



**DLC**  
DAVIDSON  
LANDS  
CONSERVANCY

Fall 2025

# DAVIDSON GREENWAY FINALIZED

## Greenway Connecting Downtown Davidson to Fisher Farm Park Moving

Eighteen years of sometimes thorny negotiations with property owners east of Davidson have ended with agreements that will complete a key link between greenways near Fisher Farm Park.

Imagine traveling from downtown Davidson to the 200-acre park, a green jewel of woods and meadows, without a car. That will be possible with the right-of-way agreements negotiated by the Davidson Lands Conservancy on behalf of the town of Davidson.

The West Branch Rocky River Greenway now runs south through the Abersham and Fisher Farm parks. The greenway goes north from River Run to the Narrow Passage community along Shearer Road. Connecting the half-mile gap between them was a top priority for expanding the town's greenway network.

The town of Davidson has budgeted \$2.1 million to pay for the connector, funded through general obligation bonds that voters approved. It will become part of the Carolina Thread Trail, an ambitious network of greenways that sprawls across 15 counties.

The nonprofit Davidson Lands Conservancy, now in its 25th year, was founded to protect green landscapes and to help bridge such divides. As the 18 years invested in securing this half-mile of trail shows, building relationships with property owners can require a tortoise-like pace.

The conservancy credits its partnerships with the town of Davidson and Mecklenburg County in moving the greenway link toward completion. This spring, Mayor Rusty Knox and the town helped negotiate with property owners on the

last two agreements needed for the project to go forward. The town paid about \$62,900 for one parcel and the county bought another.

"It was a lot of finagling around and working and being persistent, but we got there," Dave Cable, former DLC executive director said. "What I think was significant was explaining to people that this is potentially part of a much grander vision of the Thread Trail. I think that helped some people realize the importance of it and made them feel inspired to say, yeah, this is something that's probably really, really good to be involved in."

Some property owners donated easements for the greenway, while others were compensated for the costs of privacy landscaping or fencing. Low-key celebrations followed each agreement, with champagne uncorked in living rooms.

The town expects to take bids for construction of the connector in early 2026.

### CRITICAL FISHER FARM TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETED

This summer, Fisher Farm Park was buzzing with energy as DLC joined forces with the Conservation Corps of North Carolina (CCNC) to hire six local high school students to enhance the park's forested walking trails. With guidance from two experienced CCNC staff members, these students spent three weeks improving trail conditions, learning conservation skills, and making a lasting impact on the Davidson



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Davidson Lands Conservancy is dedicated to conserving local lands and natural resources, connecting lives to nature, and promoting a conservation ethic. We advance our mission through: education and service; land conservation and stewardship; improving parks, greenways and trails; enhancing tree canopy and wildlife habitat.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### DLC Program Areas

Conserve & steward land & water  
Improve parks, trails & greenways  
Enhance tree canopy & wildlife habitats  
Provide education & service programs

## FROM BETH WYTIAZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's the season of thankfulness, and here at DLC we are deeply grateful for you. In these uncertain times, your continued support makes it possible for DLC to celebrate 25 years of protecting and stewarding local land and water.



As highlighted in this newsletter, we remain committed to expanding our impact and programs.

This year, we've made significant progress in conservation with Dave Cable continuing to help lead the charge. Thanks to his efforts, DLC helped secure nearly 80 acres for passive parkland in Davidson and Cornelius, with trails and potential greenways for all to enjoy. We're also closing on a conserved property near The Pines and Antiquity Greenway this month, with another expected soon and others in progress—totaling over 1,000 acres.

We're thrilled to announce that we've reached our Now & Forever Campaign goal of \$1.75M - the largest fundraising effort in DLC's history. Led by John Griffith and Dave Cable, with instrumental help from Ed Harris, Paul Freestone and Cambria Nielson, the campaign launched in 2022 and helped protect the 209-acre Chester Farm. This funding comes at a critical time, as land prices rise, and development accelerates. We're working hard to leverage these generous contributions and continue raising funds to protect local lands.

To guide our efforts, the Board of Directors, under Tom Shandley and Zee Berl's leadership have developed our next three-year Strategic Plan. It outlines our goals to protect more natural spaces, enhance stewardship, expand education and service programs, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Looking ahead, we're excited to launch a full-time DLC Fellowship in 2026 to support all aspects of our work. The first Fellow will be Lauren Collver, a recent Davidson College Natural Sciences graduate.

As the year ends, we hope you find peace and connection in the natural spaces that make Davidson so special. Thank you for being a vital part of DLC and helping protect these places for generations to come.

