

DLC holds 16th Annual Meeting

by Autumn Michael, Executive Director



It was a beautiful, crisp fall day – a perfect one to spend celebrating Davidson Lands Conservancy's 16th year and looking toward 2017.

About 40 folks gathered at Erwin Lodge on the edge of Davidson College's campus to reflect on our accomplishments over the years, including the preservation of over 450 acres

either in fee, leasehold, or easement – and connecting people to the natural world by working with Trees Davidson, World of Wonder, and Davidson Parks and Recreation.

During the November 6 business meeting, we said farewell to outgoing board members, elected two new board members and welcomed our new board officers for the year. Former Board President Pam Dykstra shared the successes of the World of Wonder (WOW) program this year. Afterwards, Dr. Pam Hay led the program with a talk on invasive plants and a short hike around the property identifying various pervasive invasives. Board member Christine Lisiewski, a pollinator/native plant specialist from Dearness Gardens Nursery, also had a selection of native plants on hand that are alternatives to invasives in the home landscape.



Thank you Davidson Rotarians! At the Annual Meeting, DLC President John Burke, left, and Executive Director Autumn Michael accepted a generous donation from the Davidson Rotary Club represented by Frances Dawson (in red) and Don Morris (right).



Pam Hay points to invasives on the trail.

Pervasive Invasives

by Dr. Pam Hay

Invasive exotic plants are non-native species that can grow out of control and out-compete native species for resources, such as light, water, and nutrients. Invasive plants lack predators found in areas where they naturally occur. This allows them to grow excessively, often shading out native plants, thereby disrupting the natural ecosystem. Disruption can lead to a reduction in biodiversity and loss of habitat and food sources for native insects, birds, and wildlife.

Some invasive plants are planted by unaware gardeners for their look and are often available in local stores. Examples of these include English Ivy, Chinese Wisteria, Periwinkle, and Autumn Olive. Other invasive plants just suddenly appear in your garden, and you need to be vigilant to remove them. Some examples found locally include Japanese Stilt Grass, Kudzu, Japanese Honeysuckle, Mimosa, and Privet.

To help prevent the spread of invasive plants, you can plant native species and remove any invasive plants in your garden. Native plants do a better job of providing food and shelter for local insects and animals and are better adapted to the local environment.

Lists of Mecklenburg County invasives and native plant alternatives can be found at: <http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/LUESA/WaterandLandResources/Conservation/Pages/ISTF.aspx>



From The President

by John Burke

This is my first letter as President of DLC. I feel humbled by your trust in me and very proud of being part of such a meaningful organization.

Our strength lies in the diversity of experiences, perspectives, and ideas that each of you bring. Overall, I want to thank Autumn Michael for her steady guidance and flexible leadership.

My hope over the next year is to achieve ambitious goals through active engagement of our membership and broader community. This year's Run for Green was a great example. **Despite declining national trends in race participation and increasing competition from local races, registration was up by 14% to 768 runners, cash contributions from corporate sponsors were up 30%, and 99% of runners responding to our post-race survey rated their experience as excellent or good.** The result is that we were able to contribute over \$28,000 to the operations of DLC.

These stellar results would not have been possible without the active engagement and commitment of our new Race Director Whitney Dainko and the Run for Green Race Committee who generated creative ideas and carefully executed the race plan. Special thanks go to the 170 community volunteers, the Town of Davidson and our Corporate Sponsors, including MSC, our Presenting Sponsor. Survey respondents frequently cited the engagement of the community as something that set us apart from other runs.

We must work towards protecting another local piece of property next year, preferably one that connects Fisher Farm and Brackett Bluff or extends our protection of the West Branch of the Rocky River. We can do this; however, it will require the active inclusion and engagement of all of our members and the community. Our first step will be to work with our Board of Directors to determine our priorities for next year. Our discussions will be guided by survey results and your comments and suggestions.

Once our priorities are set, we will draw up our plans, establish teams, identify roles and responsibilities, and reach out to you for your help. We will need people with Real Estate experience and others with Conservation backgrounds to help us identify the right properties for protection. We will need fundraisers and marketers, lawyers and accountants. We will need help and guidance from the Town of Davidson, Mecklenburg County, and all of our citizens who care about our natural lands. If you'd like to be part of Davidson Lands

Conservancy, check out davidsonlands.org and join today. If you are interested in being on a committee or volunteering at an event, please contact our staff at autumn@davidsonlands.org. I look forward to working with you.

