



Durham County Open Space Program Update

November 4, 2019
BOCC work session

Open Space Program Summary

The Durham County Open Space Program works to enhance the quality of life and sustainability of current and future generations by:

- protecting scenic, natural and historic landscapes;
- conserving significant habitats, working lands, and cultural and natural resources;
- providing natural areas for public enjoyment



Open Space Program Summary

County OS Staff works with:

- Farmland Protection Advisory Board
- Durham Open Space & Trails Commission (DOST)
- OS Committee of DOST
- New Hope Creek Advisory Committee
- Other volunteer groups

Program focuses on partnerships and leveraging other sources of funds.



Open Space Program Summary

3,462 acres preserved to date –

- 1,286 acres owned in fee simple by County
- 2,176 acres protected w conservation easements



Open Space Program Summary

- County OS Staff consists of 2.5 FTE
- Based in Eng. & Env. Services Dept
- Current responsibilities include:
 - Management of 4 open preserves and 7 miles of county trails
 - Support for Durham County Matching Grants program admin.
 - Farmland easement monitoring and management
 - County representation with multiple groups



Open Space Project Funding

Combination of:

- County funding (annual allocations in general fund)
- \$\$'s stretched by Grants:
 - N.C. Clean Water Mgt. Trust Fund (CWMTF) grants
 - Federal Agriculture Lands Easement (ALE) Grants, 10 years @ \$6.6 million total
 - N.C. Park & Rec grants and federal Land & Water Conservation Fund grants for recreation projects
 - State ADFPT Trust Fund grants
 - UNCWI funds (City of Raleigh drinking water protection fund)
- Donations / bargain sales have helped significantly.
- Partnerships with land trusts and local governments.



Open Space Project Partners

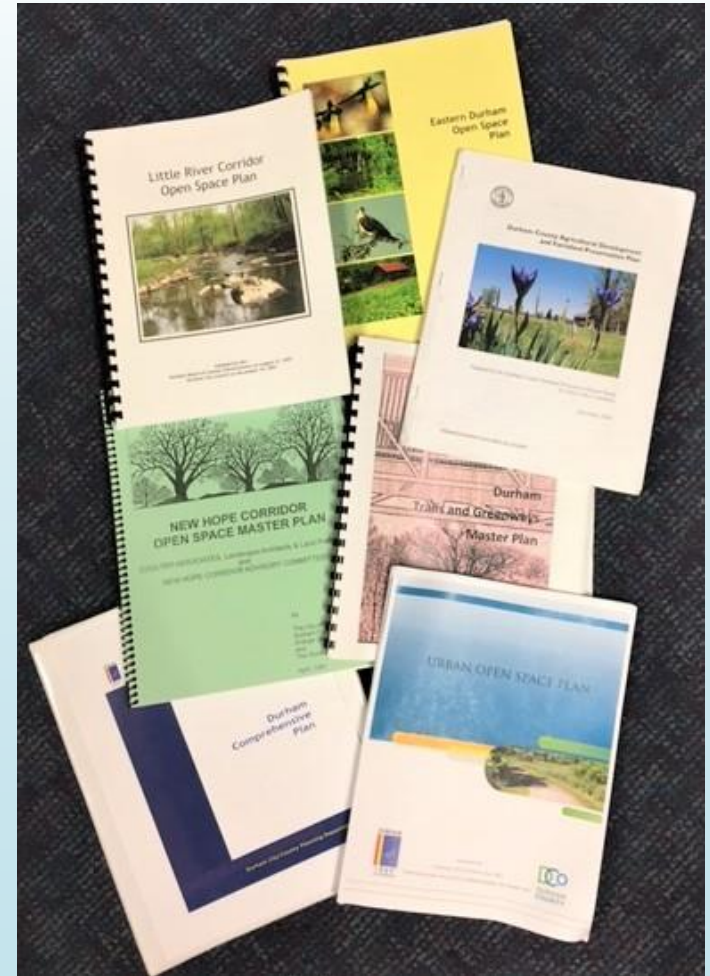
- Local Governments:
 - Orange County
 - Town of Chapel Hill
 - City of Durham
- Land Trusts and non-profits:
 - Triangle Land Conservancy
 - Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association
 - Eno River Association



Adopted Open Space Plans

Plans are generally produced by the Planning Dept. and implemented by City and County and other agencies.

- 1991 New Hope Creek OS Plan
- 2001 Little River OS Plan
- 2007 Eastern Durham OS Plan
- 2009 Farmland Protection Plan
- 2017 Urban OS Plan



