



Celebrating DLC's Future by Remembering Our Past

By Pam Dykstra

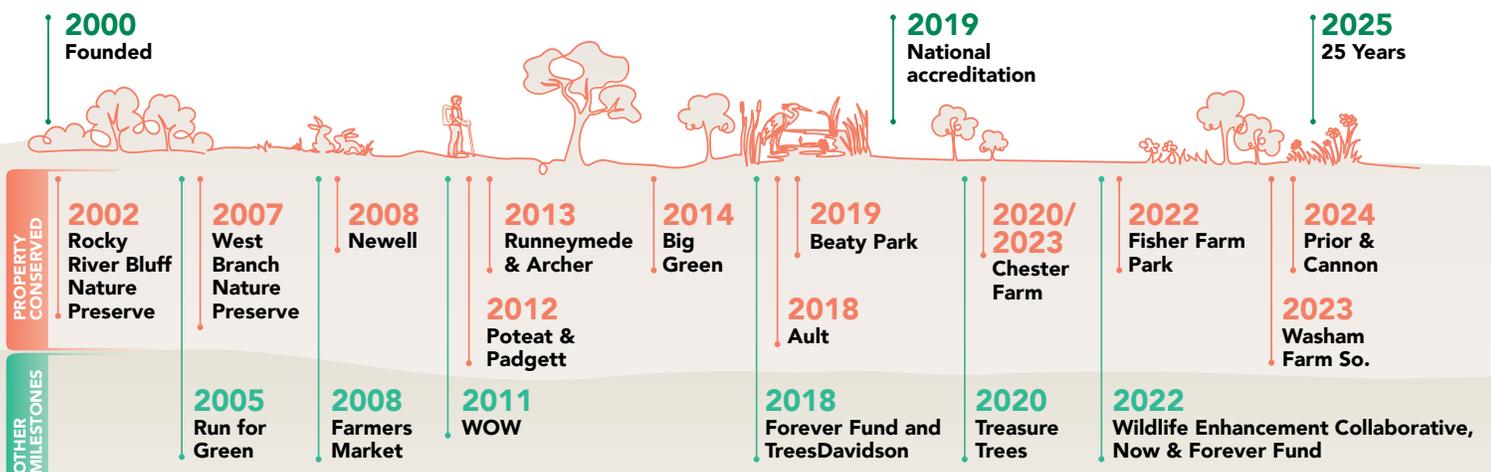
DAVIDSON LANDS CONSERVANCY (DLC) is a testament to a shared vision for protecting land to benefit all—one that began as a hope, a trust, and a belief in the power of community. It took vision to see beyond the present, trust to bring people together, and dedication to turn an idea into lasting conservation. This year, we celebrate DLC's 25th year, reflecting a legacy of protecting land, fostering community, and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

Our story began in 2000, when Mayor Randy Kincaid invited Davidson citizens, town staff, and elected officials to form a task force to explore ways to protect green space. The task force recommended an independent land trust and DLC was founded.

The first Board of Directors included Ron Charbonneau, Martha Strawn, Budd Berro, Bob Cumming, and two members at large: Matthew Churchill and DeWitt Crosby. What started as a hope among a few has grown into a legacy of protected landscapes, improved ecosystems, and a deep-rooted connection between people and nature as people enjoy the natural areas DLC protects and stewards.

Jim Fuller, former DLC president, captures it well, "DLC reflects the hard work and dedication of citizens who dreamed a dream and then rolled up their sleeves to make it a reality. It is the quintessential example of what makes our small town a wonderful place to live."

Visit davidsonlands.org/news to read the full story.





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 habitat.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Our Four Pillars of Success

- **Conserve & Steward Land**
- **Preserve & Enhance Tree Canopy**
- **Expand Greenways & Trails**
- **Protect & Restore Wildlife Habitats**

Dear Friends,

This April marked my first year with DLC. I am honored to be part of this “small but mighty” land trust that has been serving the community for 25 years and look forward to honoring those that have made DLC all that it is as we celebrate this milestone.

Over the year, I’ve had the opportunity to meet many supporters and work alongside you to protect land and water; steward our local parks, trails, and greenways; connect people with nature through outdoor education; and restore and enhance wildlife habitat and the Davidson tree canopy. It has been a year of continued growth for DLC, and this work is possible because of the amazing leadership of our Board of Directors and the partnership and support of volunteers, sponsors, landowners, and donors. We are grateful for your consistent and generous support and participation. Together, over the last year we:

- Permanently protected **56 acres** valued at \$2,130,000 with investment of \$55,000;
- Stewarded **800 acres**;
- Finalized the **West Branch Greenway Connection** in partnership with the Town of Davidson;
- Received **reaccreditation** from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission;
- Hosted **18 service days** for students, citizens and corporate partners with more than **490 volunteers** giving 1,590 hours of service;
- Planted **187 native trees**, gave away 500+;
- Reached **100 Treasure Trees**;
- Continued to restore **Fisher Farm Park** through the Wildlife Enhancement Collaborative;
- Led **54 interactive education programs** reaching more than 500 people;
- Mentored several interns;
- Designed a **new logo** to be unveiled in June; and
- Kept the Now & Forever Campaign on track to surpass the **\$1.75 million** goal

While we have much to celebrate and more to come with our anniversary, we nonetheless are dealing with uncertain times, and our work is increasingly challenging as we confront escalating land demand and values. Yet, amid all of this, DLC keeps expanding our impact. Your engagement and assistance are critical to our success. With your support, we remain steadfast and committed to conserve local lands and natural resources, connect lives to nature, and promote a conservation ethic.

Beth Wytiaz
Executive Director



PHOTO BY HOLLY PARKER PHOTOGRAPHY

DLC HONORS AND CELEBRATES Local Land Conservation

DLC made remarkable land acquisitions at the end of 2024.