With gratitude,  
Beth Wytiaz

## LAUREN COLLVER — OUR NEW DLC ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



## FROM THE BOARD

# DLC SAYS GOOD-BYE TO RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS



*The heart and soul of the Davidson Lands Conservancy are the volunteers who give their time, talent, and resources to this vibrant organization. Those who serve on the DLC board help guide and implement the decisions that impact the Davidson community and beyond.*

*Rather than just gather monthly, this is a “working” group who provide countless educational programs, negotiate land deals with local farmers, lead fund raising efforts, walk the conserved properties and much more. Brent, Cindy, Ed, John and Pam have contributed mightily, and we are forever grateful.*

**TOM SHANDLEY**

**Brent Evans** — My favorite memories are from the Run For Green. Some years brought unique challenges — stormy weather, downed power lines near the finish, even road construction on the half-marathon course. Thanks to teamwork and strategic thinking, we overcame every obstacle while keeping positive attitudes and smiles all around.



I first connected with DLC through the TreesDavidson program, helping organize community tree-planting events. Over six years, we planted more than 1,000 trees across Davidson. That experience had a great impact on me. Every time I drive around town and see those trees, I feel proud and grateful knowing they'll stand for generations.

**Ed Harris** — My favorite memories are of talking to property owners about conserving their land and walking the land with the owners who choose to conserve their property.



I think my biggest contribution to DLC is working to start the effort to connect the West Branch Greenway gap between Narrow Passage and Fisher Farm.

**Pam Hay** — My favorite memories of my time on the board of DLC are the those spent with the education committee planning and executing events. This includes everything from leading walks through the woods, handing out native plants, removing invasivespecies, and many others.



My proudest contribution would be working at Fisher Farm to help create better wildlife habitat for pollinators, birds, and other animals.

**John Griffith** — When I first came on the Board, Dave Cable asked me to lead a retreat about turning a strategic plan into a campaign and the board's responsibility. It was held in one of the barns on the Bragg's conserved land. It was a wonderful experience for me and it led to the creation, launching, and carrying out of the Now and Forever Campaign.



Folks on the Board were initially pretty worried since nothing that big had ever been tried previously. However, we ALL did it!!

My proudest contribution was seeing people we engaged and who knew very little about DLC step forward with support of all kinds because they came to believe in our mission as it impacts the town they love.

**Cindy McIntosh** — My favorite memory from my time on the DLC board would have to be walking Frank and Cindy Archer's conserved property. Experiencing the beautiful stand of hardwood forest, wide paths of moss, and sweeps of lady slipper orchids was as close to the meaning of conservation as you can get.



My proudest contribution would be the increased programming we have put together with the creative energy of our Education Committee. In particular, the four years of our family-focused NatureFest have brought a connection with nature to many people.

***“Brent, Cindy, Ed, John and Pam have contributed mightily, and we are forever grateful.”***



## DLC TURNS 25

# A Reason to Celebrate!

This has been a big year for Davidson Lands Conservancy ... our 25th anniversary, and we have a lot of reasons to celebrate.

We introduced our new logo at the Conservation Celebration in June. We celebrated the 20th running of our largest event, Run For Green, in September, and we continue to take time to appreciate all that we have accomplished over these 25 years.

The acres of land saved, the thousands of trees plants, the miles of greenways and trails preserved, the tens of thousands of hours of education and volunteerism that we've sponsored mean the world to us.

We hope you will take a minute to reflect on some of your fondest memories with DLC and come join us at one of our upcoming events and here's to 25 more years of local conservation.

