



DAVIDSON LANDS

Protecting land in and around Davidson

Fall 2007

• Davidson Lands Conservancy •

Vol. 4 No. 2



Save Our Wetland

Did you know there is a 23-acre natural wetland just outside Davidson?

Located just by the confluence of the West Branch and the Rocky River east of Davidson, this wetland is the largest in this area of the Carolinas and is incredibly rich in diversity of fauna and flora – more species than any other wetland in our region.

That it has survived past agricultural and development practices – which have drained and destroyed most other examples of these special ecosystems – is all but miraculous.

In the spring, the next phase of the Summers Walk development (over 200 housing units on a 33-acre site) adjacent to the wetland will effectively convert it to a detention pond for the runoff of these lawns, streets, parking lots, and rooftops. This plan was approved years ago and meets all local, state, and federal regulations.

Furthermore, the woodland adjoining the wetland, which is vital habitat for many critical species of reptiles and amphibians, as well as birds and mammals, will be bulldozed for Phase 3 of the Summers Walk development.

Wetlands are nature's sponges, absorbing

stormwater runoff and releasing it gradually to reduce flooding downstream. Additionally – if they are healthy ecosystems, complete with all their living organisms – they are nature's filters of our surface waters, reducing the need for costly, high-tech water treatment plants to prevent contamination of drinking water supplies. We stand to lose this wetland resource.

You can help. DLC is seeking to protect this vital habitat and to prevent discharge of the contaminated stormwater directly into the wetland. We are seeking funds from governmental units and grants from foundations and corporations. Donations from members of this community who would rather have a verdant, healthy wetland adjoining their (future) West Branch Greenway than a stark, muddy detention pond will be critical to this effort. Watch for further details as negotiations continue.

Tom Ross to speak at the DLC Annual Meeting

**November 12, 2007
7:00 p.m.
Davidson College
Presbyterian Church
Congregational House**



Everyone is invited to welcome Tom Ross, the new President of Davidson College, who will be our featured speaker. President Ross brings a long history of interest in environmental concerns. At the meeting, he will share with us thoughts on Land for Tomorrow and other preservation issues.

We will also discuss the West Branch Wetland and celebrate successes of the past year as well as elect officers and board members.



The Great Meadow in Abersham: Part of 100 acres of Homeowner Association-owned open space to be protected by a conservation easement held by DLC.

A Greenprint for Davidson

Like a blueprint that guides a builder, a greenprint is a guide for a community to grow while preserving and enhancing its natural assets.

These natural assets – street trees, woodlands, streams, lakes, wildlife, and open spaces, from farms to campuses – are valued not only for their scenic and recreational value but also for their role as green infrastructure. They enhance our quality of life (not to mention our property values) by tempering our flood problems, winds, and climate, by helping to cleanse the air and water, and by enriching us spiritually, physically, and socially.

Despite very progressive planning ordinances, the loss of these assets is apparent. To address this, Davidson’s planning staff and the Davidson Lands Conservancy have received funding from the Town and the NC Division of Forest Resources to develop a plan that will begin with an inventory of those assets throughout the town and the ETJ, from the lakes on the west to the Rocky River on the east.

A Stakeholders Committee of community members has been formed to oversee the study:

David Martin, Chair	Chris Paradise
Jeff Michael, Vice-Chair	Pat Peroni
Irwin Brawley	Wendy Reading
Marc Cathey	Gary Steber
Megan Doscocil	Gregg Webb
Rodney Graham	Allen White
David Grant	Kevin Beach, intern
Frank Jacobus	Sterling Martin, ex officio
Scott Jeffords	Henry Wallace, associate
Barrett Kollme	Doug Shoemaker, associate
Carol Mayes	Lauren Blackburn, Town Planner
Shelly Rigger	Roy Alexander, staff support

Public participation and comment will be solicited periodically at various community events. After the inventory stage is completed, the committee will consider recommending changes to the tree ordinance and development ordinances.

