

# Holly Hill Trail building underway

## Thursday Trail Adventures incorporates volunteers

By **CALEB M. SOPTELEAN**  
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Trail building is a rewarding experience for some local volunteers and interns.

The American Chestnut Land Trust has been building a 2.2-mile trail on the 405-acre Holly Hill Farm that it purchased in November. Work began earlier this year, the organization's land manager Autumn Phillips-Lewis said.

She hopes the trail will be finished by the end of the year. About a half-mile is complete now. When done, it will form a loop and tie into the PF2Bay and Griffin Meadow trails. She noted that the ACLT uses volunteers and interns for various projects on "Thursday Trail Adventures," which run weekly from 9 to 11 a.m. Building the Holly Hill Trail is just one of those projects.

"This is one of the most important properties the ACLT has purchased," Phillips-Lewis said. "It's kind of a gateway to the [Parkers Creek] preserve," she added, noting the land is on the northern edge of the Parkers Creek watershed. The southern portion of the watershed begins at Scientist Cliffs Road northeast of Port Republic.

That area is accessed by the North/South and other trails.

"I think it will be a beautiful trail," she said, calling it "a nice meandering trail through neat habitats," including "an old-growth forest, very steep ravines and headwater streams." A spur trail will connect with a 200-year-old barn on the property that is

currently being stabilized. "I'm very excited about this trail because it's the first new trail that I'm getting the opportunity to work on," said Rachel Delbo, an intern with the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Chesapeake Conservation Corps. The Mount St. Mary's University graduate is looking forward to hiking it since she helped design it and flagged trees for the trail. "Now she's digging it out." This has been a really great experience," Delbo said, noting her one-year internship will end on Aug. 20, at which time she will be replaced by another



STAFF PHOTO BY CALEB M. SOPTELEAN  
Volunteer Jeanette Kaufmann scopes out the American Chestnut Land Trust's Holly Hill Trail on June 4.

intern. Gabriela Icaza, a Patuxent High graduate and Lusby resident, is a rising senior at the University of Maryland. The environmental science and policy major is serving a summer internship with ACLT.

"It's just really rewarding to see all the progress we make every week," Icaza said. Ron Wilson is a volunteer with the organization. He and his wife Carolina have lived in the county

for 35 years and were avid hikers before they found out about the ACLT three years ago. When he partially retired 18 months ago, Ron decided to volunteer on Thursdays.

"We kind of fell in love with the ACLT," he said. "The staff and volunteers are enjoyable to work with, which keeps bringing me back. Calvert County's fortunate to have an organization like this."

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