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Easement aims to protect Dogwood Hill estate on U.S. 42 from development

U.S. 42 easement offers owner ease of mind

By Chris Otts

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Laura Lee Brown said she and her siblings never considered that Sutherland, the farm off U.S. 42 where they grew up, might be carved into a subdivision when they sold it in the mid-1980s.

Though most of the farm ended up as expensive houses, Brown galvanized an effort in 1994 buy back some of it -- 46 acres near Hays Kennedy Park -- and make it into a nature preserve.

Now she is making sure another piece of scenic property she owns will never become a subdivision.



By Arza Barnett, The Courier-Journal

Dogwood Hill estate off U.S. 42 will be sold with a conservation easement so that the property cannot be subdivided or built upon

Brown, a great-granddaughter of Brown-Forman Corp. founder George Garvin Brown, recently placed a conservation easement on her 31-acre Dogwood Hill estate at 7001 U.S. 42, just south of the Snyder Freeway.

Brown is preparing to sell the property, and it's an obvious place for a subdivision, she said. She pointed to Sanctuary Bluff, a 101-house subdivision under construction just across U.S. 42.

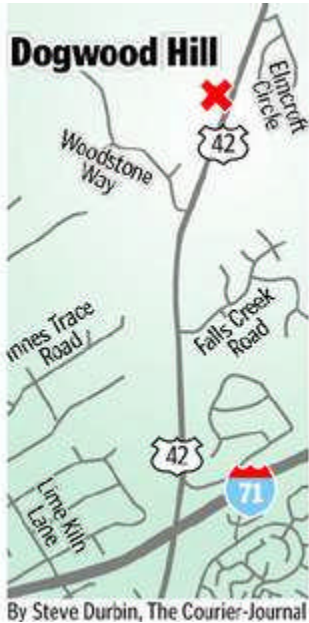
Dogwood Hill will remain a private residence, but the easement ensures that no future owners will be able to subdivide and build on the land.

"It just tears me up to think that such a beautiful piece of land ... would be used up in another way," she said.

The hilly landscape is home to wildflowers, mature trees and many species of wildlife, Brown said. A

trail leads from the 66-year-old brick house down to where Little Goose Creek and Goose Creek merge, she said.

Brown's property will become part of 343 acres overseen by the 10-year-old Louisville and Jefferson County Environmental Trust.



"We're just delighted," said Lisa Hite of Metro Parks, which helps administer the trust. "It's a wonderful gift to the community to preserve that open space." She said it is especially important to keep development from encroaching on Little Goose Creek, a habitat for two federally designated endangered species of bats.

Brown spent 32 years at the Dogwood Hill property, where she raised her three children with her ex-husband, Lee Deters.

She now lives with husband Steve Wilson on a 1,000-acre farm called Woodland in Oldham County. Brown and Wilson own the 21c Museum Hotel in downtown Louisville, and they are also helping to develop the Museum Plaza skyscraper.

Brown declined to specify how much money she gave up in potential development of the Dogwood Hill property.

The property is assessed at \$2.25 million for tax purposes.

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