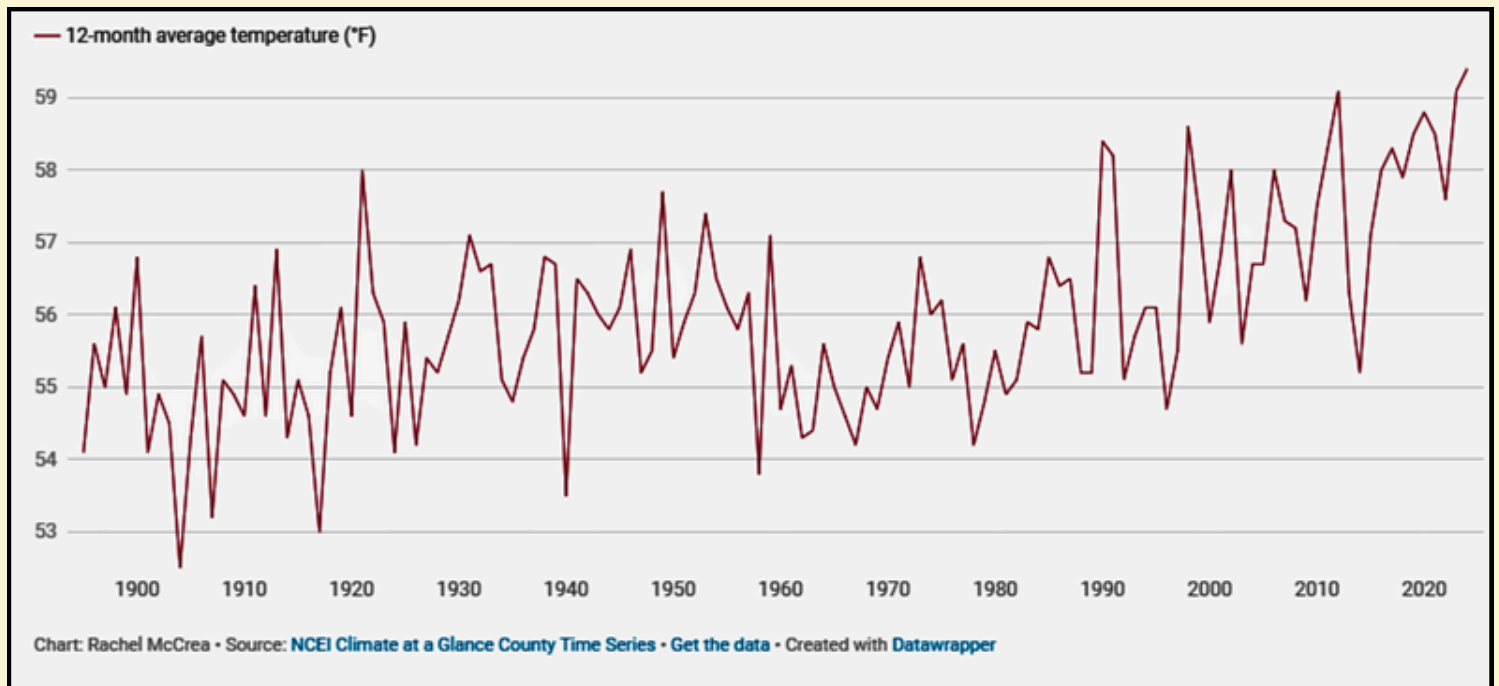
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

More than a century of Calvert County weather records show progressively rising average temperatures, which scientists say correlate with higher rates of extreme weather, such as heat waves and extreme precipitation. The average annual temperature for Calvert from 2000 to 2024 was 57.5°F, 1.9°F higher than the average for the 20th century. The warmest year in this range was 2024, with an average temperature of 59.4°F, up 3.8°F from former averages. The US Global Change Research Program and its partners predict that for Calvert County, a 2.7°F increase in average temperatures will result in:

- 27 more days per year of extreme precipitation
- 5 more days per year with temperatures of 95°F or above
- Fifteen more nights per year with temperatures of 70°F or above

### Calvert County Yearly Average Temperature, 1895-2024

The yearly average temperature in Calvert County has trended upwards since 1895, according to NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information. The federal data points to a 0.2°F rise per decade, or a 2°F rise per century.



Source: Capital News Service - <https://cnsmaryland.org/2025/07/07/the-changing-climate-in-calvert-county/>

Extreme weather is one of the easiest ways to see climate change in our own lives, and a good way to depolarize our climate conversations. According to the Yale School of the Environment, talking about the weather grounds conversations in lived experience, which is not interpreted by most Americans as 'political.' Encouraging people to see the link between the extreme weather in their own lives and our changing climate has the potential to inspire more meaningful climate action. It unites people under a common understanding and a goal of protecting their communities, avoiding divisive conversations more than other climate change awareness campaign strategies.

As extreme weather events become more frequent, we must work both to mitigate climate change and also to adapt to new conditions. Infrastructure, public health and safety, and our environment are all at risk. Here at ACLT, we mitigate and adapt to climate change in a wide variety of ways, including building trails in a sustainable manner to



Parkers Creek

minimize erosion from stormwater. We also use organic and regenerative agriculture practices to reduce agricultural greenhouse gases and provide education about balanced ecosystems. Conserving land alone is also an extremely effective climate mitigation strategy.

ACLT's forests and wetlands provide yearly ecosystem services, including the following:

- Absorbing over 150 tons of pollutants that would otherwise be in the air or the Bay.
- Containing an estimated 215,126 tons of stored carbon, sequestering another 1,970 tons per year out of the atmosphere as forests grow and mature.
- Delivering flood prevention and stormwater mitigation.

The weather is changing in Calvert County, but we are prepared to keep our communities safe. With your help, the ACLT community continues to reduce the risk we face from climate change and extreme weather events, and adapt to their consequences.

For sources, visit: [www.acltweb.org/newsletter-sources-spring-2026](http://www.acltweb.org/newsletter-sources-spring-2026)

## **Around ACLT**

### **Dirt Bikes on the PF2Bay Trail**

By Clara Brill-Carlat, Land Manager

Throughout the past year, ACLT has been facing a persistent problem: people riding dirt bikes on the PF2Bay Trail. While ACLT has had previous incidents of people trespassing with motorized vehicles, which are not permitted on any of ACLT's trails or properties, the issue on the PF2Bay Trail is the worst in recent years. The dirt bikers have been eroding the trail surface, posing a threat to hikers on the narrow path, and creating deep ruts in the stream banks alongside the PF2Bay Trail's bridges. They have also repeatedly removed wooden barriers put in place by staff and volunteers—even breaking through a gate that was cemented into the ground—and have ridden off-trail in some places to circumvent the barriers. After ACLT put up additional signage prohibiting motorized vehicles, the dirt bikers tore down many of the signs and even scraped a couple of our painted trail blazes off of the trees. Hikers have reported two riders, often entering or exiting the trail from Simmons Ridge Road and from Dares Beach Road via the BGE power lines.

Having the opportunity to work on ACLT's trails for the past five years has given me a deep appreciation of all the time and energy that goes into creating and maintaining a trail. Beyond the hundreds of staff and volunteer hours that are spent designing and building a trail to make it enjoyable for hikers and minimally disruptive to the surrounding environment, continual maintenance is required to address erosion, clear fallen trees, and re-route and re-blaze sections of the trail. Each ACLT trail has a volunteer "trail steward" who walks their assigned trail each month, keeping vegetation trimmed back and reporting fallen trees or broken infrastructure to staff. Additional volunteers, armed with chainsaws, shovels, or impact drivers—whatever the job requires—take time out of their day to make any needed repairs as soon as a problem is reported. All of this is in service of the more than 50,000 people who hike ACLT's trails each year. Over the past few months, approximately 80 staff and volunteer hours have been dedicated to protecting the PF2Bay Trail and its hikers from the dirt bikers, only for the problem to persist. To have two individuals purposely damage a trail, time and time again—worsening the experience for thousands of other people—feels very disheartening; to have the time and energy of our volunteers be repeatedly disrespected feels personal.