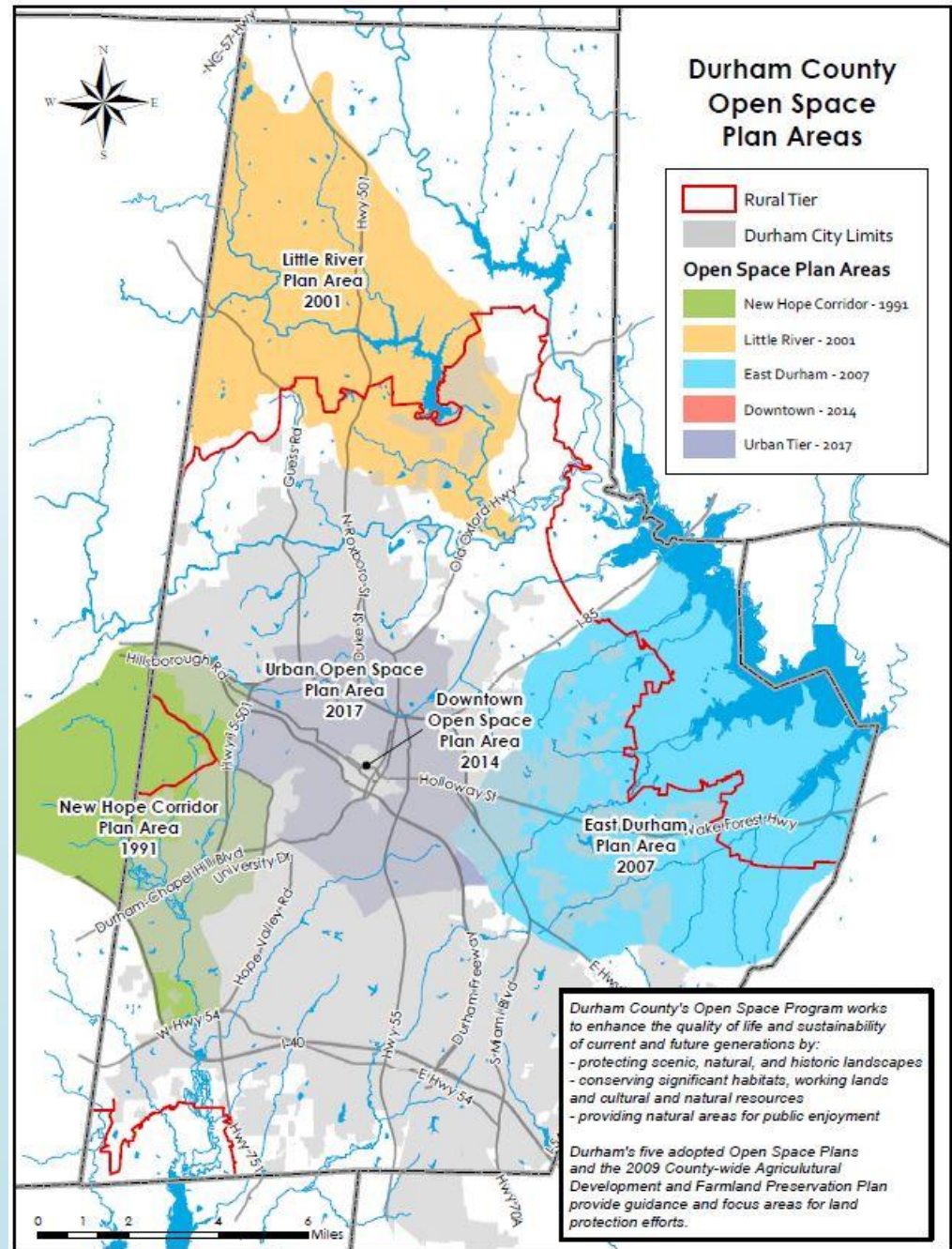
Adopted Open Space Plans

Most OS Plans are resource based:

- Major river and watersheds as the planning focus;
- Protection of natural heritage values;
- Local recreational needs;
- Urban OS Plan is tier-based



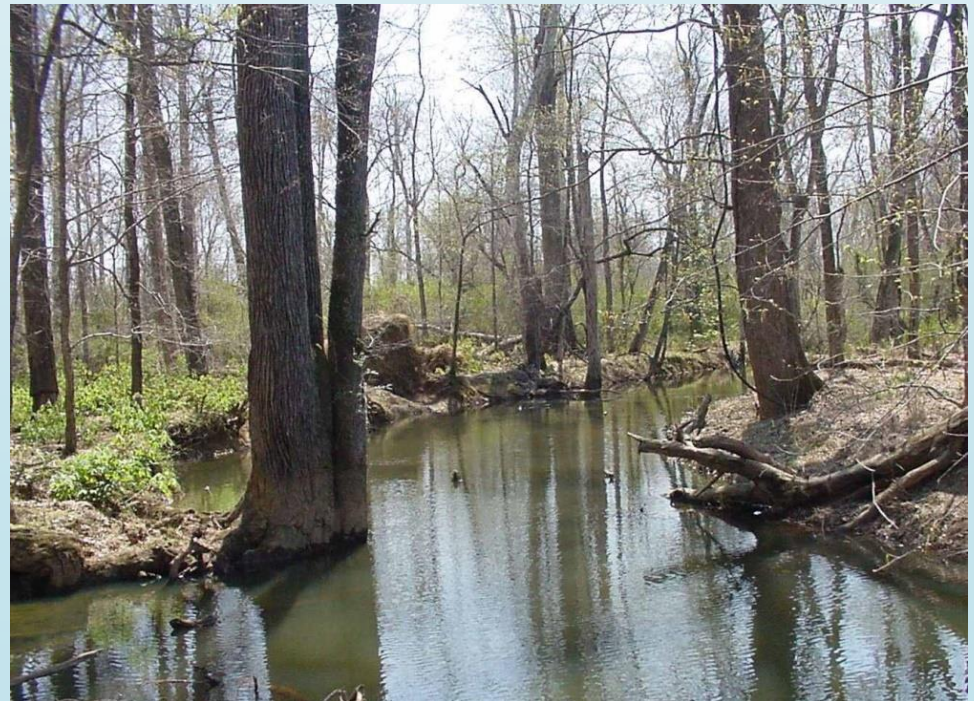
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New Hope Creek OS Plan (1991)

