

Partnership to protect Seven Oaks parcel

Groups target 77 acres next to botanical garden for regional trail.

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Charlotte-based Catawba Lands Conservancy is partnering with Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden near Belmont to protect 77 acres next to the garden for the Carolina Thread Trail, it was announced Wednesday.

The parcel of Gaston County land, known as Seven Oaks, includes a 2.3-mile waterfront segment of the Thread Trail on Lake Wylie, connecting with the garden.

According to a conservancy release, the trail is slated to be completed next year and will eventually become a bridge to segments of the Thread Trail in South Carolina and north to an existing trail along the South Fork of the Catawba River.

The conservancy stated that the Seven Oaks property is a wooded natural area that serves as an important wildlife corridor and provides a natural filter for water draining into Lake Wylie, the drinking water source for such cities as Belmont and Rock Hill.

Public access to the trail will provide "a recreational and educational amenity for the region, complementing and extending the natural areas of the garden and its new Meadowood Walk," according to the release.

"My family and I are so pleased that this beautiful property will remain natural and be accessible to Gaston families and visitors," said Harding Stowe, president of the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden Foundation.

"The connection of the Carolina Thread Trail with the garden is very much in keeping with the legacy that Daniel Stowe sought to leave in our area."

The property was purchased from the Stowe Botanical Garden Foundation using a \$1.5 million grant from the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the conservancy said.

The conservancy is the lead agency for the Carolina Thread Trail, a 15-county, two-state initiative to create a regional network of trails, waterways and conservation corridors.



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<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2011/08/11/2518527/partnership-in-gaston-county-to.html#storylink=misearch>