Luckily, there are a few things that you — our members and supporters — can do to help. First, please leave downed logs and branches in place across the PF2Bay Trail; they have been placed there intentionally by staff and volunteers. While we normally take pride in keeping our trails clear, these temporary blockades make navigating the trail more difficult for motorized vehicles,

### **Canoe Trip Registration is Now Open! Trips are Scheduled through October**



Sign up for one of ACLT's guided canoe trips and get your "I Paddled Parkers Creek" decal!

View schedule here:

[www.acltweb.org/canoe-trips](http://www.acltweb.org/canoe-trips).

while still keeping the path passable for hikers. Second, if you see or hear dirt bikes on the trail while you are hiking, please call the Calvert County Sheriff's Office non-emergency number (410-535-2800) right away and provide a description of your location. Finally, if you have information about the owners of the dirt bikes or where the bikes are kept, we encourage you to get in touch with ACLT staff or the Sheriff's Office. For all of our hikers, runners, bird-watchers, and nature lovers, let's take good care of our trails.



*Above: Ruts created by dirt bike riders along the PF2 Bay Trail; Top Left: Volunteers building a dirt bike barrier across the trail; Bottom Left: Staff and volunteers constructing a barrier alongside the trail*

## Spring Growth at Double Oak Farm

By Addy Dunbar, 2025-2026 Corps Member & Farm Manager

Spring is upon us, and soon the bees will buzz, the flowers will bloom, and outdoor production at Double Oak Farm will be back in full swing. Double Oak Farm is ACLT's one-acre organic and regenerative produce farm, which supplies over 4,000 pounds of food each year to the local St. John Vianney Food Pantry. If you've ever wondered what goes on within the fenced area just past the Northside barn, or within the mysterious plastic structure out there - the high tunnel - you're in luck. This article will recap the winter at Double Oak Farm, explore what's to come for spring, and reveal some of the secrets behind a successful harvest.

Though the farm produces harvests year-round in our high tunnel, many things cannot survive outdoors through the Southern Maryland winter, and thus, our production capacity is much lower. This winter, we've been harvesting mostly veggies in the brassica family: dark leafy greens such as kale, collards, and mustard greens. We are also harvesting some root veggies, including carrots, turnips, and radishes. Surprisingly, the carrots and turnips were able to overwinter outside, even under weeks of frozen snow, and they are now coming out of the ground with most of their flavor and snap still intact. As winter comes to a close, dedicated farm volunteers are getting ready by preparing planting beds, resetting the irrigation system, and clearing some



*Plants in the High Tunnel*

of the leftover fall vegetables. Soon, the hustle and bustle of planting will begin!

The spring growing season starts earlier than you may think, with indoor seed starting, sprouting sweet potato slips - baby vines, and preparing various sprouts for the outdoors. In January, farm volunteers and I met to discuss what we wanted to plant for the year and to order seeds. The following month was spent gathering materials and doing the first few plantings - not in the ground, but in trays in the ACLT office basement. After months of coddling under timed grow lights, mid-March is the beginning of the season to "harden off" seedlings - bringing them outside to experience true sunlight and simulating wind with a box fan for a few hours a day. The fan encourages the plants to grow heartier stems so that they can hold themselves upright in their eventual outdoor home. While some lucky plants will continue to be coddled outside in the warmth and humidity of ACLT's high tunnel, others will have to brave wind and cold evenings outdoors through the spring.

The first to go outside are direct sow plants (seeds that we plant directly in the ground), such as peas, spinach, turnips, and radishes - planted in the first two weeks of March. Then, right around St. Patrick's Day, we plant potatoes after sprouting them inside for a few weeks, a process called "chitting." Next, we plant carrots, and begin to transplant brassicas outside - all of our kale, cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower. The heat lovers in our high tunnel - tomatoes, peppers, eggplants - go in in early May, around Mother's Day, and so do a few plants from the same families that will grow outside the tunnel. You can't forget about



Top: Farm Volunteers enjoy the sun at a Wednesday morning harvest in 2025. Bottom: Double Oak flower garden blooms in Oct. 2025.

summer squash, which goes in at around the same time, or pumpkins and watermelons, which get planted two weeks later.

