

DAVIDSON LANDS CONSERVANCY

Who Are We?

- DLC is a private, nonprofit local land trust.
- DLC is a member of the Land Trust Alliance, a nation-wide accrediting organization, and has adopted LTA's standards and practices. DLC is also one of 24 regional and local land trust members of the Conservation Trust for North Carolina.

Our Purpose

To protect natural spaces and other significant lands in the town of Davidson and adjacent areas in Mecklenburg, Iredell, and Cabarrus counties.

- Davidson and ETJ lost approximately 18% of its tree canopy between 1984 and 2003 (*The Town Message*).
- Charlotte area has lost one-fourth of its cropland and forestland over the past 20 years – 270,000 in all – while adding 321,000 acres of developed land. That's an 88% increase (*Charlotte Observer*).

Our Role

- To acquire land through private donations or through conservation easements from landowners
- To work with developers in designating open space areas
- To steward and protect natural lands and open space

Please join us in protecting local natural lands

- Become a member
- Be a sponsor for Run for Green, our fall fundraiser
- Talk to Roy Alexander, Executive Director, about conservation opportunities
- Volunteer to help with specific events, office work, and stewardship activities
- Visit www.davidsonlands.org or call the DLC office at 704-892-1910.
- Your contributions will help protect the land, and in so doing, safeguard our water and air quality. An investment today is a legacy for generations to come.

DLC acquires land by accepting gifts of land, accepting voluntary conservation easements from landowners, and purchasing land. North Carolina has a unique incentive program for the protection of the environment and our quality of life. To learn more about incentives for a donation of land or easements, contact DLC or visit www.onencnaturally.org/pages/ConservationTaxCredit.html



DAVIDSON LANDS

PROTECTING LAND IN AND AROUND DAVIDSON

Spring 2010

Davidson Lands Conservancy

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Bicyclers enjoy Fisher Farm Park, one of Davidson's green spaces.

governing boards selling off or destroying these sites, but they would reasonably reserve the right to convert some portions to other community services. For example, Ada Jenkins Center might one day be greatly expanded; an HOA board might elect to cut down wooded commons to construct tennis courts.

DLC believes that a conservation easement requiring that the specific ecosystem services of a parcel are respected in perpetuity is desirable to protect the most important of these green spaces so that they would not be destroyed unnecessarily.

Even with a conservation easement, the town or county could exercise its power of eminent domain to construct a vital community facility where necessary.

Please retain this insert for future reference and contact DLC if you have questions or if you have ideas on how we can advance this green network concept to sustain the quality of life for present and future Davidson residents.

Toast the Earth

DLC and the Davidson Farmers Market invite you to sample local wines and hard ciders on Earth Day, Thursday, April 22. The event, hosted by Summit Coffee on the farmers market grounds, is a fundraiser for DLC and a preview of the DFM summer season. The wines and ciders are produced by the McRitchie Winery and Ciderworks in NC's Yadkin Valley. Come meet new DFM vendors at 7:00, enjoy wine at 7:20, listen to "Open Space Protection" at 8:20, and mix and mingle from 8:30 to 9:00. Tickets: \$20 or 2/\$35. Order online at dlc@davidsonlands.org, purchase at Summit Coffee, or call 704-892-1910.

Mark Your Calendar! • Run for Green/Green Day • Saturday, Sept. 18, 2010

For runner registration, volunteer or sponsorship information, go to www.davidsonlands.org



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Roy Alexander, Executive Director
STAFF
 Brenda Pressley, Treasurer
 Lacy Dick, Secretary
 Pam Dykstra, Vice President
 Dave Martin, President
BOARD MEMBERS
 Hayden Boyd
 Katie Epstein
 Jim Fuller
 Rodney Graham
 June Kimmel
 Kris Krider
 Bill Latham
 Ross Meentemeyer
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 Pat Peroni
 Fountain Walker
 Caley Worthington

Davidson Lands Conservancy
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Davidson's Array of Green Spaces

Davidson has an impressive array of green or open space as shown on the map insert in this newsletter. Actually, the total shown in green is 1232 acres. Open space is so valued in Davidson that the Town Board has adopted a goal of preserving 4458 acres of the community as open space, which is 50%. This green infrastructure has multiple benefits: recreational opportunities as well as ecosystem services, including stormwater retention, surface water filtration, groundwater recharge, climate moderation, oxygen production, and carbon sequestration. We also value the beauty (and property value enhancement) of our greenspaces, their inspirational aspects, and the habitat they offer for wildlife and plants. Additionally, the

Town has the objective of having a recreational site within .25 miles of every residence.