Over 1760 acres have been protected by partners, valued at more than \$11 million, involving the combined efforts of:

- Durham County
- City of Durham
- Orange County
- Chapel Hill
- TLC
- State of NC

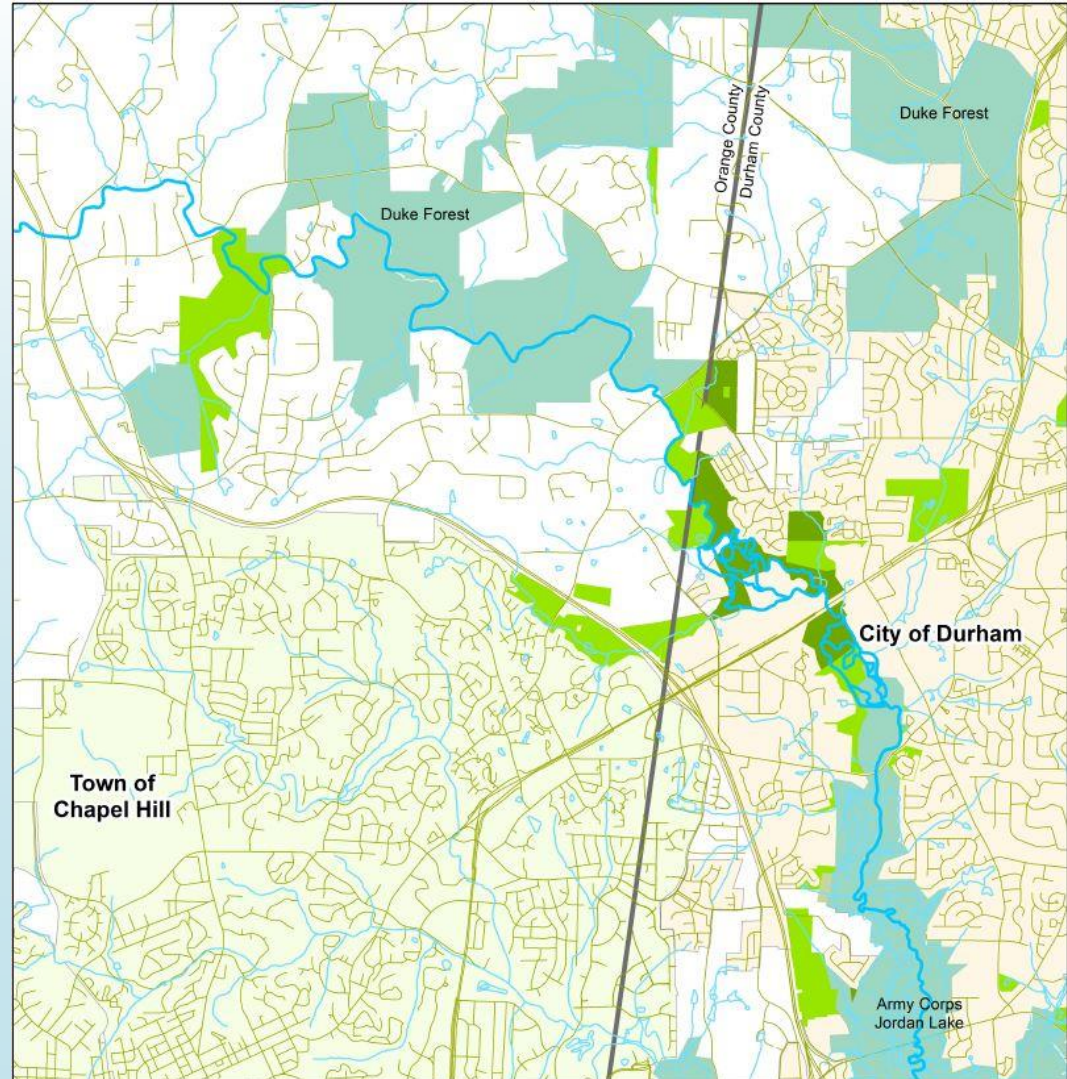


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New Hope Creek OS Plan

Durham County Protected Open Space in 2019:

- 323 acres
- 12 transactions,
- 17 parcels

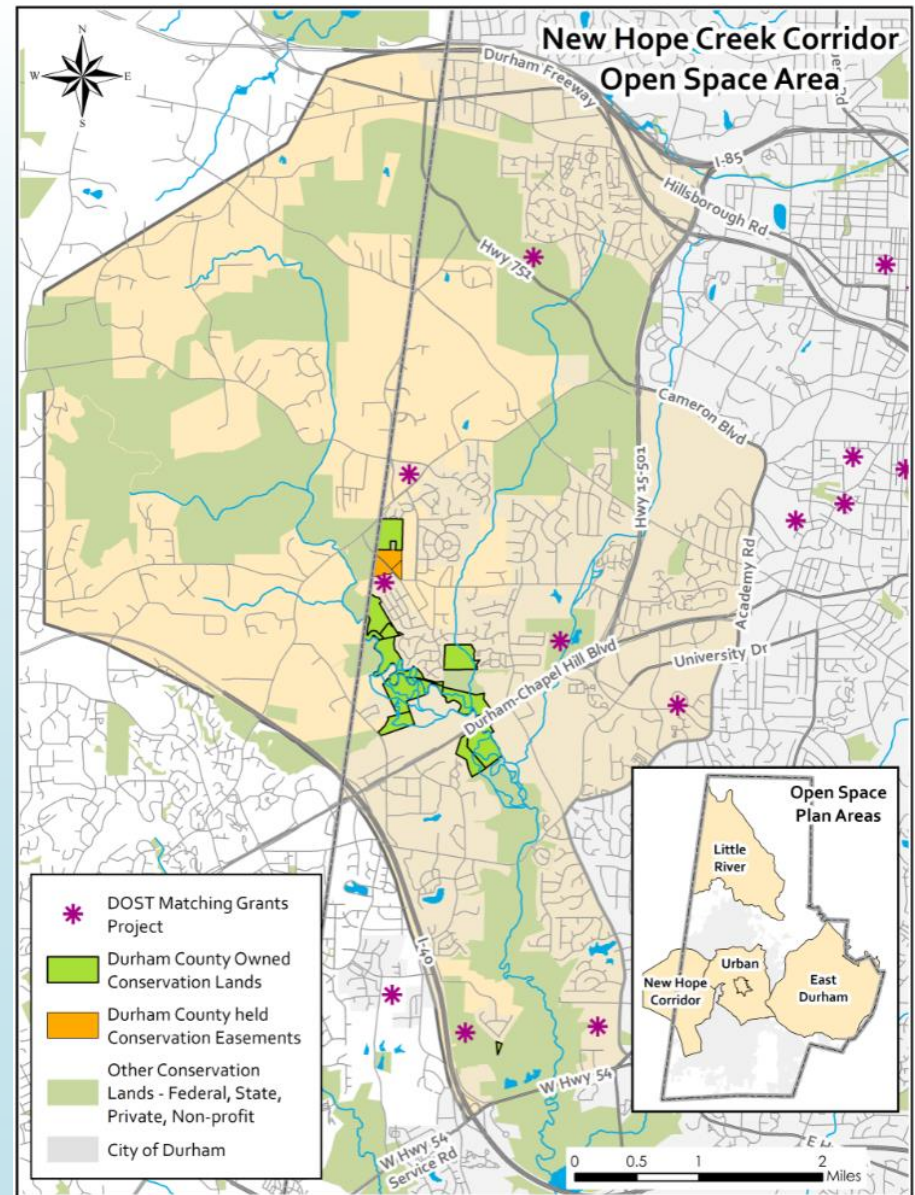


New Hope Creek OS Priorities

- Hollow Rock Phase II – continue working with Orange County on next site development to include barn renovation, accessible trail.
- Continued land protection and purchases of opportunity of New Hope Preserve Lands -
 - Beacon Properties pledged donation in future
 - Other opportunities
- Neighborhood Trail Connections -
 - Solis at Patterson Place- New Hope Bottomlands trail
 - Kendrick Estates at Hollow Rock

