

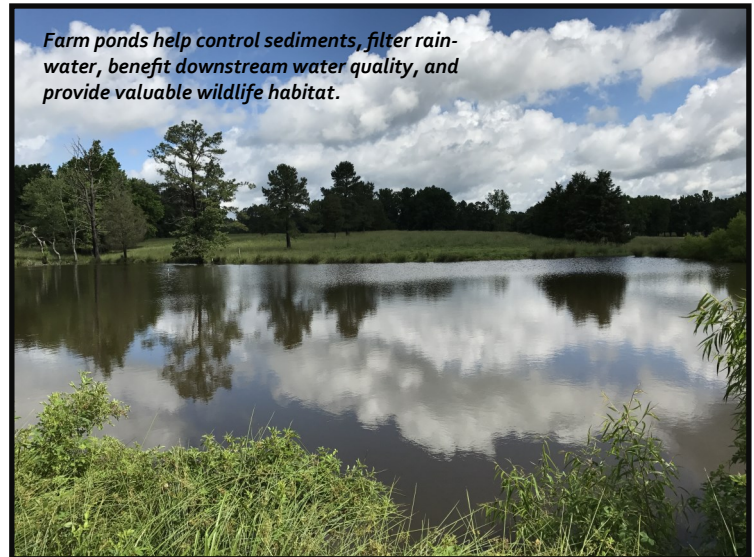


Durham County's Farmland Protection Program



Farmland preservation is a unique and important part of Durham County's Open Space Program. Since 2001 Durham County, with guidance from the Durham Farmland Protection Advisory Board, has preserved farmland by purchasing development rights through conservation easements that permanently protect farmland. The land stays privately-owned, for farming and/or forestry uses, and cannot be developed. The program relies on grant programs and donations to minimize the County's costs of preserving farmland. The County has permanently protected 2,365 acres on eighteen farms with funding secured for five more projects to protect an additional 221 acres.

Conservation Easements are a popular and effective way to permanently protect open space and farmland. The farm remains privately-owned, but permanent easement restrictions prohibit future development. Conservation easements are tailored to the unique qualities of each farm and the needs of the landowner. The easement is permanent and 'runs with the land' - it is recorded with the Register of Deeds. In this way the land remains in private ownership but cannot be developed in the future.



Farm ponds help control sediments, filter rain-water, benefit downstream water quality, and provide valuable wildlife habitat.



Protected Farmland . . .

- provides farmland for future generations.
- meets the demand for local produce and products.
- provides valuable wildlife and native plant habitats.
- requires sound and sustainable farm management practices.
- preserves a significant part of Durham's history and way of life.
- is a significant and attractive part of our community's rural character and scenic values.
- provides opportunities for 'agri-tourism' that attract visitors from the greater Triangle area and beyond.
- makes economic sense: farmland does not create demand for additional roads, schools, libraries, or sheriff's services.
- makes Durham County a great place to live!

Working with Landowners - Placing a permanent conservation easement on land is a big decision for landowners. Durham staff work closely with interested landowners to explore this voluntary option. Staff talk with landowners to understand their goals, how they fit with a permanent conservation easement, and the County's farmland preservation objectives. Staff consider the farm's chances for funding success by reviewing potential grant programs that best fit the landowner's goals.

Farm Selection -The Durham Farmland Protection Advisory Board has an evaluation system to review farms. This ranking, combined with other farm and landowner information, is used to make an advisory recommendation to Durham's Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners makes the final decision on what farmland projects the County will pursue.



Leveraging Durham's Dollars - Durham County has received over \$6.9 million in federal and state grant awards to support its farmland preservation efforts. This includes USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) funds, NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (NC ADFPTF) grants, and a NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund Grant. Landowner donations have also contributed over \$4.8 million in value toward these projects. In all, Durham County has contributed over \$2.5 million of the total \$12.8 million of project value towards farmland conservation. **This means that Durham has leveraged \$80 in outside grants or donations for every \$20 that the County has spent!**