

Conservancy protects 71-acre Mount Holly forest

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By Joe Marusak

The Catawba Lands Conservancy announced this morning that it has conserved the 71-acre Meakin Forest in Mount Holly, bringing the total amount of land permanently protected in Gaston County by the conservancy to more than 4,000 acres.

Meakin Forest is between two undeveloped subdivisions for which land has been cleared.

"The property provides valuable conservation benefits for wildlife habitat, water quality and open space preservation in an area facing significant development pressures," conservancy executive director Dave Cable said.

Meakin Forest is primarily wooded, with 2,800 feet of frontage along Taylors Creek and 2,800 feet of frontage along two of its tributaries. The forest provides what Cable calls important buffer lands to protect surface water quality in the Catawba River watershed.

Formerly owned by The Dales Group LLC, Meakin Forest was purchased by Conservancy board member Dr. Chuck Meakin, who has donated a conservation easement for the entire 71 acres.

The Catawba Lands Conservancy protects more than 8,000 acres in Catawba, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg and Union counties and is among 24 N.C. land trusts.

The Conservancy is the lead agency for the Carolina Thread Trail, an initiative linking two million residents with hundreds of miles of trails through 15 counties in the Carolinas.

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2010/12/03/1884165/conservancy-protects-71-acre-mount.html#ixzz175O8pfBS>