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Easement protects Claxton Farm

<http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20100210/NEWS01/100210045/1009>

WEAVERVILLE — A \$6 million working lands conservation easement will permanently protect 480 acres of Claxton Farm, according to a press release from the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy.

The conservancy has been working for three years with landowners Porter and Martha Ann Claxton on conservation options on the landmark property in the Flat Creek area of northern Buncombe County.

The farm, a well-known event and wedding venue, made headlines after its historic tobacco building burned to the ground in November. Plans are underway to rebuild the barn and is expected to be completely rebuilt by April.

In addition to hosting events, the farm also has one of the largest intact breeding herd of registered Polled Herefords in WNC and a diverse assortment of livestock.

The farm is also in an area designated by the Buncombe County Land Conservation Advisory Board as a high priority for protection efforts. It's the first project of the board in the northern part of the county and is near other conservation easements held by the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy.

The Claxtons donated 84 percent of the easement value. The Buncombe County Land Conservation Program provided a \$790,000 grant to cover the purchase price and transaction costs. The North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund awarded a \$200,000 state grant to the conservancy.