

August 20, 2008

Floyds Fork farm added to park land

\$3 million purchase links preserved tracts

By Sheldon S. Shafer

sshaffer@courier-journal.com

A 120-acre farm just east of Floyds Fork between Interstate 64 and Taylorsville Road has been added to the 21st Century Parks program.

The nonprofit program, using money raised by Humana co-founder David Jones and provided primarily by conservationist and philanthropist Sally Brown, recently closed on the purchase of the farm at 1501 Gilliland Road for \$3 million.

It was owned by Bob and Nancy Bell, who retain the right to stay on a 5-acre tract containing their house and barn as long as they live, said Dan Jones, president and CEO of 21st Century Parks Inc.

The purchase brings to about 3,200 acres along Floyds Fork that is under the control of 21st Century Parks, Louisville Metro Parks and another nonprofit agency called the Future Fund.

The goal is to develop a linear park along the creek as part of an eventual 105-mile greenway along the outer perimeter of the county.

Dan Jones said the Bell farm ties together about 500 acres previously purchased, including two parcels just north of the Bell farm and three parcels to the south.

"This is an incredibly important piece of the (park) master plan," Jones said.

According to a consultant's preliminary plan for the land along the creek, the Bell farm is recommended for active recreational use.

Unlike some of the nearby land that is rolling and heavily wooded and ripe for trails and hiking, the Bell farm is flat and not so prone to flooding, Jones said.

In addition to farming, the Bells raised cattle and horses.

Acquisition of the farm was negotiated by the nonprofit Trust for Public Land, which acquires and conveys land for parks, wilderness areas and public open space.

Nancy Bell said yesterday that the Bells are happy the public will be able to enjoy their property for generations to come.

"It's better than trying to sell the land for development," she said, adding that "we thought this was a good way to do it."

"Farming has been a way of life ... but it's time to quit," her husband said.

"I can't think of a better place to put a piece of property that holds so much of our work and memories than into a public park for a lot of people to enjoy," he added.

Reporter Sheldon S. Shafer can be reached at (502) 582-7089.