Even though the Lake Norman area is experiencing rapid population growth and with it, significant increases in property values, DLC was able to conserve 56 acres on two pieces of land.

In 1999, the Priors were living in a subdivision off Langtree Road. They felt hemmed in as the area rapidly developed, causing them to move to a piece of land where they could enjoy nature and have a sense of privacy. The Priors have raised a family on this property, used it to support a border collie rescue, and stewarded the land. Working in partnership with the Department of Forestry and the Ag Extension, they learned that this property had one of the broadest spectrums of tree species in our region. The longer they lived on their land, the more they came to worry about what would happen to the land after they were gone.

Consequently, the Priors began to explore land conservation, and in 2024, they discovered DLC. Mark said they asked themselves, “If we don’t save this land from bulldozers, who will? Thinking about how many species depend on undeveloped land for their survival was critical in our deciding to go forward with conserving our property.” In November of 2024, they closed on their conservation easement with DLC and now have the satisfaction of knowing their beautiful piece of land will remain a refuge for people and wildlife in perpetuity.

Ann Prior stated it perfectly when she said, “It soothes my soul to know that, even though we’re a blip, this place will remain as an oasis to showcase trees and wildlife for generations to come.”



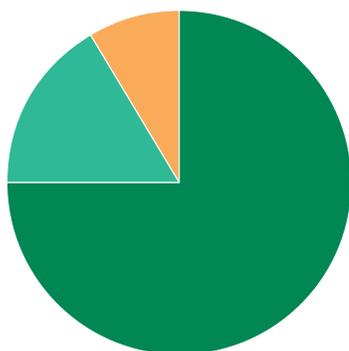
Mark and Ann Prior take Ed Harris and Beth Wytaiz on a tour of their property.

The second conserved property is in Cabarrus County.

DLC and Catawba Lands Conservancy (CLC) joined together to successfully protect 44 acres of pristine land near Concord. Property owners Craig and Kathleen Cannon donated this land to DLC in late 2024.

DLC subsequently donated the land to CLC for management, with DLC holding a permanent conservation easement on the land and the responsibility of defending and stewarding the property. This newly conserved property will be known as Charles A. Cannon, III Memorial Land Preserve. The preserved land includes a mature hardwood forest and is home to Little Meadow Creek, a tributary of the Rocky River. By protecting this land, the partnership ensures the preservation of vital ecosystems and wildlife habitat and the protection of water quality, contributing to the overall health of the Rocky River watershed.

HOW WE SPEND OUR FUNDS

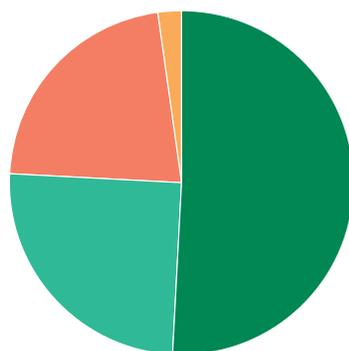


Programs,
Land Protection
and Stewardship
75%

Administration
16.5%

Fundraising
8.5%

WHERE OUR FUNDING COMES FROM



Individuals
51%

Run for Green
25%

Corporate/Foundation
22%

Other
2%

Support DLC

by Joining a Society or through Legacy Giving

As part of our 25th anniversary, we are creating two societies to recognize members who are committed to supporting and sustaining DLC long term. Society members are DLC advocates that help ensure our longevity and allow us to advance our work to permanently protect and steward local land and water, restore wildlife habitats and tree canopy, enhance trails and greenways, and create educational experiences that unite people and nature.

Sustainers Society

The Sustainers Society is a three-year commitment to give \$1,000 or more each year. This allows us to establish a foundation of giving to best enable DLC to plan and execute on our priorities. Sustainers will be invited to the fall reception, recognized in our annual Impact Report, given DLC branded merchandise, and invited to members-only events.



Evergreen Society

The Evergreen Society is a lifetime society to recognize those supporters who have given a total of \$25,000 or more in land, in-kind, dollars, or through legacy giving commitments to DLC since our founding in 2000. These members have helped make it possible for DLC to celebrate 25 years of service, and will be honored at the fall reception and recognized in the 2026 Impact Report and each year going forward. Members will receive a special keepsake, DLC branded merchandise, and invitations to members-only events.



LEAVING A LEGACY: ZEE BERL

conservation of those natural lands and free-flowing rivers.

A few years ago, I moved from the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains down here to the Piedmont. Once again, I looked for those quiet, natural places. Of course, it was the Davidson Lands Conservancy (DLC) that was working to protect and sustain these areas!

This organization goes about its work—quietly, often for years, with landowners who care about protecting their properties for future generations. Having worked with scores of land trusts all over the country, I know the quality of work that DLC undertakes. It deserves to flourish!

I, too, want to make sure that my grandchildren have some of those

same places that I sought out as a child available to them. That is why I have put Davidson Lands Conservancy in my will. Through this action, I know that some natural places will remain for them. Whether joining DLC as a member, participating in its campaigns, or leaving a bequest, I hope that others who care about our community of Davidson will consider supporting this organization's important work.

If you are interested in joining a society or including DLC in your will as part of your legacy giving or have done so already, please contact Beth Wytiaz at 704-421-0979 or [beth@davidsonlands.org](mailto:beth@ davidsonlands.org). You can also learn more at our website, davidsonlands.org.

Growing up in suburbia with its tidy, manicured lawns, I found myself as a child seeking out wild areas that fed my young soul. I didn't understand then why that was so important to me, but it was! Over the years, I have continued to seek out sparkling, cold water streams, wetlands, and ancient woods that sustain wildlife: salamanders and frogs, barred owls, red-tailed hawks. It's no wonder that my career ended up focusing on conservation: