



The Durham County Farmland Protection Program



Poole Farm

As new residential development continues to change Durham's rural landscape, Durham County has permanently protected a local family farm from development, helping to preserve important farmland along Poole Road in northwestern Durham with the acquisition of 50.3 acres of permanent conservation easements. This easement project is part of a larger open space preservation effort involving multiple efforts by both Durham and Orange counties that will protect approximately 83 acres in Durham County and another 70 acres in Orange County. The overall project includes approximately 1.5 miles of creek side buffers along Buffalo Creek, a major tributary to the Little River.



The floodplain along Buffalo Creek was preserved with the support of the NC EEP program at no cost to Durham County.

This unique project exemplifies how multiple partners and protection methods can be combined within one overall project area. The open space along Buffalo Creek and its adjacent lands were identified as an open space corridor on the Little River Open Space Plan, adopted by the Durham Board of County Commissioners in 2001. The property on both the north and south side of Bill Poole Road was also prioritized for preservation in the Little River Open Space Priorities adopted by the BOCC in April 2004. Unique Places, LLC, a local Durham conservation development firm, placed the property under contract, and began work to find ways to permanently protect the conservation values of property with easements.



Durham County was able to protect 50.3 acres of the site with permanent conservation easements. This acreage does not include the Buffalo Creek portions of the property. The Buffalo Creek floodplain consisted of another 32 acres that were separately protected with a permanent conservation easement to the State of North Carolina using Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP) Funds. The project is also bordered by two other open space properties. The property is bordered to the east by the existing 26



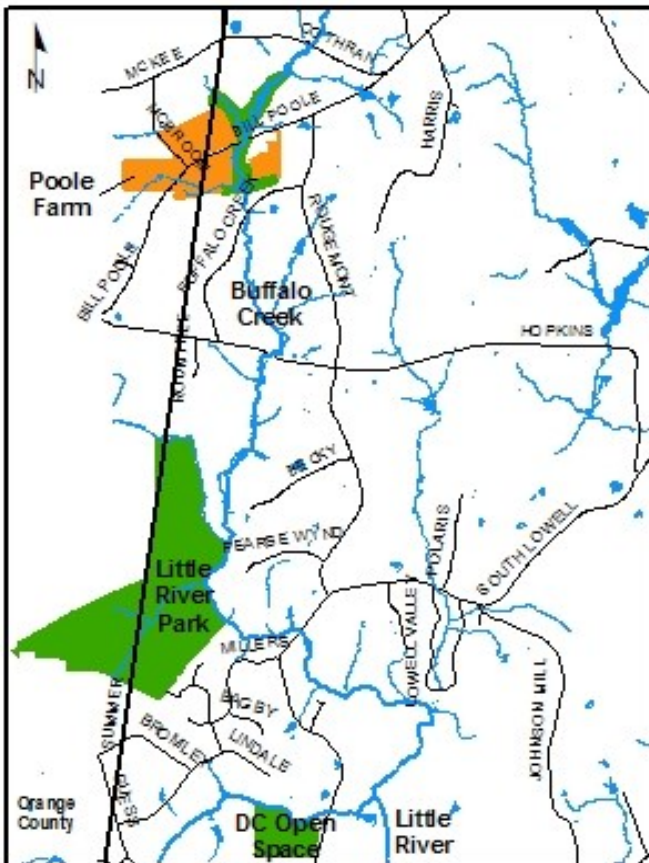
acre Russell farmland conservation easement that was conveyed to Durham County in 2005. In addition, Mr. Bill Lee has conveyed farmland conservation easements to Orange County on the 70 acres of his farm that borders this property on the west side of the property.

The farmland easement in Durham County was conveyed on land that had originally been a part of a larger farm owned by Mr. Lee's grandfather within both Durham and Orange County, but the Durham portion had been passed on to another branch of the family and eventually listed for sale. Mr. Lee would have liked to purchase the land immediately, but the market price of the land was out of his range. After Unique Places LLC purchased the land and conveyed the conservation easement to Durham County, Mr. Lee was able to purchase the farmland from Unique Places LLC more affordably with the easement in place, which reduced the property's market value. To purchase the property, Mr. Lee used funds he received from the sale of the conservation easements in Orange County. The happy result is that Mr. Lee now owns more of his family's original farm than was possible before the easements were sold to Orange and Durham County, and his efforts to recreate the

Financial Aspects of the Project

The farmland conservation easement portion of the project was valued at over

\$300,000. Of this, Federal FRPP grant funds were used towards 50 percent of the easement cost, with 25% of the remaining costs paid by Durham County totaling \$75,000. Unique Places, LLC donated another \$75,000 in easement value. With the NC wetlands preservation conservation easements along the stream included, a total of 153 acres of important floodplain, riparian buffers, and farmland were protected at a very low cost to Durham County.



For further information on this conservation easement project or other Durham County open space projects, please contact Jane Korest, Durham County Open Space and Real Estate at 919-560-7955.

Note: Poole farm is still privately owned as a working farm. Please enjoy the view from the road but respect the landowner's privacy.