



The Durham County Farmland Protection Program



The Van Ellis Farm

The Van Ellis Farm farmland conservation easement was purchased from the Ellis's in December of 2013 to protect a historic farm and its significant agricultural soils, preserve water quality and significant natural habitats, and to provide open space and scenic conservation values.

The Van Ellis easement consists of 69 acres of conserved land of which 50 acres are currently used to graze beef cattle. Ninety percent of the soils on the Ellis Farm area considered productive agricultural soils.



The Van Ellis Farm is just north and upstream of Lake Michie, a primary drinking water supply for most Durham residents. Preservation of the property in woodland and farmland will contribute to clean water in Durham's drinking water reservoir.

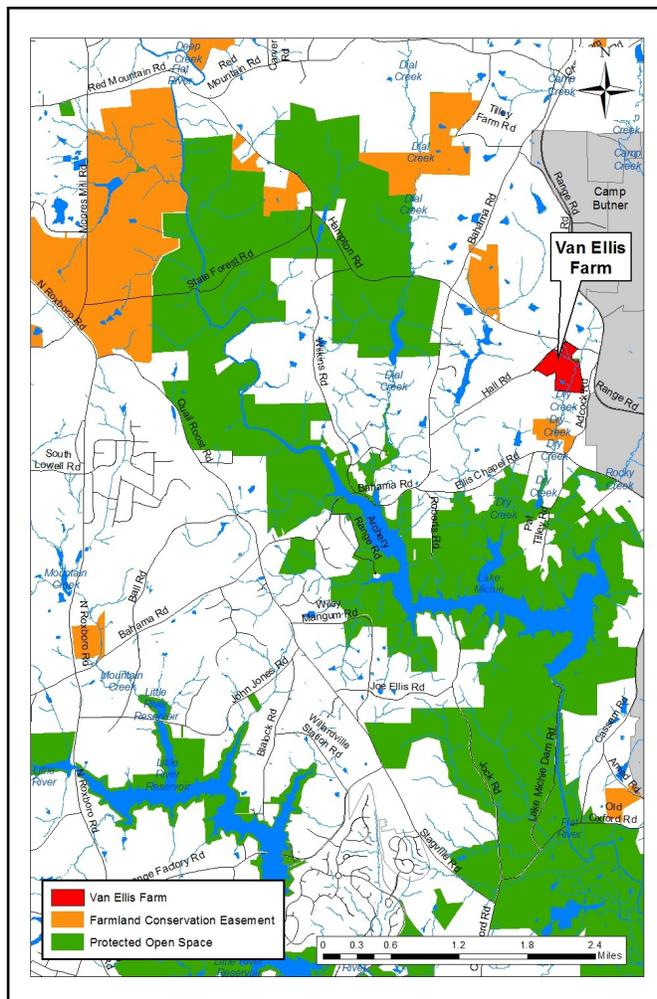
Mr. Ellis works closely with the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District and the local NRCS to implement Best Management Practices his farming efforts.

Van and Edna Ellis explain why their farm is important to preserve for their children

The Ellis Farm is near areas with significant natural habitats for both plants and wildlife. Camp Butner, just a quarter of a mile east of the farm, provides an important regional wildlife corridor for many species, including black bear. The upland farm areas offer excellent habitat for North Carolina piedmont wildlife including gray and flying squirrels, red and gray foxes, and birds like wild turkey, cooper's hawk, black vultures, quail, and a variety of songbirds.



The property provides scenic vistas and view of fields and woods that are integral to the scenic character. The Van Ellis Farm, and the permanent protection of this property, preserves the scenic and cultural nature of the area.



Financial

In 2013 when the easement was purchased, the overall easement project was valued at \$256,000. The federal Farm and Ranchlands Protection program paid for 50% the value of the easement, for \$128,000. The Ellis's donated \$49,000 in value for the easement, termed a "bargain sale" With the grant funds and partial donation, Durham County only provided \$79,240 or an average of \$1,148 per acre for permanently conserving this 69 acre farm.

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