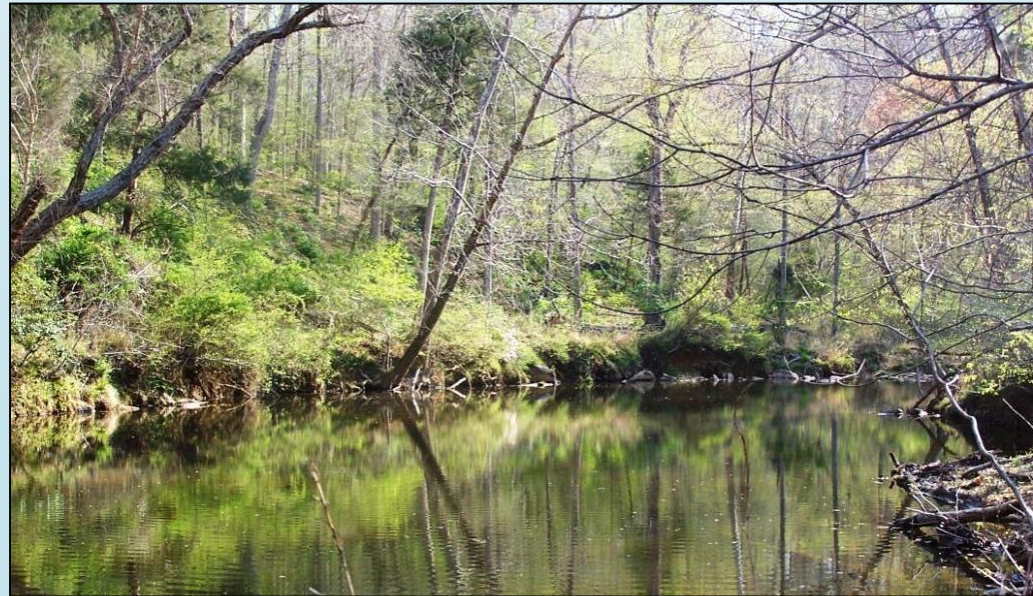
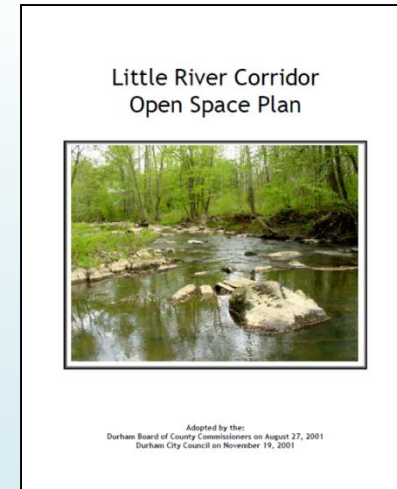


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Little River Corridor OS Plan (2001)

- Important water supply watershed for most Durham residents.
- County Protected Open Space in 2019 totaled 90 acres-
 - 618 acres fee simple
 - 172 acres easements

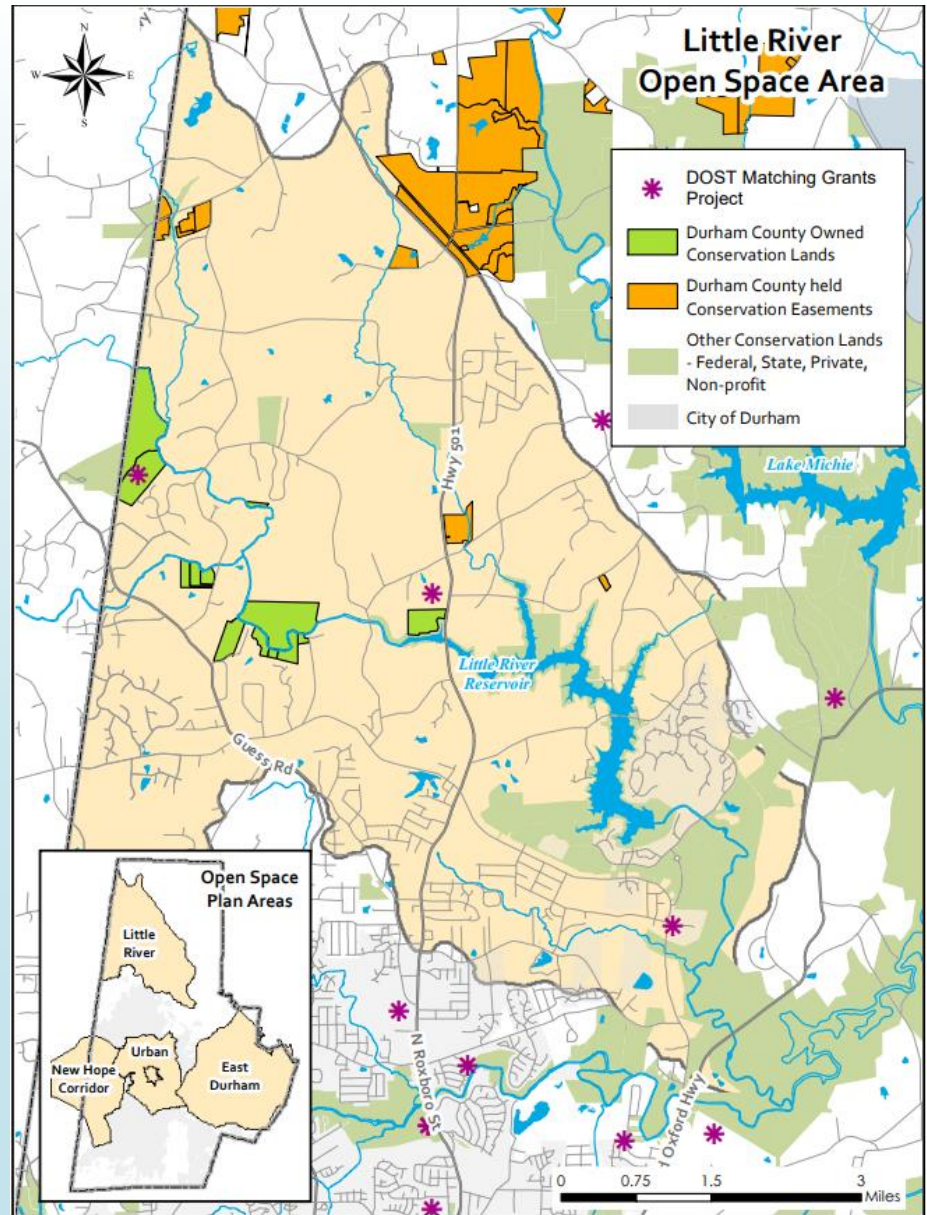


Little River OS Priorities

- With Orange County, complete the LRRP Master Plan and Management Plans as required by the Interlocal Agreement for park management.
- Continue protecting the Little River corridor upstream from the reservoir.
- Seek out partnerships where to save time and/ or \$\$s.