As is true of many things, the farm and its volunteers spend some time in hibernation each winter. But along with being a time of rest, hibernation is a time of preparation, gathering resources for a season of flourishing ahead. The farm and its extremely hardworking volunteers are excited to welcome spring at ACLT. In the spring, our beautiful flower garden out on the farm starts to flourish, bringing in rare and spectacular bugs, which also happen to pollinate our veggies. Harvests grow larger, more colorful, and more diverse as we move toward the summer months, and of course, the farm work picks up. As the sun starts to come out more frequently this spring, we encourage anyone interested in gardening to join us. Farm volunteers meet weekly on Wednesday mornings, from 9 am to 12 pm. If you'd like to volunteer, get more information on the farm, or just consult about a situation in your own garden, feel free to email me at [adelaide@acltweb.org](mailto:adelaide@acltweb.org). Happy planting!

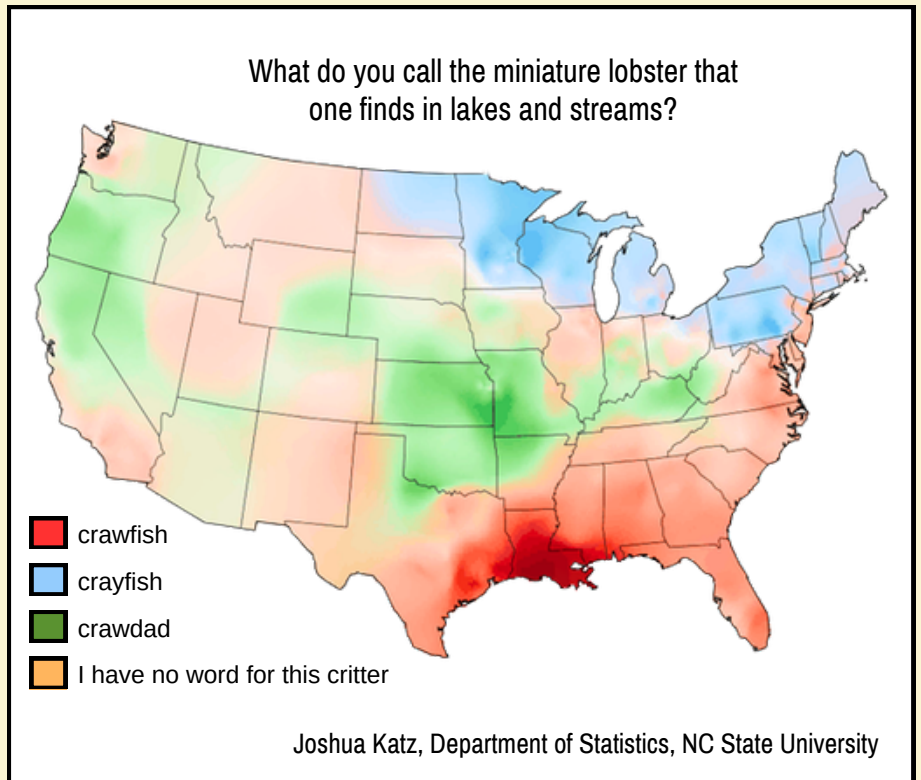
## Crustacean Investigation: A Pilot Survey of Crayfish in Hunting Creek

By Mary Hoover, Regional Conservation Partnership Coordinator

Over recent years, the Friends of Hunting Creek (FOHC) has been on a scientific journey to better understand the ecological health and biological diversity of their watershed. From nutrient monitoring during the annual Water Quality Blitz and quarterly data collection to investigations of macroinvertebrates and cutting edge eDNA fish analysis, the FOHC is committed to unraveling the complexities of the watershed.

In 2025, the FOHC's scientific inquiry turned toward a new, intriguing creature of many names. In the North, you may hear them called crayfish; in the South, crawfish; and in other scattered pockets across the country, you may even hear them referred to as crawdads. But to the FOHC, they are an essential bio-indicator and, therefore, a compelling area of study.

