



The Durham County Farmland Protection Program



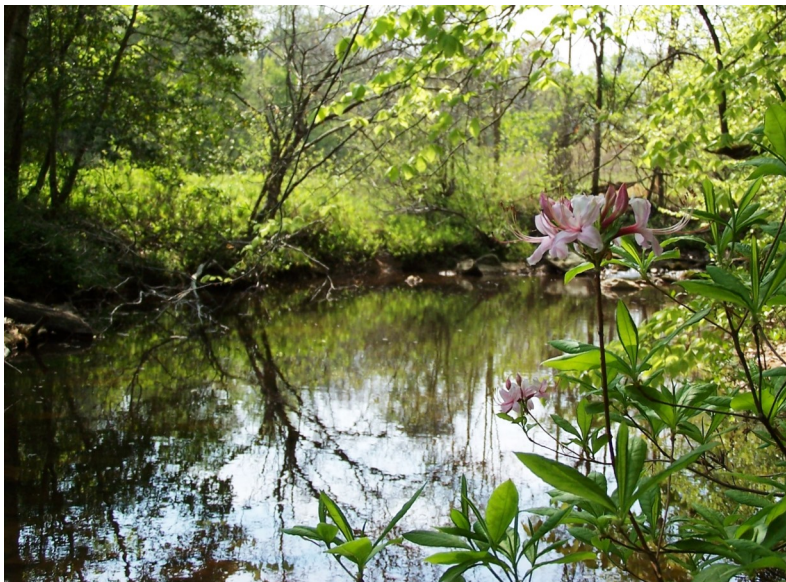
The Russell Farm

Patricia Russell and her son Ronald were the first farmers for which Durham County was awarded federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program funds. The Russell's have 156 acres they placed under a permanent conservation easement, including 136 acres along the Flat River on the north side of Red Mountain Road, and 26.5 acres they own at the corner of Rougement Road and Bill Poole Road.

The property on Red Mountain Road borders the Flat River at its confluence with Deep Creek, and includes 5,500 feet between the two tributaries. This river habitat has been identified as part of the " Flat River Slopes and Aquatic Habitat" site in the Durham County Inventory of Natural Areas and Rare Species, produced by the State of North Carolina's Natural Heritage Program. This natural habitat area is rated as a nationally significant aquatic habitat based on the number of significantly rare aquatic species particularly mussels, that live there. Mussels require high quality waters and are intolerant of sediments and pollution. The corridor is also significant for land based animals, and is recommended for preservation to support increasingly rare piedmont wildlife, including bobcat and several unusual bird species.



The Red Mountain Rd farm is upstream from Lake Michie, a primary drinking water supply for most Durham residents. The Poole Road portion of the farm is upstream from Little River, another drinking water supply.



Under the easement restrictions, one homesite for the owner's use may be built within the Flat River property. It may not be subdivided off from the farm. Due to the relatively small size, of the Poole Rd tract, only new farm buildings are permitted, no new residential development. The farms are required to conduct practices in conformance with best management practices. Both farms are limited to three percent impervious surface, 1/2 the amount permitted in the watershed through current development regulations.

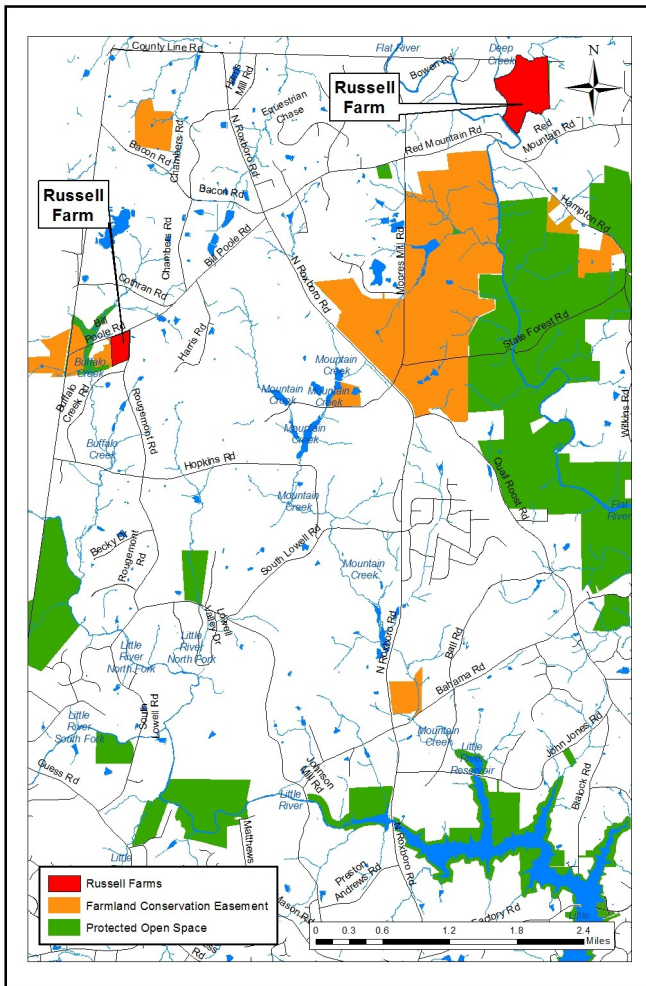
The Russell farm has significant frontage along the Flat River and Deep Creek



The Russell Family used to plant tobacco before the buyout. Now they still grow some tobacco, but also soybeans, corn, and other crops. Mrs. Russell has been researching alternative crops with an eye for the farm's economic profitability. In discussing why she wanted to place an easement on her farm, Patricia said "It was important to know that the farm would always be a farm for Ronald and his family. This allowed us to get some financial value out of the land now, while still ensuring the farm will stay a farm."

Financial

In 2005 when the easements were purchased, the overall easement project was valued at \$511,000. The federal Farm and Ranchlands Protection program paid for approximately 50% of the value of the easements, and an additional \$125,000 in Durham County funds paid for another 25%. The Russell's donated another \$125,000 in value, called a "bargain sale" because they agreed to sell the easements for less than their value. With the grant funds and partial donation taken into account, Durham paid an average of \$792 per acre for permanently conserving this farmland.



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

Note: The Russell farm is still privately owned as a working farm. Please enjoy the view from the road but respect the