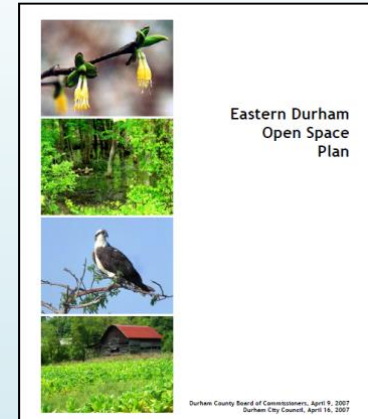


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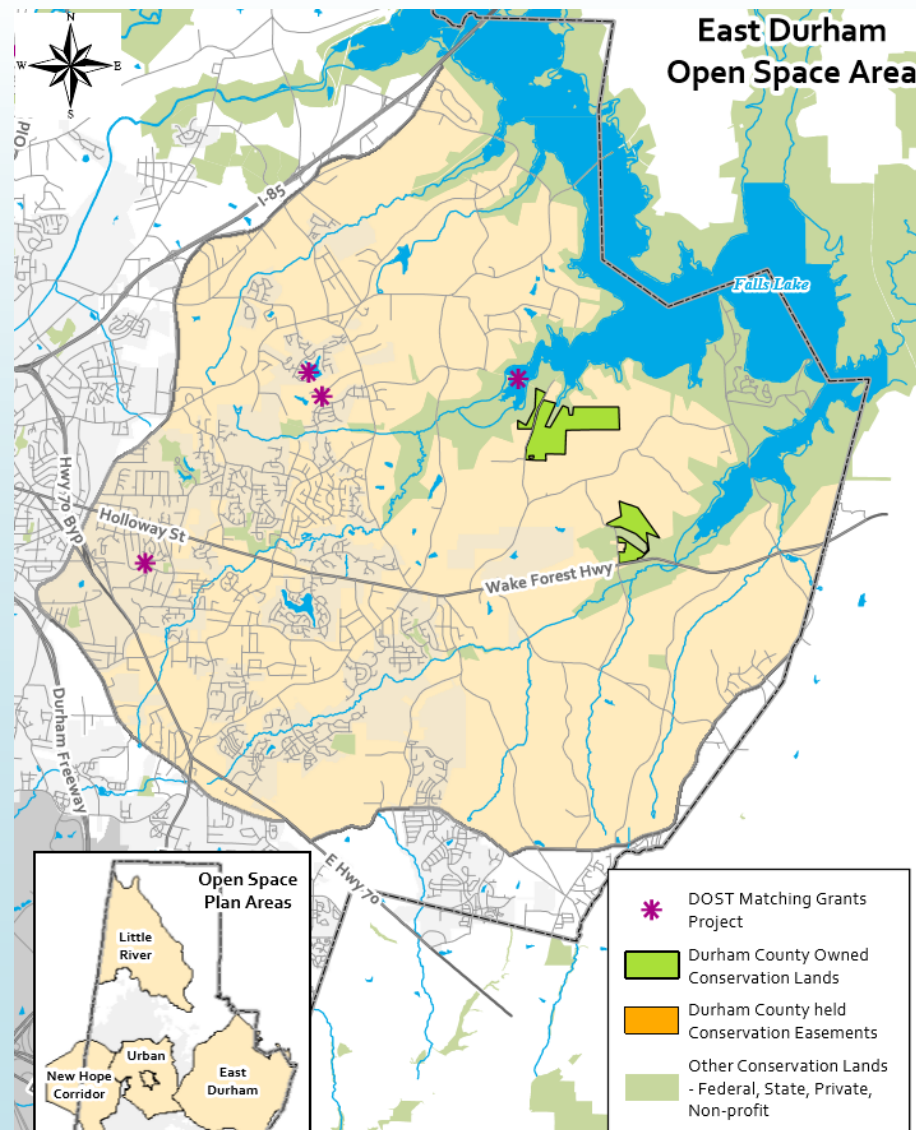
Eastern Durham OS Plan (2007)

- Area is fast growing part of county, plan area is both inside and outside city limits.
- County has acquired two large OS acquisitions that can serve as future parks:
 - 263 acre Santee Rd
 - 132 acre Southview Rd



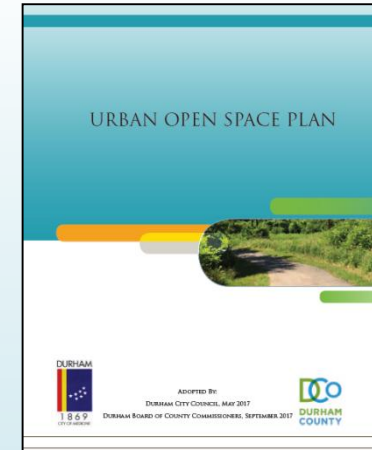
Eastern Durham OS Priorities

- Panther Creek open space and rail trail corridor acquisition linking eastern Durham with Falls Lake.
- Site development of the 263 acre Santee Rd property, in coordination with the City.
- High scoring purchases of opportunity that support the plan goals.