Native crayfish play an important role in stream ecology, processing plant matter and serving as a vital food source to many



fish, bird, and mammal species. The presence of non-native, invasive crayfish, however, can be harmful to native populations. Maryland is home to nine native crayfish species and five non-natives. The Maryland Biodiversity Project records indicate that three native species have been found in Calvert County: Devil Crayfish (*Cambarus Diogenes*), Spinycheek Crayfish (*Orconectes limosus*), and White River Crayfish (*Procambarus acutus acutus*). Additionally, one non-native, invasive species has been identified in the County: Red Swamp Crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*).

In 2025, thanks to a small grant awarded by the Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust (CPNHT), the FOHC executed a pilot study to begin the process of documenting crayfish diversity throughout the watershed. The pilot study sought to answer two key questions:

1. Can baited cylindrical coated-wire crayfish traps catch crayfish in non-tidal tributaries?
2. Which of the two baits (canned catfood and Atlantic Menhaden) are most effective?

To answer these questions, the FOHC identified two study sites in the Hunting Creek Watershed: HC6, located in the Fox Run tributary to Hunting Creek, and HC8b, located in Sewell Branch. In Fox Run, the four traps were spread across different stream habitats (runs and pools) for four consecutive days, from September 15th to September 19th, 2025. Then, at Sewell Branch, four traps were deployed at different stream habitats (runs and pools) for four consecutive days from October 13th to October 17th, 2025. All of the traps were checked for crayfish and emptied every 24 hours.

Over the four-day study, two native crayfish species were collected in the two pilot study streams. In Fox Run, four Spinycheek Crayfish and three Devil Crayfish were caught. In Sewell Branch, three Spinycheek Crayfish and one Devil Crayfish were caught. The other two crayfish species historically reported in Calvert County — the native White River Crayfish and the invasive Red Swamp Crayfish — were not found at either site.



Frank McPhillips (left) and Ron Klauda (Right) checking their minnow traps for Crayfish

The mid-September and mid-October sampling timeframe occurred when water temperatures were cooling (53-64°F), and crayfish were probably less active than at other times of the year. Nevertheless, the cylindrical wire traps caught two of the four expected crayfish species. Both types of bait appeared to be about equally as effective, as the catfood-baited traps attracted six crayfish, and the menhaden traps caught five crayfish.

The FOHC hopes to continue crayfish sampling in 2026. The group has applied for another round of funding from the CPNHT Research and Assessment Small Grants Program, and if funded, they will conduct a survey in at least two other tributaries in the Hunting Creek watershed. This year, traps will be deployed in June-August when water temperatures are warmer, crayfish are more active, and, hopefully, the chances of collecting all species residing in Hunting Creek are higher.

## CRAYFISH SPECIES FOUND BY THE FRIENDS OF HUNTING CREEK



Devil Crayfish (*Cambarus diogenes*)



Spinycheek Crayfish (*Orconectes limosus*)

## What We're Working On

In addition to all the projects described so far, staff has been busy with several ongoing efforts. Trail maintenance continues along the Horse Swamp and PF2Bay Trails, including removing fallen trees and rerouting sections as needed. Work is also underway in the Greg & Tamea Bowen Memorial Area, where crews are clearing trees, invasive species, and other vegetation and debris. Invasive species management remains a priority, with continued efforts to remove woody invasives across preserved lands. Staff are also advancing science and monitoring initiatives by completing ACLT's annual Early Detection and Rapid Response surveys for high-priority invasive species, as well as conducting spring macroinvertebrate surveys and the Water Quality Blitz. Additionally, the organization is hosting its Master Naturalist classes for the 14th consecutive year.



*Left: Volunteers remove vegetation from the Greg & Tamea Bowen memorial area, which is under construction. Right: Dale Hutchins and Addie Brown cut downed trees on Horse Swamp Trail.*

At Double Oak Farm, preparations for the growing season are well underway. Staff and volunteers have been starting seeds in anticipation of upcoming plantings, while also directly sowing certain crops and transplanting those that were started indoors. Work has begun on prepping the flower garden and getting flowers established. In addition, repairs are being made to the farm's fence, which sustained damage over the winter. As spring progresses, weekly harvests are beginning to increase the quantity of vegetables we donate to the food bank.



*Left: Plants started in the ACLT office. Right: Volunteers tending the crops in the field.*

**We couldn't do it without our volunteers!** ACLT relies on its dedicated volunteers to help get all this work done!

Each week, our land management staff hold volunteer workdays. On Wednesday mornings from 9-11am, the Wednesday Woods Workers (WWW), meet at ACLT's south side trailhead. On Thursday mornings, the Thursday Trail Adventures (TTA) crew meets at the north side trailhead (same time).

These crews assist with a variety of initiatives, including sustainable trail building, invasive species removal, habitat management, and other projects that help us care for the land efficiently and effectively. New volunteers are always welcome! Whether you want to spend more time outdoors, participate in hands-on conservation work, or learn new skills, we invite you to join one or both of these crews. No prior experience is required.

Email ACLT's Land Manager, Clara Brill-Carlat ([clara@acltweb.org](mailto:clara@acltweb.org)), or Stewardship Coordinator, Addie Brown ([addie@acltweb.org](mailto:addie@acltweb.org)) to be added to the email list.

There's always a lot to do on the farm, so volunteers often work on tasks individually or in small groups throughout the week. An exception is on Wednesday mornings, when a bigger group gathers to harvest produce and deliver it to the local food pantry. Contact Farm Manager Addy Dunbar ([addy@acltweb.org](mailto:addy@acltweb.org)) for more info.

Our Calendar of Events is full of onsite and offsite events for the remainder of the year. These events would not be possible without help from our loyal volunteers. Contact Community Relations Manager Miriam Gholl ([miriam@acltweb.org](mailto:miriam@acltweb.org)) for more info.

See our website for more volunteer opportunities:  
[www.acltweb.org/volunteer](http://www.acltweb.org/volunteer)

## What We're Working On (cont'd)

The Donor Relations staff and committee are currently leading several important initiatives. They are conducting a Feedback Survey to gather input and insights from supporters ([www.acltweb.org/survey-26](http://www.acltweb.org/survey-26)), and launched the Spring Appeal Campaign in March (see sidebar, right) ([www.acltweb.org/spring-appeal-2026](http://www.acltweb.org/spring-appeal-2026)). In addition, staff is in the process of transitioning to a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve data management and engagement with donors.

With the help of the Outreach & Membership Committee, a variety of programs and events are scheduled for this season. Spring events are underway ([www.acltweb.org/events](http://www.acltweb.org/events)), including guided hikes and canoe trips that offer opportunities for community engagement in the outdoors. Planning is also in progress for a 40th Anniversary celebration, to be held later this year.

In partnership with the Cultural Heritage Committee, staff is also preparing for the launch of the Parkers Creek Heritage Trail, scheduled to take place on National Trails Day, June 6th.

The Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance (SMCA) continues to advance key initiatives, including the development of a conservation video and conducting landowner case studies to highlight regional efforts. Staff is also working on a grant application to be submitted to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support funding for an SMCA Coordinator position.

Staff continues to make progress on several operational and strategic priorities. Negotiations are ongoing for the Helfrich conservation easement, reflecting a continued commitment to land preservation. Efforts are also underway to repair the driveway leading to the office, which is riddled with potholes that developed over the winter. In addition to the NFWF grant mentioned above, the organization is actively pursuing funding opportunities by applying for three other grants to support staffing needs.



**ACLT's Feedback Survey**

Your feedback is incredibly important to us and helps ensure we are effectively serving our supporters, volunteers, donors, and the broader community. The insights you share will help guide our work and shape how we communicate and engage moving forward.

Take the survey here:  
[www.acltweb.org/survey-26](http://www.acltweb.org/survey-26)

## 2026 Spring Appeal Letter

Dear Friend of the ACLT,

In every strong forest, deep roots anchor the trees through seasons of change, holding steady while nourishing the growth that allows the canopy to rise.

At the American Chestnut Land Trust, those roots are you - our supporters, members, and dedicated volunteers. Together, we have built something lasting. As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we reflect on how we have worked to protect the Parkers Creek and Governors Run watersheds, provide public access to natural landscapes, and expand our mission of land conservation throughout Southern Maryland.