## Photos From The Conservation Celebration ...



Zee Berl (L) & Nannette Ghanatzian



Tom Shandley (L) & Gordon Clark

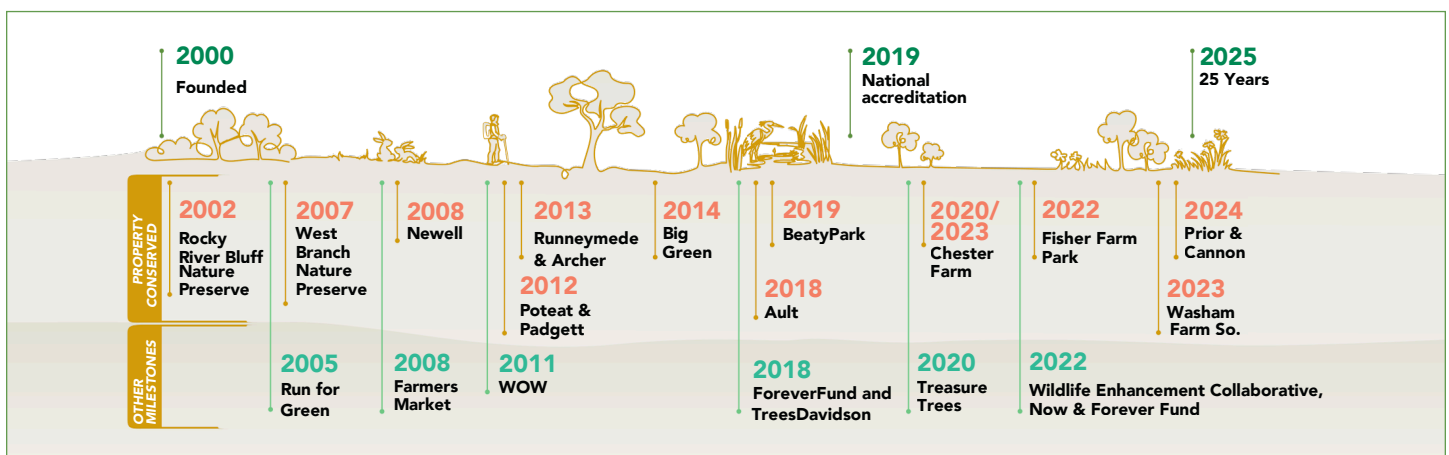


Brian Jenest (L) & Jim Fuller



Hayden & Margot Boyd

## Davidson Lands Conservancy Milestones



# WINTER TREECARE TIPS

## WATERING

Water your trees thoroughly before the ground freezes to help prevent winter drought.

Watering is only necessary when the ground is not frozen and temperatures are above 40°F.

Water the area beneath the entire canopy, not just the trunk.

## MULCHING

Apply a 2-3 inch layer of organic mulch, such as wood chips, around the base of the trees.

Keep the mulch a few inches away from the trunk to prevent moisture buildup and rot.

Mulch helps insulate roots, retain soil moisture, and prevent erosion.

## PRUNING

Winter is an excellent time to prune, as trees are dormant. Remove dead, damaged, or weak branches to prevent them from breaking under snow and ice.

Prune to maintain the tree's structural integrity.

For fruit trees, pruning can be done in late winter or early spring through March.

## PROTECTION

Wrap the trunks of young trees with white reflective tape or paint to prevent "sunscald," which is cracking from temperature fluctuations.

Use tree guards, especially for fruit trees, to protect against rodent damage.

Avoid using rock salt or de-icers near your trees, as they can damage roots.

## OTHER TIPS

Clean up fallen fruit from beneath fruit trees.

If you notice vole activity, consider using traps or other methods to prevent damage.

## SUMMER PROGRAMS

# DLC's Education Commitment

At its core, DLC is about protecting the future. Every acre we conserve, every tree we plant, every trail we build is a gift to tomorrow. To ensure this work continues, we must educate our future leaders.

This is why every summer we make a large commitment to providing diverse outdoor education experiences to expose local children to the joy of the outdoors. This summer we had a variety of exciting offerings.

Davidson College and Ada Jenkins offer Freedom School, a six-week summer enrichment program started by the Children's Defense Fund. We partner with them to provide environmental science experiential learning programs.

We offer week-long summer camp sessions called Conservation Camp through the Town of Davidson, and they always sell out. We take our campers to various parks, greenways and streams around town to let them learn and explore.

We also offer a variety of one day events through WOW and Wilderness Calling like Firefly Fest at Fisher Farm and programs focused on trees and bluebirds.

Finally, we also like to engage our life-long learners in education programs. On top of our popular monthly Wilderness Calling offerings, we also had restarted a speaker series this year and brought author Lisa Watts who spoke about her incredible bike journey and then led a greenway ride. Check our calendar for more exciting programs for 2026.

Teaching and engaging tomorrow's conversationists is a critical part of our mission and we are always looking for ways to expand education offerings.



# Run For GREEN

## Our 20th Year Was Wet & Successful

A pre-dawn downpour didn't dampen the spirits of 691 champions who toed the line at this year's Run for Green. The rain broke just in time for the starting horn. Runners and walkers enjoyed a misty morning on Davidson's greenways - and cleaned their shoes in a few puddles along the way.

Congratulations to Chris Raulli and Addie Anderson who won the 5K race, and to Zack Krieger and Caitlin Murray for their 10K wins.

This year's race celebrated 20 years of running for green on Davidson's streets and greenways. As DLC Executive Director Beth Wytyaz reminds us, Run for Green is "the only fundraiser that supports the work we do at DLC to ensure that Davidson has natural spaces for wildlife to thrive and for people to enjoy with friends, families, and pets."

