



Durham County Open Space Protection Program

Little River Open Space Protection O'Neal Conservation Easement November 20, 2019

Overview

- Since the Little River Corridor Open Space Plan was adopted, Durham County has protected 790 acres in the watershed, in a combination of land purchases and conservation easements.
- The O'Neal conservation easement will protect an existing 27.4 acre wooded tract along the Little River and adjacent to Durham County's 160-acre Little River Uplands Tract.
- The property is located less than 1 mile upstream from the Little River Reservoir, a drinking water supply for most Durham residents.
- Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) submitted a request for funding of a conservation easement to the protect the property to the City of Raleigh's Watershed Protection Program (previously known as the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative UNCWI).
- The property scores highly for its water quality protection values, with an UNCWI score of 6.67 (a min. score of 4.49 is required for consideration, and 7 is the maximum possible score)
- The property has a Durham County Open Space score of 57; most Durham County acquisitions have score in the range of 50 or above.
- The Durham City Council approved \$77,706 towards the easement at its meeting on November 18. The City of Raleigh is anticipated to provide \$73,581 on Dec 3; and Durham County has been requested to provide \$78,000.

O'Neal Conservation Easement Summary:

- The easement will be co-held between the Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) and Durham County.
- The easement 'runs with the land,' meaning that any future landowners have to abide by the easement terms.
- The property can be sold in the further but future owners will have to abide by the easement terms.
- The existing 27.4-acre parcel cannot be further subdivided.
- There is a strict limitation on future home sites – Only one small area, currently with one small dwelling and an existing gravel drive, is permitted for buildings and structures.
- The easement places a strict limitation for impervious surfaces –only 1% of impervious surface is allowed and only within limited building area.
- The easement includes strict limits on the types of land uses for water quality protection purposes – timber harvests, grazing and agricultural purposes are not allowed
- The property will remain generally in its natural wooded condition for water quality purposes.
- Existing wooded stream and river buffers will be maintained to protect water quality.
- Commercial and industrial uses are prohibited.
- The conservation easement does not grant the general public the right to be on the property.
- TLC will provide annual stewardship and monitoring of the easement.