

Conserving Chatham County's Garden of Eatin'

In the past few years, there has been an increased interest in local food both nationally and locally, and with good reason. Shipping food across the country or around the world requires significant energy consumption for transportation and storage.

To continue to have access to local food, local farmland needs to be in agricultural production. Once land is developed, it will likely never be farmland again. By conserving working farmland, Triangle Land Conservancy is ensuring land right here in the Triangle will be available for farming forever, providing fresh local food for generations to come.

While TLC protects farmland throughout the Triangle, farmland in western Chatham County illustrates an exceptional example of our local farms supporting our local food needs.

In September, TLC placed a conservation easement on Dr. John Dykers' farm

near Siler City. This farm has been at the forefront of antibiotic-free beef production since its beginning in the mid-1960s. Dr. Dykers has carefully bred and raised Charlais cattle for his Char-Lean line of beef, known for its low fat content and exceptional taste. Dr. Dykers sells the beef locally at several Chatham County farmers markets.

In western Chatham County, TLC has also protected Chestnut Hill, Ayrshire Farm, and the Robinson Farm.

"The farmers working the land in this region are many of the same farmers you'll see at the markets in Raleigh, Carrboro, and Chatham County," said Tabitha Roberson, TLC Conservation Project Manager. "It is important to make sure this slice of agriculture in Chatham County is conserved to supply local food to the population of the more urban areas of the Triangle."

TLC is currently working on projects to protect a local dairy specializing in cheesecakes, a farm producing beef, pork, eggs and organic hay and



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Cattle at New Hope Farm

grains, and a fifth generation organic dairy and poultry farm.

"There are definitely more projects and more farmers willing to conserve their land in this region," said Roberson. "Unfortunately, it is difficult to find funding to pay for legal fees, surveys, and staff time."

Several projects have been funded through the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund and other government sources, but the current economic climate has caused those sources to all but dry up. This means donations to TLC are even more important for continuing our work in this area.

"Our donors can take pride in knowing their individual donations to TLC are working toward providing our region with local food," said Kevin Brice, TLC President.

And remember, a great way to keep farmland in agriculture production is to keep farmers working the land. So support your local farmers by buying local food!



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Dr. John Dykers at his New Hope Farm, recently protected by TLC with a conservation easement.



Upcoming Events...

For information about our upcoming events, go to www.TriangleLand.org/calendar.



TLC and Partners for Environmental Justice have joined forces to offer middle school youth hands-on learning through ecological restoration and nature observation activities this fall and spring at Swift Creek Bluffs. Find out more on our blog at www.triangleland.org/blog/?p=746 or contact rosslandrews@yahoo.com.

Make a year-end gift and help us accomplish the extraordinary.

During this season of giving, we thank you for your past support of TLC. Together, we have made great strides in protecting our local waterways, farms and green spaces. As the year comes to a close, we hope you will consider a year-end Annual Fund gift that will enable TLC to continue accomplishing extraordinary things for local conservation across the Triangle.

Make your gift online today at www.triangleland.org/donate.

A proud member of...



Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce
Durham Chamber of Commerce
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce

Other Highlights...

TLC conserves over 15,000 acres!

With the completion of several projects, TLC has conserved over 15,000 acres -- roughly twice the size of Research Triangle Park. Recent projects include the Duke Forest Conservation Easement adjoining Johnston Mill Nature Preserve, the Robinson Conservation Easement on a farm near Mt. Vernon Springs in Chatham County, the New Hope Farm near Siler City (see story on front) and the Neuse River Cypress Swamp near Smithfield. These projects protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and local farms and food.

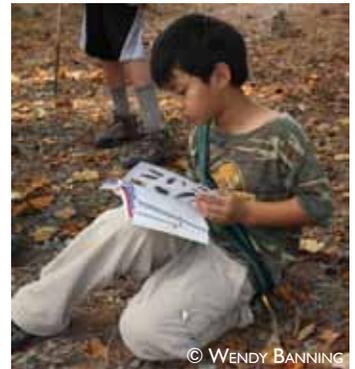
To learn more about each of these projects, go to triangleland.org/blog and select "Land Conservation" under Categories in the column on the right.

Fall in the Wild

Learning Outside Inc. (formerly Irvin Learning Farm) hosts numerous programs at TLC's Irvin Nature Preserve. Each program is designed to provide children with opportunities to achieve, to learn and to develop confidence and a sense of place through hands-on learning experiences in the natural world.

This fall, programs include a Forest Kindergarten for 3 – 5 year olds, a School in the Wild program for homeschoolers and two after school nature clubs: the Adventurers and the Trailblazers. In addition, ILF provides programs for schools, such as the Outdoor Explorers for the Pittsboro Montessori School.

Each program meets a unique need in our community and connects children in meaningful ways with the natural world. Programs continue throughout the winter/spring semester. Visit www.learn-outside.com/ILF to learn more!



And the winner is...Aveda!

Congratulations to our partners at the Aveda Institute Chapel Hill and Aveda Corp. for being named the 2011 Corporate Conservation Partner of the Year – an annual award presented by the North Carolina Land Trusts. TLC was proud to nominate Aveda and present the award at the North Carolina Land Trust Assembly Sept. 12 recognizing their continued commitment to conservation.

For the past five years, TLC has partnered with Aveda through the annual Earth Month campaign to raise awareness and funds to support clean water initiatives across the Triangle. The Earth Month campaign has raised almost \$190,000 since 2007 to benefit TLC projects that aim to keep our waterways clean for drinking, recreation and animal habitat. Again, thank you and congratulations to our partners at Aveda!

Join the discussion!

TLC actively manages a small portion of the natural land we own through several methods, including prescribed burns and forestry. This land is managed to provide a variety of wildlife habitats. Do you want to learn more about this, or add your two cents? Join the discussion at triangleland.org.