Note that the map includes not only town and country parks, but also common areas held by homeowners associations (HOAs) and conservation easements held by Davidson Lands Conservancy and Catawba Lands Conservancy. We cannot assume that all of these are "safe" or preserved forever. Except for 69 acres *under conservation easement* to DLC (#33 and #39 on the map), the Blue Bird Farm under easement to CLC (#40), and Fisher Farm Park (#12) where a 200-acre easement is held by Mecklenburg County, the other green spaces are no more than a vote of the governing body away from sale or destruction. We don't anticipate



Own Your Own HMS Minnow!

This stable, good looking, hand-built skiff, The Sea Urchin, is offered at auction with all proceeds to the Davidson Lands Conservancy. Built by Jimmy Helms and finished by Yates Smith, the design is by David Stimson, Stimson Marine, Booth Bay, Maine. • Length: 11'5"; • Beam: 4'4" • Construction: Lapstrake, Plywood, Mahogany (fully framed). **Send your bid to dlc@davidsonlands.org**. Bidding will conclude at Toast the Earth winetasting on April 22.

Q&A with Dan Clodfelter



In this issue, the NC Senator replies to letters from DLC members Lois James, Julius Melton and Sam Hay regarding conservation tax credit.

What are the objectives of the effort to revise NC's tax code?

The basic structure of our current tax code is over 80 years old and has not been comprehensively updated to reflect changes in our economy since that time. Over the years there have been countless new exemptions, credits, exclusions, and allowances inserted into the tax code, each one of them passionately supported by advocates for some worthwhile objective. But the aggregate result of all these small, individual changes has been an increase in revenue instability, further complication of an already complex tax code, distortions of economic activity, and constant political strife about revenue shortfalls or surpluses (read: "tax increases" and "tax cuts").

Over the last decade numerous study committees have unanimously concluded that we are overdue for a complete overhaul of our antique tax code. The current goal is to see how far we can go to rebase our tax system on a set of neutral principles. It is not the goal to generate more revenue or additional taxes, just to collect the same revenue in a more balanced and sensible way. That would involve simplifying the

system, reducing the number of different deductions and credits, eliminating various special treatments, and thereby leading to a situation in which we could substantially reduce tax rates all across the board while still generating the revenue the state needs.

What is your view of the value of the tax credit for conservation easements?

The conservation tax credit encourages one form of charitable activity. There are many different charitable purposes. I do not believe the tax code should favor giving to educational institutions over giving for land preservation, but neither should it favor land conservation over education, for example.

Under the proposal now under discussion the existing tax credit for conservation land donations would be merged into a new, single tax credit for charitable gifts. We have not yet gotten to the point of deciding the amount or level of that new combined charitable tax credit and are still debating the general concept. I can't predict at this point how it will all turn out.

What are the prospects that the tax credit for conservation easements will be retained?

That all depends on whether we do a comprehensive reform or not. It isn't likely the credit will be modified or changed by itself, since it is not under any special focus or consideration by itself.

Please watch this issue closely as the NC Legislature reconvenes. We currently have a tax credit, and retaining that tax credit is important. It is of much greater value and incentive to the donor, and thus to our continued success in getting donations of conservation easements. You can contact Senator Clodfelter at Daniel.Clodfelter@ncleg.net

From the President's Desk



"From Gray to Green" has been rolling off of my lips a lot since we first saw the enclosed map with the protected lands in green and the remaining rural areas in gray. The two-pronged mission of the DLC is first to encourage landowners to preserve the natural character of their lands and second to keep these preserved lands natural forever. "Turn the gray to green and keep it green" is more accurate but not as bumper-sticker worthy.