Urban Open Space Plan (2017)

- Urban OS area is almost entirely within City.
- Based on Urban Tier from Comprehensive Plan.
- Open spaces provide both environmental benefits and recreation potential.
- Most implementation recommendations involve city.

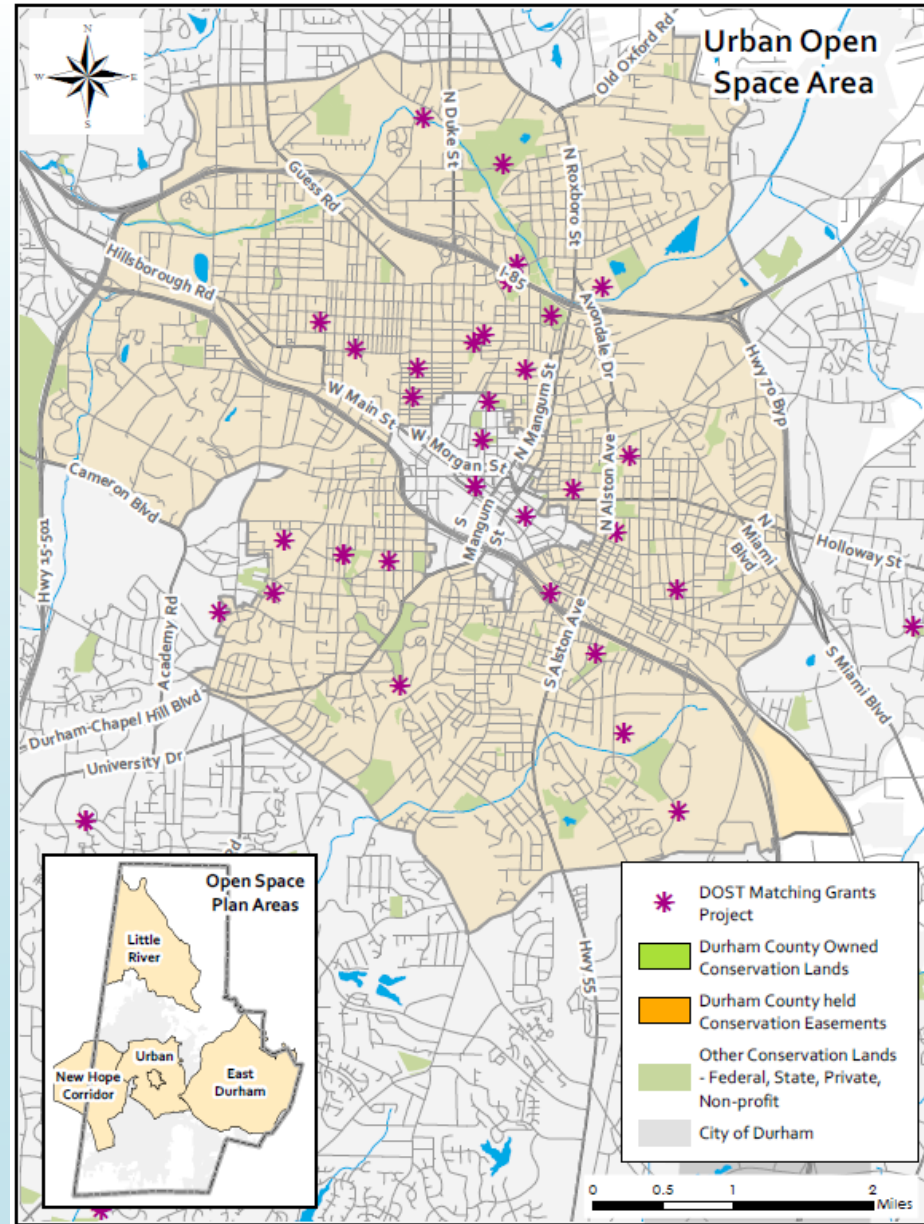


Urban OS Plan Priorities

- Continued support to DOST OS Committee to develop recommended Co. projects within the urban OS area.
- Priority for properties that can meet multiple community objectives (water quality, healthy neighborhoods, public demand, etc.).
- Continued support to the DOST OS Committee as it develops their Urban OS Scoring criteria, to be used to review potential projects.
- Continued support for the Durham County Matching Grants program, to help finance community initiated projects.