This past year brought profound change, including the loss of our remarkable Executive Director, Greg Bowen, whose vision shaped so much of ACLT's impact. In the months that followed, we moved through a time of transition as new leadership rose from within. Today, Autumn Phillips-Lewis guides the land trust forward with steady purpose after more than a decade as ACLT's Land Manager.

Because of this strong foundation, ACLT has continued to conserve additional high-priority lands, steward the forests and waterways already under our care, and provide meaningful opportunities for people to connect with nature. More people are discovering our trails, more families are engaging in our programs, and more volunteers are stepping forward to care for our lands and preserve our cultural heritage. Our community is growing, and so is the responsibility to protect the land that makes it all possible.

The land we care for so deeply does not belong to one person nor one generation. It belongs to all of us and to those who will walk these trails long after we are gone. That's why we invite you to help carry ACLT's mission forward with a gift to the Spring Appeal today. Your support will help protect vulnerable landscapes, connect people with the land, and strengthen our ability to preserve these places and experiences for future generations.

Our work depends directly on the generosity of supporters like you. Thank you for being an essential part of this shared effort and for helping ensure that the land we protect today remains part of our community's living legacy.

With gratitude,  
John Yoe, Board President

Donate: [www.acltweb.org/donate/spring-appeal-26](http://www.acltweb.org/donate/spring-appeal-26)

# Annual Meeting Highlights Accomplishments in a Difficult Year

By Miriam Gholl, Community Relations Manager

*“2025 was a year of change and challenge for ACLT after our long-time Executive Director, Greg Bowen, passed away suddenly in February. However, ACLT showcased just how resilient and capable our organization and its people are in the months that followed. As you will see by reading through this Annual Report, we continued to make great progress on all aspects of our current 5-Year Plan, which was adopted by the Board of Directors in early 2024. We continued to be the leaders in land conservation and stewardship in Southern Maryland, and we connected people to the land while working to ensure our spaces and programs were welcoming and accessible to all.”*

~ Autumn Phillips-Lewis, Executive Director

Over 100 supporters attended ACLT’s Annual Meeting on March 7th at Truth Bible Church. Newly appointed President John Yoe opened the meeting with the State of ACLT, followed by the election of new Board Member Dale Hutchins. Dale is a dedicated land management volunteer who consistently donates hundreds of hours of his time each year.

During the meeting, staff proceeded to share successes in the areas of land management, science, outreach, regional conservation, and donor relations. Cheryl Place, Board Treasurer, reported that ACLT is financially stable.

The keynote speaker, Dan Skalos of the Maryland Environmental Trust, described the ways in which his organization helps landowners, land trusts, and local communities protect land through several programs.

If you missed the meeting, you can watch it on our [Youtube channel](#). The 2025 Annual Report is also available here: [www.acltweb.org/publications](http://www.acltweb.org/publications).

## Thank You for Your Support

### New Members

ACLT welcomes the following new members since the Winter newsletter:

Janet Benish  
Coralyn & Ervind Bhogte  
Kristen Bunn  
Elizabeth Bouchard  
Kate Carey  
Lisa & Will Dorsey  
Judi Durda  
Courtney Fonfara, Mike Smith & Family  
Jessica Fudge & Serita Lagos  
William & Katherine Gorman  
Kimball Jonas  
Edgar O'Brien  
Michelle Pistachio  
Anne & James Watson

### Sustaining Membership

Congratulations to those who have reached the level of Sustaining Membership:  
Carlton and Marion Green

### Memorial Donations

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

#### In memory of Paul, Doris & Don

**Berry:**  
Marsha Berry

#### In Memory of Dan Boesz:

Jenny & Mike Gray  
Norman & Helen Prince

#### In memory of Lucille Bowen:

Marsha Dyjack  
Sandra Kissner

#### In memory of Tamea Bowen:

Marsha Dyjack

#### In memory of Joan Cunningham:

Melissa Orr

#### In Memory of Dan Head:

Anna Deeny & Greg Locraft

### Greg Bowen Memorial Fund

Melanie Biscoe  
Penelope Bittinger  
Laura Blackwelder  
Marsha Dyjack  
Sandra Kissner  
Melanie & Robert LaCount  
Linda Roof  
Susan Kopanke Shubert  
Fay Walton

