

Iseley offers pick-your-own strawberries, and for 11 years she has grown organic tobacco that she sells to Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company.

"It's a learning curve," she says. "I love something new and challenging."

Forever protected

Many family farms are disappearing, due in large part to development pressure. Troxler says North Carolina lost 600,000 acres of farmland between 2002 and 2007.

Jane's farm on the outskirts of Burlington is a jewel in a rapidly developing area, he says. Ten years ago Iseley decided she didn't want her land covered with houses. "My concern was: How am I going to make this affordable so somebody else can farm it?"

The Piedmont Land Conservancy helped her protect the farm through a bargain sale easement that will allow farming and a homesite or two. PLC combined funds from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, the USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, and a generous donation from Iseley to purchase the development rights of 218 acres of this North Carolina Century Farm. The

North Carolina Ecosystem Enhancement Program also purchased a 40-acre easement on the farm for the purpose of stream restoration and enhancement.

Iseley Farms has about two miles of frontage on the Haw River and was identified in 2005 as a high priority conservation project by the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, says Kalen Kingsbury, PLC's associate director and general counsel. PLC is working with Iseley to preserve an additional 120 acres.

"Her determination was an inspiration to me personally," Kingsbury says. "The more time I spent with Jane, the more I realized the desire to protect her farm was about something bigger than herself." ➤

Kathy Norcross Watts recently moved to a farm in Germanton.

if you're going

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