



**GENEROSITY AND PRIVACY**

# Conserving the Land

In January, the Davidson Lands Conservancy permanently conserved an extraordinary land parcel of more than 100 acres. This conservation project, three-plus years in the making, resulted from a generous contribution of a conservation easement by an owner whose connections to land and a love for nature are deeply rooted.

## **Conservation easements**

Conservation easements permanently restrict development of the land while allowing the owner to continue to own and enjoy their property. The donor in this case, valuing privacy, wishes to remain anonymous, requesting confidentiality about the easement's location.

**The land was purchased more than 100 years ago by the donor's grandfather.**

## **Protecting the land**

Conservation of this land is particularly significant, not only because of its extraordinary natural features, but also the legacy of its ownership—the land was purchased more than 100 years ago by the donor's grandfather. Rich in conservation values, the property's permanent restriction from

development will protect wildlife habitats, agricultural land, tree canopy, streams, and the watershed—forever.

“This conservation project is a legacy gift to the community, made possible by an extraordinarily generous land owner. The Conservancy was well equipped to help the owner achieve the dream of protecting the property for all time,” said Ed Harris, chair of the Conservancy's Land Acquisition Committee.

This anonymous contribution of land dramatically advances conservation and stewardship, which lie at the heart of DLC's mission for our community.

## **Thank YOU!**

The work of the Davidson Lands Conservancy is only possible because of strong community support. The past year brought challenges for nearly everyone, and DLC is exceptionally grateful to our supporters. Through monetary gifts and volunteer time, we not only continued but significantly advanced critical conservation work. We are grateful to the 175 generous donors who contributed more than \$54,000 in general program support.

**We also thank those who donated so generously in memory of three exceptional, local conservationists who passed away in 2020:**

Colin Shaw, Pat Peroni, and Elizabeth “Ibby” Whitener. Their conservation legacy lives on through DLC, and they are dearly missed.



Davidson Lands Conservancy is a local land trust dedicated to conserving and stewarding land and to promoting a conservation ethic. DLC advances its mission with education and through programs of land conservation, trails and greenways, urban forestry, and preservation of wildlife corridors.

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Wood decay fungus,  
*Stereum hirsutum*

## 2021 VISION FOR DLC

# A Conversation with Executive Director Dave Cable



### When did you first become aware of the importance of land conservation?

It was during and following college and graduate school in New England. My first exposure was in the late 1970s, working for a program in Maine to identify geologically significant waterfalls. I experienced first-hand the powerful impact of land conservation on communities, people, and natural systems. The *forever* aspect of land conservation is captivating, powerful, and for me, spiritual.

### We hear about the Four Pillars of conservation. Are they all equally important?

DLC's pillars of conservation, unique to Davidson, form the road map to maximizing our impact. While each pillar is important, the magic happens with their interplay: They build on each other. When we conserve land, we add to the urban forest long term, and secure wildlife habitat. Because of our area's topography and stream systems, most greenways and trails are positioning near streams. So, when we conserve a corridor of connected lands, the benefits

to nature and people are multi-fold—trees, water quality, open space, wildlife habitat, and the human experience of enjoying and benefiting from a trail.

### Why is land conservation important to Davidson and the people who live here?

The bottom line is this: the linkage between our sense of place, our health, and our natural landscapes is too important to leave it up for grabs. Growth is good, and we all benefit from it, but it must be balanced. The stakes are high because, on one hand, our threatened natural lands and trees are vital to our sense of place, and on the other, land development, once it happens, is effectively irreversible. Conservation is the only way to protect important natural lands given that land use controls are subject to political shifts and uncertainty.

### What's key for 2021?

After a year of self-study, the name of the game for 2021 is execution. We hope to complete several land conservation projects and link the greenway from Narrow Passage and River Run to Fisher Farm. For urban forestry, TreesDavidson plans several community tree planting events to complement the launch of our Treasure Tree program. This year, the wildlife corridor program will begin with a pilot along Schenk's creek, with help from several Davidson College interns.

Read more from Dave Cable at [davidsonlands.org](http://davidsonlands.org).



