

**NEWS RELEASE**

January 11, 2010

**Land Added to Stillhouse Bottom Nature Preserve, Chapel Hill, NC**

The Botanical Garden Foundation, Inc. (the Foundation), the non-profit membership support organization of the North Carolina Botanical Garden (the Garden) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has purchased and added a 5.6-acre parcel to its Stillhouse Bottom Nature Preserve. This parcel occupies the heart of the greater Morgan Creek Bluffs Natural Area that is recognized as a site of state significance by both the Orange County Lands Legacy and NC Natural Heritage Programs.

According to the **Inventory of Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats for Orange County, NC** (2004), the Stillhouse Bottom natural area is the only undisturbed, steep, north-facing ravine left in Orange County. Over 100 plant species have been identified on the site, which has never been logged or cultivated. Trees estimated to be 300 years old have been identified in the natural area. The high quality of the site is also demonstrated by the presence of red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks, yellow-billed cuckoos, white-breasted nuthatches, ovenbirds, scarlet tanagers, and other deep forest birds. Stream quality is likewise demonstrated by the healthy amphibian community, made up of dusky salamanders, two-lined salamanders, and green frogs.

The purchase was made possible with contributions from Orange County (\$100,000), the Town of Chapel Hill (\$34,000), and \$266,000 in private donations. The Foundation also holds conservation easements on 12 acres of contiguous private land to the north and west of the Stillhouse Bottom Nature Preserve. There is the potential to create a 100-acre nature preserve with additional land or conservation easement donations and land purchases.

The Stillhouse Bottom Nature Preserve does not contain trails and is not open to the general public because of site sensitivity. The Botanical Garden does offer guided hikes throughout the year that are advertised in the Garden's website and newsletter, local newspapers, and the Town of Chapel Hill's Parks and Recreation publications.

**Information contacts:**

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NORTH CAROLINA BOTANICAL GARDEN

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