As a land conservancy, we work with the landowners to preserve their lands in a conservation easement, which allows landowners to continue to own and manage their land while turning it green by giving up many of their development rights. We celebrate the owners of the green spots that represent conservation easements because these lands will be kept green forever.

DLC works with a variety of entities and tools to preserve the natural character of the lands. For example, Roy Alexander spent much time and energy as our Executive Director to help preserve Mecklenburg County's West Branch Wetland even though the DLC does not hold a conservation easement on it. It is the "turning green" and the "keeping it green" that is important, not who gets to own it.

We do like to differentiate ourselves from the larger land conservancies who also help preserve land in this general area by referring to ourselves as "your" land conservancy. The gray areas we want to turn green aren't the lands that will attract other groups, but these areas are important to us because they are important to you. We want to move from a series of spots on a map to a network of green because you have told us that's what you want: more green now and forever.



Roy Alexander points out a native plant at the Catawba Wildlife Glen.

Springtime Activities 2010

• Reptile Day April 10 – 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Davidson College professor Mike Dorcas and his biology students will host fun for the whole family at the Blanche Knox Parker Memorial Garden between Dana and Watson Science Buildings at the College. Some of last year's favorites were venomous snake talks, local turtle and snake collections, and a menagerie of frogs.

• Catawba Wildflower Glen Hike – Sunday, April 11, 1:00 and 2:30 PM

Registration required. Email [dlc@davidsonlands.org](mailto:dlc@ davidsonlands.org) or call 704 892 1910.

CWG is a 20-acre preserve located just below Mountain Island Lake in Mecklenburg County. We will see the richest array of woodland wildflowers found in this area. Tour length is approximately one mile on moderately strenuous constructed trails. A ½-mile boardwalk into the heart of the Glen offers access to even those with limited stamina.

• Fisher Farm Park Hike – Sunday, April 25, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Registration required. Email [dlc@davidsonlands.org](mailto:dlc@ davidsonlands.org) or call 704 892 1910.

Dr. Larry Mellichamp, botanist and director of the botanical gardens at UNCC, will lead us on an exploration of rich flora and mature woodlands, some off-trail. Fisher Farm Park is located at 21215 Shearer Road.

• West Branch Wetland Hike – Saturday, May 8, 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Registration required. Email [dlc@davidsonlands.org](mailto:dlc@ davidsonlands.org) or call 704 892 1910.

Park Naturalist, Lenny Lampel, will guide this preview look at the newest nature preserve in the Mecklenburg County Park System. Expect to see lots of beaver signs, mature alluvial forest, and evidence of "hydrological engineering."

EAC Contributes to DLC with Green Ball

On February 12, the Davidson College Environmental Action Coalition hosted the sixth annual Green Ball in the Lilly Family Gallery. This student group is dedicated to increasing campus environmental awareness and collaborating with the community on environmental projects. The Green Ball is their biggest and most popular annual event and features a contra dance, live band and caller and chance auction. This year's event featured the Asheville-based band Appalachian Storm and raised over \$1900 for DLC.

**Davidson Farmers' Market
Officially Opens May 1**

Welcome New DLC Board Members



A freshman at Davidson, **Cakey Worthington** hails from Indianapolis, IN. She enjoys backpacking, fishing, and hiking in her free time. She plans to

major in biology or environmental studies. "I hope to learn a lot about land conservation and help the Davidson community by being a part of the DLC!" Cakey has hit the ground running; she has already been an integral part of Run for Green and Christmas in Davidson.



Rodney Graham and his wife Melissa and two children, Marshall and Emma Claire, moved to Davidson in 2005. Rodney owns John Marshall Custom

Homes in Davidson. His interest in preserving open space stems from a life long love of nature and coincides with his current interests in planning and development. "Our ability to preserve green spaces in large part depends on how we plan and build our homes."



Hayden Boyd and his wife Margot moved to Davidson in 2005. An economist retired from the US Department of Commerce, he volunteers for

Marion Medical Mission, helping rural villagers in Malawi and other African countries build protected wells for clean drinking water. "We in Davidson benefit from the many places of natural beauty in and around our community. DLC works to preserve these open spaces for future generations."