



TO: DLC Board of Directors

FROM: Autumn Michael, DLC Executive Director

DATE: December 18, 2017

RE: 2017 Annual Report (and Looking Ahead!)

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The Davidson Lands Conservancy yet again had a whirlwind year, and I am so happy to be a part of this organization, and continue to marvel at how much work this (mostly volunteer!) team gets done!

DLC has a three-pronged mission of protecting natural lands, educating the public about the benefits of conservation, and advocating for our ecosystems. Below are some of our relevant programs and activities this year, within that three-pronged framework.

Protection—

- 1) **Land Stewardship**—Stewardship of our existing 500 acres of easement and other protected properties is a key priority of the DLC and is required of land trusts who protect land in perpetuity. DLC's staff and a large group of Land Monitoring volunteers, monitor each property annually for changes, and helps to resolve any stewardship issues that arise with property owners during the year.
- 2) **Land Initiatives**—Staff and committee members continue to strategize and target key properties in the region for conservation and for greenway development. We continue to build key relationships with property owners and strategize about how to protect new conservation lands in such a high growth market.
- 3) **TreesDavidson**—In its fifth year, Trees Davidson held three tree plantings in town. For more information about TreesDavidson, see:
<http://www.davidsonlands.org/treesdavidson/>



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Education—

- 4) **Insect Book**—DLC just published a new Insect book, its third book in our Davidson's Backyard book series. The booklet is for sale through the DLC or at our local independent bookstore, Main Street Books.
<http://www.mainstreetbooksdavidson.com/>
- 5) **WOW (World of Wonder program)**—The WOW program continues to be a successful and highly visible program of the DLC. WOW volunteers are at the Davidson Farmers Market each week with nature-based crafts and educational activities, along with conducting weekly hikes and outings during the season for families with children. <http://www.davidsonlands.org/about-wow/>
- 6) **Bee City**—In partnership with the Town of Davidson, DLC's Outreach Committee, spearheads the Town's Bee City and pollinator efforts, including outreach at Town Day, the Davidson Farmer's Market, and DLC's annual meeting.
- 7) **Environmental Stewardship Award, Tarheel Trailblazers (Mark Sullivan)**—At this year's Annual Meeting, DLC gave out its first Environmental Stewardship Award to the Tarheel Trailblazers for their outstanding trail building and maintenance work at Fisher Farm Park.
- 8) **E-Newsletter**—We experimented this year with substituting our paper newsletter for a more cost-efficient and environmentally friendly e-newsletter. If you did not receive these bi-monthly e-newsletters, please email autumn@davidsonlands.org . If you wanted to share an opinion on paper v. email newsletters, please let Autumn know that too, while we debate which is the best way to serve our DLC members for 2018.



Advocacy—

- 1) **Greenway Summit** –DLC organized and hosted a “Greenway Summit” in June, as an opportunity to bring together stakeholders involved in the developing and maintaining our greenway trails and multi-use paths in and around Davidson. Collaboration was the word of the day, and we were grateful to the various Towns, Meck County, the Carolina Thread Trail, and Hummingbird Trail representatives who joined us.
- 2) **Beaty Street property**—DLC advocated with the Town to preserve this 19-acres of Town-owned open space on Beaty Street. The Town eventually abandoned development plans, after much neighborhood and community opposition.



Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building

Run for Green. We held our 12th annual Run for Green this past September 16, 2017. With *MSC Industrial Supply* again as our Title Sponsor and largest corporate donor for the event, we **raised (netted) almost \$35,000** that goes directly to our DLC mission of conservation. We had almost **850 runners** in our three races (1/2 marathon, 10k and 5k), and more than **150**



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volunteers on the Green, at water stops and as course monitors. We had many new Sponsors, as well as many of our faithful contributors from many years past. The committee really focused on runner experience this year, and we think it paid off. Soon after the new year, we will begin to plan Run for Green 2018!

Donor Base/Membership. Our donor numbers were down a bit this year compared to last, in part because last year was frankly, a banner donor year, with multiple large donations. Our membership base remains at a steady 400-450 donor members, and our (free) e-newsletter has a mailing list of over 1,500 folks. Our Facebook page has 1,650 followers and our Instagram feed has around 400 followers.

Roy Alexander Summer Internship. We had our first official Roy Alexander Intern this summer with Bayne Brennan of Davidson College. Bayne made some invaluable contributions to the DLC, including getting us up and ready for the 2018 Accreditation process, and creating brochures for us to share with landowners related to conservation lands and greenways. The Roy Alexander Internship Fund is a *permanent, endowed summer internship* for Davidson College students. For more information about the Internship, see this recent article: <https://www.davidson.edu/news/news-stories/171115-internship-honors-alumnus-life-and-passion-for-conservation>

Staff Growth. We welcomed **Mary Gannon** to our staff this fall as a part-time office assistant. Mary is being paid through a Department of Labor program for older adults to work in non-profit organizations, that is administered through the COG.

We are also looking forward to 2018! Here is a preview of our year ahead:

Protection—

- 1)** We will finalize written materials for sharing conservation education with property owners;
- 2)** We will build capacity with a volunteer land protection staff position;
- 3)** We will continue to partner with TreesDavidson for more tree plantings in town.

Education—

- 1)** We plan to publish the fourth book in our Backyard book series, a Native Plants book;
- 2)** We hope to partner with several neighborhood associations to create Native Plant guides for Davidson's neighborhoods.
- 3)** We want to explore a "youth conservation corps," perhaps with the Boy Scouts, to create volunteer opportunities for our youth outdoors.

Advocacy—

- 1)** We will advocate with the Town and Mecklenburg County for the protection of open space in town and in our ETJ and rural areas.
- 2)** We will advocate for a strengthened local tree ordinance within the Town of Davidson.



We will also be pursuing LTA Accreditation for land trusts. For more information on the Accreditation process, see: <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org>