Thanks to all the runners and walkers who celebrated with us, and to Trane Technologies, MSC and the other sponsors and volunteers who made this year's run a soggy success.



## STEWARDSHIP

# THE INCREDIBLE GROWTH & FUTURE OF DLC VOLUNTEERISM

DLC's volunteerism and service programs have grown exponentially this year. We receive calls, texts and emails weekly from people looking for volunteer opportunities. Scouting groups, college organizations, schools, churches, civic groups, businesses, neighborhoods and tons of individuals are all looking for ways to make a positive impact on our environment.

Over the last year we have nearly doubled the number of volunteer days we have hosted.

We love bringing people out to work in our parks, plant trees, repair trails and clean streams. Volunteers make a huge impact on the work we can accomplish. At the same time, we are a small organization, and these events take a lot of staff resources. We have been looking for creative ways to keep up with demand and we think we have developed a great solution... the DLC Stewardship Program.

This program will use the peer mentorship model to train volunteer leaders so they can take groups out and tackle various projects like small tree plantings, park clean-ups, invasive plant removal, and trail maintenance. By training the trainer, we can amplify our work and use the knowledge and talents that our incredible supporters already have.

As a thank you, our stewardship leaders and participants will be able to earn fun DLC swag like stickers, shirts and hats through their participation.

If you are interested in participating as a DLC Stewardship leader, please reach out to Carly at [carly@davidsonlands.org](mailto:carly@davidsonlands.org) so she can put you on her interest list.

The focus areas include:

- Park Steward
- Trail Steward
- Stream Steward
- Tree Steward

We will kick off this program in early 2026 with an interest meeting. Keep your eyes open for announcements about that date on DLC social media and in the monthly E-blast. Help make a difference in our community.





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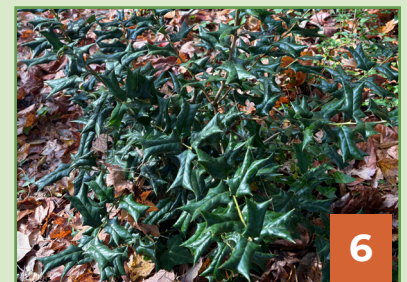
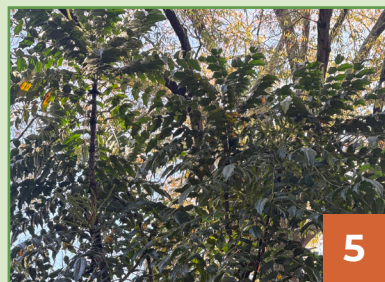
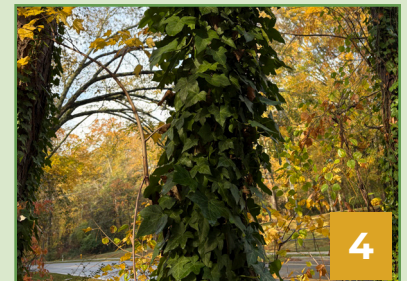
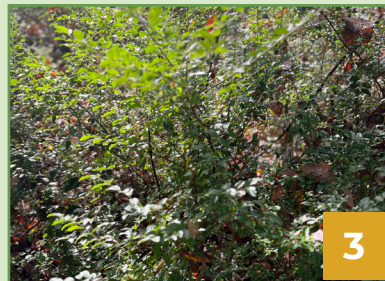
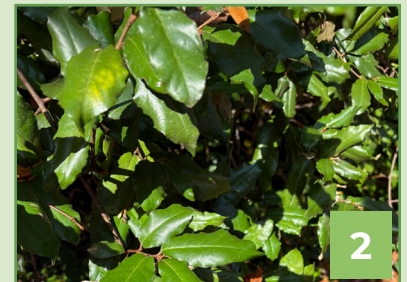
## Invasive Plants

*This is a great time to remove them from your yard*

(Try to identify these troublemakers)

Invasive species are non-native plants that are introduced to an area and outcompete native species for important resources like sunlight, water and nutrients. Their presence disrupts the food web and hampers biodiversity in both plant and animal populations. These plants are incredibly destructive to our ecosystem as they grow rapidly and crowd out native plants.

Most people do not realize the most prevalent invasive plant species and the harm they cause. This is a great time of year to remove them from your yards if possible so let's see how you do at identifying these troublemakers?



**ANSWERS:** 1. Nandina 2. Autumn Olive 3. Privet 4. English Ivy 5. Mahonia 6. Chinese Holly