## COLLECTING ALL CRITTERS

# Can We Bring Back THE BUGS?

*Davidson College student researches stream health in the DK8 Nature Preserve*

Davidson College Biology and Environmental Studies major Andrew Brantley '21 is using the stream restoration project behind the Davidson K-8 School as a test site, assessing whether efforts to reduce erosion caused by stormwater runoff may benefit the abundance and biodiversity of invertebrates. DLC is reviving and enhancing the natural area behind the school for outdoor learning.

Aquatic invertebrates play a big role in the breakdown of leaf litter in streams, as well as provide a food source for the organisms above them in the food chain, thereby making them an excellent bioindicator of stream health.

Andrew said, "We're using artificial leaf packs to simulate naturally occurring layers of leaves in the



Andrew Brantley placing a leaf pack in the stream behind Davidson K-8 School.



stream where insect larvae often colonize. By comparing levels of biodiversity and abundance upstream, within the restoration area, and downstream, I am able to see how the restoration affects invertebrate populations."

The results of the study will clarify relationships between restoration projects and natural systems, and could lead to more stream projects like the one planned along the West Branch in the area of Fisher Farm. Brantley, who loves fishing, hiking, and hunting, hopes to continue his passion for wetland ecology by pursuing a postgraduate degree in environmental management. DLC looks forward to using the results of this study to further our education efforts with DK8 students.

## OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

# Local Teen Brings Learning Outdoors

Claire Alexander, a sophomore at Hough High School, is completing her Girl Scout Gold Award this year with an ambitious and timely project. Collaborating with DLC, she is designing, fundraising, and constructing an outdoor-classroom circle at the Davidson K8 Nature Preserve, located behind the school along Schenck's Creek.

Claire said, "The circle of seats and large demonstration table will provide kids a safe area to learn outdoors. This is such a

great opportunity for me to help others enjoy the environment that I appreciate and care about so much!"

Addressing the "nature deficit" affecting our children with too much time indoors and on screens, as well as providing a safe learning space during a global pandemic, this classroom promises to be a healthy option for teaching and learning at DK8.

If you would like to donate to this project, please email [dlc@davidsonlands.org](mailto:dlc@davidsonlands.org).





## TREASURE TREES

# Honoring Our History

Treasure Trees is a new DLC program that highlights the relationship between humans and trees of cultural and ecological significance, focusing on a tree's physical features or unique natural or human history.

Davidson College student and DLC/TreesDavidson intern Chris Chao is spearheading this new program by investigating, cataloguing, and writing about candidate trees.

Chris notes: "The Treasure Tree program is about the people and history of Davidson as much as the trees themselves. We want to engage the community to increase awareness of our urban forest and our special trees. Community involvement is key, including nominating trees, telling their stories, and photographing trees."

The Davidson Treasure Tree program is a collaboration among Davidson Lands Conservancy, Davidson College, the Town of Davidson, and residents. To nominate a tree, email [dlc@davidsonlands.org](mailto:dlc@davidsonlands.org).



Photo by Bill Giduz

### Our Four Pillars of Success

- 1 Conserve & Steward Land**
- 2 Preserve & Enhance Tree Canopy**
- 3 Expand Greenways & Trails**
- 4 Preserve Wildlife Corridors**

**Trees are the most defining features of any landscape.**



Jeanie White with her late husband Bob White.

### MEET A TREASURE TREE

## White Family Pecan

Planted shortly after the house was built, this pecan tree was part of Victory Gardens for World War I and II, grown throughout allied nations to assist with food shortages on the front and to raise morale for those at home. Americans would grow their own vegetables to reduce stress on the public food supply. Organized by Charles Lathrop Pack and the National War Garden Association, there were millions of gardens planted throughout the United States. When food shortages stopped with the end of WWI, many Victory Gardens were maintained.

This tree, over 100 years old, is a habitat to many squirrels and birds who feast on its fruit. It has sister trees along South Street. Maintained and loved by Jeanie White, the tree still produces large crops of pecans.



# Preserving Davidson's Tree Canopy

Trees provide aesthetic beauty, filter our air, reduce storm water run-off, naturally cool our streets and buildings, and create habitats for wildlife. DLC's program, TreesDavidson, supports this critical pillar of conservation through several community-powered tree plantings each spring and fall.

In 2020, we planted 88 trees in the Davidson area, including events at Fisher Farm and Bailey Springs neighborhoods. TreesDavidson's plantings engage community members looking

to spend a few hours making a huge difference in our community. You can learn about our tree planting events at [davidsonlands.org](http://davidsonlands.org).

The Town's revised tree ordinance strengthens tree-saving and planting requirements for developments, and widens required planting strips to accommodate larger trees along roadways and sidewalks. The enhancements expand the canopy and preserve the forest, recognizing the vital role of a town arborist as educator and facilitator of the ordinance.

DLC partners with the Town of Davidson to advocate for tree protection, monitor our urban canopy, and maintain valuable street trees. You can view an inventory of the street trees of Davidson conducted by Bartlett Tree Experts, at [arborscope.com/inventories/4132](http://arborscope.com/inventories/4132).

Look for the **NEW** tree ordinance on the Town website.



## BEATY PARK PLANS

### A Community Collaboration

Beaty Park lies at the intersection of North Main Street and Beaty Street at the north end of Davidson Village. This 20-acre park and nature preserve owned by the Town of Davidson is permanently protected by a conservation easement held by Davidson Lands Conservancy.

The park's location is unique for the Town, given its proximity to West Davidson residences, the Village area, and Davidson College. Walkability to the site

will be enhanced with sidewalk improvements that are planned along Beaty Street.

#### Planning a park

Now undeveloped land with a pond, the park's features are in the advanced stages of planning, the result of robust collaboration among the Town's Livability Board, Davidson Lands Conservancy, the Davidson Garden Club, and consultant Dodd Studio. Their exciting design has been built on concepts and ideas initially developed by the Beaty Park Task Force through rich community engagement.

The Garden Club formed seven planning committees for this project, which are actively addressing key park elements. Plant material committees have provided lists of native and pollinating plants for sun, shade, and water. Focus groups created ideas for children's play areas, public education about sustainable plants, and a pollinating garden display.

"We are happy to contribute to creating a beautiful and educational garden for the community to experience and enjoy," said Liz Harris, a Davidson Garden Club leader.

# Good for the Soul

## Volunteer of the Year Janet Andersen

Janet Andersen, our 2020 Volunteer of the Year, has served on the Davidson Lands Conservancy board since 2019. She quickly became integral to DLC through her tireless land stewardship, not to mention her service as board secretary—a job that requires meticulous attention to detail.

Her love of nature began as a child, when her family relocated to Latin America. After spending her formative years exploring the natural wonders of Venezuela, Mexico, and Brazil, she continued her love of travel, exploring Australia as well as the great National Parks of the United States.

Leading the DLC stewardship efforts in 2020, Janet monitored each of our conserved properties, hiking densely vegetated landscapes with an infectious positive outlook. She believes the opportunity to spend time in nature allows one to get grounded in things that are more important than the latest news flash.

“As area population growth continues, it’s important to provide natural habitats for the movement of wildlife, nesting places for birds and bees, fields of milkweed for monarchs. It is equally important to have access to a place to sit quietly and listen to the birds and be with oneself. It is good for the soul,” she said.

Since moving to the Davidson area nearly 20 years ago, Janet has been a stalwart and vocal supporter of local conservation efforts, recognizing the important balance between thoughtful development and preserving natural resources.

Executive Director Dave Cable captured the feelings of her fellow board members and volunteers, saying, “Janet has been an excellent thought partner in a year of change. We’re grateful and appreciative for her bold, funny, and generous personality, and her endless energy dedicated to our conservation efforts.”



Photo by Bill Giduz



Janet Andersen hugs a giant tree.

## Lace Up Your Boots!

### Land stewardship is a walk in the woods

Each fall, DLC staff, board members, and volunteers get to dust off their hiking boots and head out to monitor each of our conserved properties.

With leaf loss from deciduous trees, autumn provides excellent visibility and optimal temperatures. From wetlands to steep hillsides, we walk the land to check for possible encroachments, such as trash, unauthorized access, or development.

We also monitor the integrity of important conservation values

on each property, which include important bioindicators like healthy watersheds, special or rare plant species, or stands of mature trees.

We hope to discover...nothing! Nothing more, that is, than evidence of thriving habitats, and to check that the conserved land is unaltered since our last visit. And if we discover, for example, extreme erosion in a creek bed or the spread of invasive plant species in ecologically sensitive areas, we can analyze and plan how to best steward the area.

It's a lovely walk in the woods.

## WELCOME TO THE BOARD

# New Members Bring Energy and Know-how

Having easy access to greenways is important to our health and well-being.



### Brent Evans

*Financial technologist, business analyst, development and IT manager in the banking sector*

I value how close we live to such amazing natural spaces and trails, and joining a board comprised of caring and talented individuals will be both rewarding and fun.

Preserving the tree canopy and expanding our greenways and trails are both key pillars for me. Having easy access to greenways is important to our health and well-being.

As a volunteer with TreesDavidson, I engage with the community at our tree planting events and share the importance of proper tree planting. I am excited to continue promoting TreesDavidson, increasing our funding for tree planting and educational events and enhancing our partnership with the Town. I'm also passionate about promoting DLC's 4 Pillars of Conservation our digital and through and social media platforms.



### John Griffith

*President Emeritus, Presbyterian College; President Emeritus, Lyon College*

Conserving land to extend greenways and trails and to protect trees is central to the DLC mission, and what I personally enjoy...

walking the greenways and marveling at the wonders of nature. I believe that continuing this work is fundamental to our quality of life in Davidson. Dave Cable is a strong and dedicated leader who is working with the board to strengthen DLC, and I want to be part of that process. Finally, generating financial resources is crucial to the ongoing success of DLC, and I look forward to sharing this area of my experience and expertise.



### Tom Shandley

*Retired Vice President of Student Life and Dean of Students, Davidson; Dean of Student Affairs, Duke Kunshan University in China*

I have lived in Davidson since 1994. As much as this is a great place to live and raise a family, the open land that was a part of that initial attraction

is disappearing rapidly. I have appreciated DLC's efforts to do all it can to preserve the land, as well as add opportunities to enjoy what we have. I am happy to be a part of this work and do what I can to continue it.

My personal interests and passion lie closest to DLC's greenway and trail initiatives. As an avid walker, jogger, and cyclist, I appreciate what has been done to improve access to trails and greenways and would love to see this expand.



### Scott Tew

*Vice President of sustainability and cofounder of the Center for Energy Efficiency & Sustainability at Trane Technologies (CEES)*

DLC is well respected in the community for its focused efforts in conservation, and I've wanted for some time to do my part

to help conserve land for future generations. I want to learn more and contribute to help broaden our impact, especially with public interest, education, and engagement in the future.

Trees provide significant value to quality and aesthetics of cityscapes and property values, and their mutual benefits in the ecosystem cycle are numerous. They are the most defining features of any landscape—urban or rural—so I am most interested in preserving our tree canopy.





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## Full STEAM Ahead

### World of Wonder participates in Woodlawn's 2021 virtual STEAMfest

For the second year in a row, WOW has participated in Woodlawn's awesome STEAMfest (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math), which aims to pique the interest of young folks and encourage curiosity and exploration.

We loved being part of this event in person last year, and we were thrilled to be asked back for the virtual event in 2021. And the best part—because it's virtual, you can check out the STEAMfest website—[steamfest.woodlawnschool.org](https://steamfest.woodlawnschool.org)—any time for cool ideas for fun things to do with the kids.

In keeping with WOW's nature-focused mission, we created two activities that will get families outside. First, we have a pinecone winter-birdfeeder activity. Watch the video on the Woodlawn site to create your own simple, bird-friendly feeder, sure to keep hungry birds satisfied during the lean winter months.

Our second activity aims to get families outside and in the woods. Worried that winter is no time for an interesting hike? On the STEAMfest site you can join WOW volunteer and master naturalist, Alice Sudduth, as she points out all kinds of wonders on a simple walk in the woods. And be sure to check out the included list of local places to visit for brisk spring walks.



### WOW To-Go Nature Kits

This past year has changed the way we look at Outreach and Education, allowing our creativity to flow. DLC's World of Wonder has taken our Farmer's Market nature activities and packaged them To-GO! We have enjoyed creating nature activity bags to distribute for local children to explore topics like pollinators, song birds, raptors and more.