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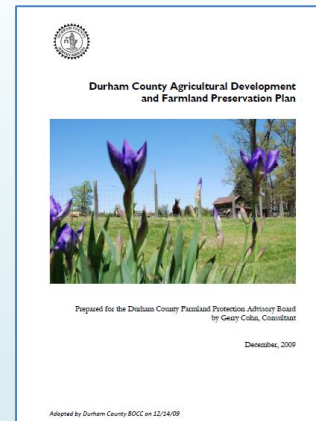
How are OS projects selected?

- Adopted Plans serve as guide
- Input from DOST, Advisory Boards, BOCC
- Leverage strategic partnerships
- Pursue “purchases of opportunity”
- OS Criteria (adopted by DOST in 2011):
 - Environmental & OS Qualities – 40%
 - Recreational & Public Amenities – 35%
 - Plan and Policy Basis – 25%
 - Potential Bonus points (historic or cultural feature, outstanding size)
- DOST advisory recommendation, then BOCC



Farmland Protection Plan 2009

- Durham County has protected 2131 acres of permanent farmland on 15 farms with easements.
- 6 more farms are underway totaling 282 acres with federal grant funds awarded
- Most farms have been located in rural tier.

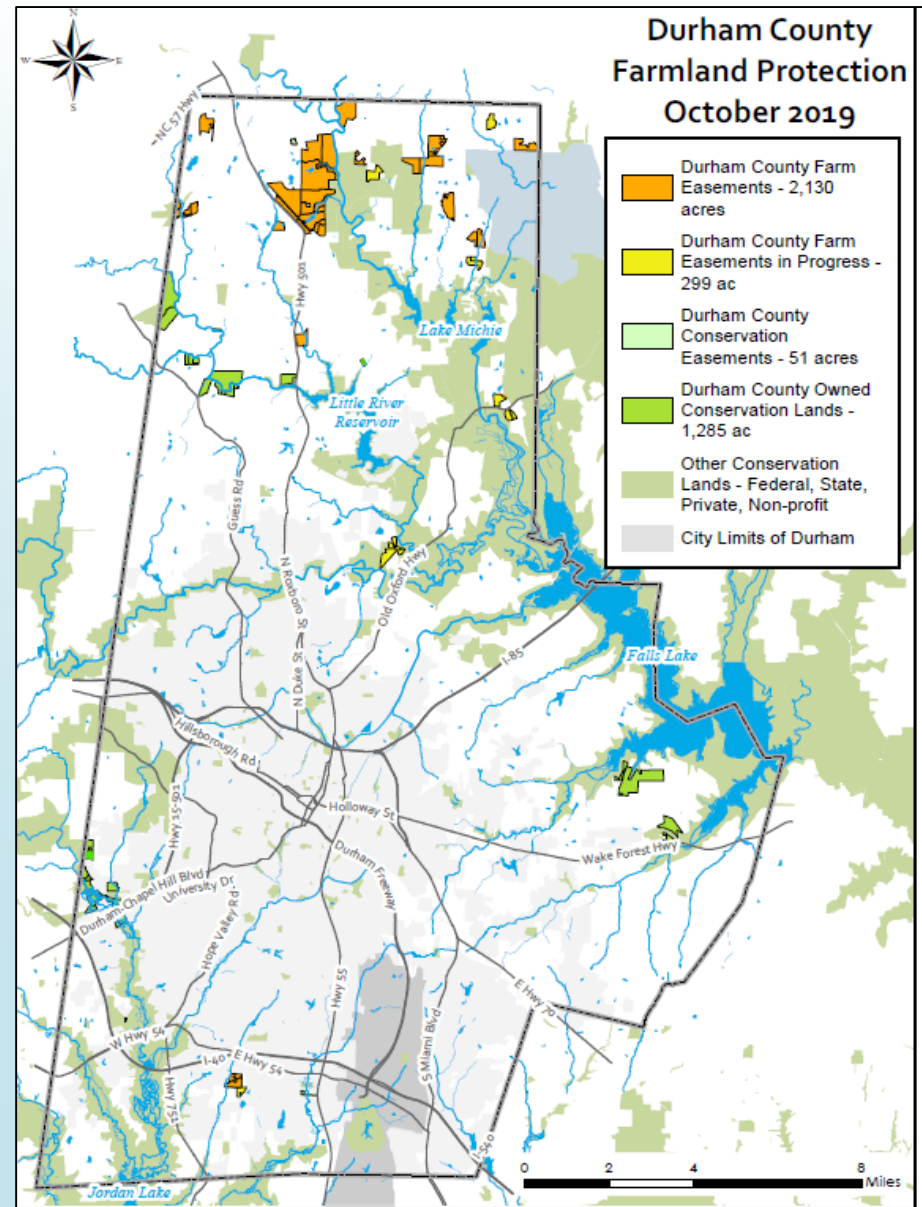


Farmland Protection Priorities

- Pursue key farmland conservation properties and seek likely grant funds for assistance with easement \$\$.
- Potential ACUB Cooperative Agreement for land protection funding in the 1-mile area surrounding Camp Butner, to be brought to the BOCC in early 2020.
- Continued technical assistance to the Farm Board's farm campus working group.
- A donated conservation easement on a 22-acre addition to the Herndon Farm conservation easement in December 2019.



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Questions / Discussion