### Gift Memberships

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

RT West  
Jen Ludlow & Dan Walker

### In Kind Donations

Jeff Buyer  
Tom Dugan  
TJ Ireland  
Melissa McCormick  
Beth & Ralph Nolletti  
Mel Ricks

## **General Contributions and Designated Gifts**

### **12 in '26 Hiking Challenge Donations**

Amy Everett  
Dorothy Birch  
Laura Blackwelder  
Ashley Budano  
Jody Cacko  
Virginia Foran-Cain  
Kristen Chirichella  
Melanie Donis  
Richard Fallica  
Alison Fields  
Allen Garneau  
Miriam Gholl  
Patrick Goldsmith  
Sandra Gwynn  
Gretchen Hambright  
Cheri Hamilton  
Jonna Jones  
Amy LaGrange  
Jen Ludlow  
Jennifer Matteson  
Kathy Mead  
Sonya Michael  
Eric Montgomery  
Penny Moran  
Christopher Newman  
Winifred Niemi  
Sandra Peissner  
Saroja & Raj Raman  
Sharon Roach  
Janice Rodgers  
Lisa Spencer  
David Steffee  
Danette Svobodny  
Jenny Thompson  
Janis & Ronald Tucker  
John & Patti Wahl  
Robert Weatherly

### **Double Oak Farm Program**

Kenneth Michael  
NAI Michael

### **Spring Appeal**

Karen Anderson  
Marsha Berry  
David Bury  
Jessica & Ty Clark  
Paul & Diana Dennett  
Mike, Margaret & Matthew Duffy  
Richard Fallica  
Jeanette & Michael Flaim  
Rachel Fried  
Edwin Haack  
Colleen Kiefer  
Thomas Kirby  
Ron & Kathy Klauda  
Bruce & Liz Laher  
Kennie & Jacques Mauche  
John McGahey  
Rick Phillips  
George Spence  
David Steffee  
Denise Swol  
Craig Turner  
James Vietor  
John & Patti Wahl  
Debra Zanewich

### **General**

Jessica Boynton  
David Braun & Kathy Daniel  
Cathy Brill  
Marijo & Marcia Cosmas-Monnett  
Edwin & Florence Ford  
Karon Garrett  
Jim French and Martha Holleman  
Ted Kowaluk  
Frank & Janel McPhillips  
Mel Ricks  
John & Betsy Saunders

### **Land & Stewardship Campaign**

Angie Bollich & John Williamson

### **Monthly**

William Kipling Atlee  
Judy Bradt  
Paul & Diana Dennett  
Toby Gohn  
Jessica Howard  
Sandra Jarrett  
Penny Moran  
Edwin & Monica Noell  
Edgar "Ted" O'Brien  
Tod & Mel Ricks  
Rebecca Rothhaas  
Elaine Strong  
Paul Vetterle

### **Workplace Giving**

The Abell Foundation  
America's Charities  
Constellation Energy  
Eric & Robyn Truslow

### **Auction Donation**

Calvert Nature Society

### **Friends Forever Society**

Joy Bartholomew  
Stan\* & Barbara Benning  
Dan Boesz\*  
Peter Daly  
Kathy Daniel & David Braun  
Paul & Diana Dennett  
Mary & Ralph Dwan\*  
David & Ellen Farr  
Millicent Gay\*  
Jim\* & Susan Greene  
Robert Jeager\*  
Steven & Jackie King  
Jane Klemer\*  
Shirley Knight & Bonnie Carter  
Gary & Sandra Loew  
Penny Moran  
Robyn & Eric Truslow  
Caroline Van Mason\*  
\*Deceased



**American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 2363**  
**Prince Frederick, MD 20678**

*The Many Ways to Get Involved with ACLT*  
visit [www.acltweb.org](http://www.acltweb.org) for more info.



*Become a Member*



*Help with Trail Maintenance*



*Make a Donation*



*Help on the Farm*



*Take a Hike...Bring a Friend!*



*Join a Friends Group*



*Help with Water Sampling*



*Attend an Event*