Davidson Planning Director Kris Krider sums up the potential benefit of the study as follows: “With this ‘Greenprint’ we have an opportunity to chart a course to aggressively plant new trees in all parts of town, protect the ones we have as long as possible, and make wise decisions about the location of development to ensure that 100 years from now, Davidson is even greener.”

DLC Visits Classrooms

Fourth graders, smiling and giggling, stand in two rows about 10 yards apart, back to back. The children in one row are deer; those in the other are the essential resources: food, water, and shelter. Each child is making a sign – either hands on stomach to indicate food, hands over mouth to indicate water, or hands over head to indicate shelter. When the word “Go” is given, both rows turn around and the deer, displaying their sign, run toward the resource they need to survive. Some deer find the resource and survive for another season (another round of the game); others do not and become a resource themselves. Fourth graders love this game. Through it, they realize that good habitat is the key to wildlife survival, and that everything in nature is interrelated.

Making a Difference

After the game, they discuss the effects of diminished resources and brainstorm what we all can do to make a difference. The list is expansive, ranging from planting flowers to turning off the water while brushing teeth. As DLC’s parting gift, each child is given a DLC reusable bag.

The game and the discussion are part of a new DLC educational outreach program with fourth graders. Our purpose is to help children appreciate open space and become good stewards of the environment. The program is led by board member Pam Dykstra and Davidson College students. This past spring, they visited the fourth grade classes at Children’s Community School and Woodland School. They are currently expanding this annual program to additional schools in the Davidson area.

Making a difference – that’s what the DLC is all about. It’s a privilege to be part of helping children understand that what they do – the big things and the little things – makes a difference.



DLC’s Reusable Bag

Support the environment and DLC’s educational program by buying and using DLC bags. They will be for sale at town events and the DLC office: 704-892-1910.

Q and A with Roy

By Roy Alexander
Executive Director, DLC

I've read that tax deductions for conservation easements may change at the end of this year. Is this true?

Yes, the current tax deductions will expire December 31 unless Congress passes an extension before the year's end.



What can I do to extend this law?

Contact our legislators (see next column) and ask them to support Senate Bill 469 and its parallel, House Bill 1576. The bill, endorsed by President Bush, would make the current benefits a permanent part of the tax code. The bill provides the following:

- *Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their gross income in any year to 50%.
- *Allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income.
- *Increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 5 years to 15 years.

Please thank Senator Dole for co-sponsoring this bill. As of this writing, Senator Burr and Representative Mel Watt have not signed on so please encourage them to do so.

For additional information, visit www.lta.org and click "See the latest on the tax incentive."

Senator Elizabeth Dole
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-6342 dole.senate.gov

Senator Richard Burr
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3154 burr.senate.gov

Representative Melvin Watt
2236 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-1510 watt.house.gov



DLC Intern

We welcome this fall's intern Jennings Boley, a sophomore at Davidson College. He comes from Kittery Point, Maine, close to the Rachel Carson Nature Preserve, where he grew to love the natural world. Working with the DLC is an extension of that environmental connection.



Brackett Bluff Hike

Saturday, November 3, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Mark your calendars for a two-hour hike at Brackett Bluff on November 3. Gary Marshall, steward of the 61-acre natural heritage site located on Rocky River, will lead this moderately strenuous hike. For more details and to register call 704-892-1910 or email [dlc@davidsonlands.org](mailto:dlc@ davidsonlands.org).

Thanks to all who participated and volunteered in **Run for Green 07**. Nearly 600 athletes of all ages signed up for the Half Marathon, the 5K, and the FunRun/PetWalk. An untold number of volunteers supported the event. We are especially grateful to our sponsors, listed on the back page.



Runners take off



Astri Kollme, Director



Kids on the run



On course

Photos by: Bill Giduz

Run for Green 07

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Panera Bread
La Patisserie
Italian Bakery and Coffee Shop
Bill Giduz

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.



DAVIDSON
LANDS
CONSERVANCY

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