Run for Green 2016

There are so many folks to thank, including our wonderful sponsors from our community.

We were thrilled to have Davidson College participate this year through their Wildcat Wellness program, and we also had strong teams who ran from MSC, Ingersoll Rand, and Woodlawn School, among others. Thank you, Davidson runners and DLC supporters!



The Ingersoll Rand runners



Autumn Michael (c) with Susan Spalding and Joan Rizzo from MSC.



2016 Run for Green registration was up by 14% to 768 runners!

World of Wonder

by Pam Dykstra



Connecting families to the land is essential for land preservation: If people don't appreciate land, they have little desire to save it. World of Wonder (WOW) was begun 6 years ago as a response to that need.

WOW is a collaboration between DLC and Woodland Discovery, an educational nonprofit. We have a booth at the Davidson Farmers' Market every Saturday, April through October, and nature outings throughout the year.

The WOW Booth draws people of all ages with nature information and hands-on activities. Some of this year's highlights: Meteorites, Nature Art, Patterns in Nature, Firefly Magic, Wheel of Soil, and Nature Mandalas. Some of the organizations who participated: Catawba Riverkeepers, NC Wildlife Federation, Mecklenburg Audubon Society, Davidson Library, Mecklenburg County Soil and Water, Carolina Thread Trail, Mecklenburg County Master Gardeners, and Davidson College's Physics Department.

The Nature Outings, except for stargazing, are limited to children with a parent so families can share the experience and build on it in the future. Each outing is led by an experienced guide who points out and explains what we're seeing.

Our 2016 outings:

- **Herpetology Lab** with Brielle Bowerman at Davidson College
- **Aquaponics** with Kathleen McIntyre at Davidson Green School
- **Winter Scavenger Hunt** with Alice Sudduth and Maureen Charde at Lake Davidson Nature Preserve
- **Stargazing** with Kristen Thompson (Davidson College) and Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Club at Fisher Farm Park
- **Vulture Feeding** with Jessica Hudgins at Carolina Raptor Center
- **Who Lives in this Pond?** with Theresa Morr (NC Wildlife Federation) at West Branch Nature Preserve
- **Nature Walk** with Rob Van Epps at West Branch Nature Preserve
- **Bug Walk** with Corey Sperling at Fisher Farm Park
- **Get in Touch with Trees** with Irvin Brawley at Davidson College's Arboretum
- **Where Do Spiders Hide?** with David Grant at Davidson College Nature Preserve
- **Carolina Thread Trail** with



WOW Booth: Activities with Erin Burke and Mary Bowen



Nature Walk: investigating critters up close

Mary Ann Harrison (Catawba Lands Conservancy) at West Branch Nature Preserve

• **Nature Art** with Betsy Flagler and Carolyn Walker at South Prong Rocky River Greenway

WOW Email Newsletter and Blog

WOW is a valuable outreach arm for DLC. Each week, we send an email newsletter to the WOW list, currently reaching 1,063 families; and our blog is hosted on DLC's website.

Special thanks to the WOW steering committee, who meet and work year-round: Erin Burke, Pam Dykstra, Alice Sudduth, Carolyn Walker, and Janet Werner — and also to Abby Wyatt, Davidson Farmers' Market director.

Two New Members join Board of Directors

EDIE SURRATT is a long-time Davidson resident who has been involved with DLC in the past, working on fundraising for our Run for Green event in 2010. She also was one of the founders and first Co-President of the highly successful Davidson Farmers' Market. Edie works in corporate marketing for WDAV and owns Carrburritos with her husband, Doug. She believes "natural spaces are essential for a thriving planet" and wants to be involved in saving green space around Davidson.



YANCEY FOUCHE is new to the community of Davidson, and we are glad to have her here. She is the Sustainability Director for Davidson College, and prior to that, was the Associate Director of the David Shi Center for Sustainability at Furman University. Yancey is particularly interested in enhancing the relationship between Davidson College and DLC. She was intimately involved in environmental and sustainability issues in the Greenville, SC community.



THANK YOU to all of our 2016 Run for Green Sponsors!

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