



# KELLAM-WYATT FARM

## DRAFT MASTER PLAN

● SEPTEMBER 2021







An aerial perspective rendering of a park landscape. The scene features a dense canopy of trees in various shades of green and yellow, suggesting a mix of species and possibly autumn foliage. Winding, light-colored paths or trails meander through the wooded areas. In the lower-left quadrant, there is a paved area with some pinkish-red structures, possibly playground equipment or seating. A prominent, solid yellow horizontal bar is positioned above the main title. The sky is a pale, hazy blue with numerous small, dark silhouettes of birds in flight. The overall style is a detailed digital illustration or architectural rendering.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





Bob Kellam and Susan Wyatt in the production area of Kellam-Wyatt Farm (photo courtesy of Susan Wyatt)

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2013, Bob Kellam and Susan Wyatt granted a conservation easement to the City of Oaks Foundation in order to permanently protect the unique agricultural and natural heritage of their 59-acre Kellam-Wyatt Farm, located in east-central Wake County near the border between Raleigh and Knightdale.

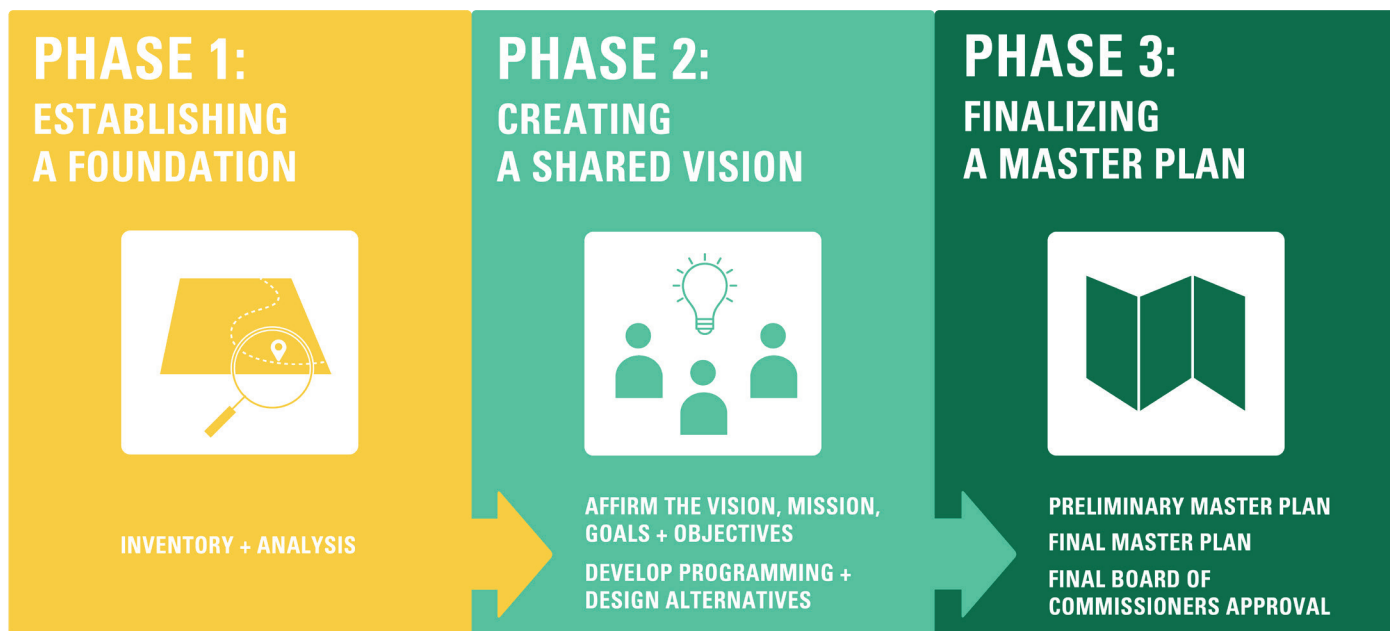
Bob Kellam passed away in 2016. The conservation easement — which limits development on the property and ensures that future improvements and uses promote certain environmental, recreational, agricultural and educational values — helps to ensure that the family's vision will be reflected

in the Kellam-Wyatt property for generations to come.

In 2017, the City of Oaks Foundation contacted Wake County on behalf of Susan Wyatt, her late husband Bob Kellam, and his daughter Leewyn Kellam regarding the donation of Kellam-Wyatt Farm for use as a park, open space, nature preserve or agricultural site. The Wake County Board of Commissioners accepted the donation in 2018.

This three-generation family farm and woodland sanctuary has much to offer the Wake County public in natural beauty, wildlife habitat and sustainable, educational agriculture. The planning process described in this document was the first step toward developing a Kellam-Wyatt Farm vision and master plan





Master planning process for Kellam-Wyatt Farm

that will protect the site's unique natural and agricultural character while allowing for public access, education and recreation.

Assessment, to situate the Kellam-Wyatt Farm master planning process within the larger Wake County context of agricultural programming and gaps.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The Kellam-Wyatt Farm Master Plan provides a vision for the long-term buildout of the site as a Wake County park and public amenity. The master planning process was designed to ground the plan in site realities and to ensure the plan reflects the needs and wants of Wake County residents and site neighbors.

The master planning process was divided into three general phases.

### Phase 1: Establishing a Foundation

In Phase 1, the design team interviewed project stakeholders and established a foundational knowledge of the site and its history, context and existing conditions.

The design team also developed a Wake County Agricultural

### Phase 2: Creating a Shared Vision

In Phase 2, the design team created a Kellam-Wyatt Farm StoryMap Collection to share its initial site discoveries with the public and to ask for input to inform the development of possible site designs, features and programming.

In the first round of public feedback, the design team found that the community vision for Kellam-Wyatt Farm aligned with the site conservation easement — to preserve and enhance the site's natural features while incorporating agricultural, recreational and educational site features.

### Phase 3: Finalizing a Master Plan

The design team used the public vision and programming preferences



collected during Phase 2 to develop two master plan concept alternatives, which were shared online and during a live virtual public meeting to solicit public input.

The most popular elements from the two concepts were incorporated into a final draft master plan, which was shared for public review and feedback at an in-person Open House and through an online survey.

## PROJECT GOALS

Beginning in January 2020, the design team worked with Wake County Parks, Recreation and Open Space and public stakeholders to develop project goals that strike a balance between the environmental, cultural, recreational and agricultural opportunities of Kellam-Wyatt Farm.

### Honor the Conservation Values of the Property

Any future activity on Kellam-Wyatt Farm must satisfy the values defined in the site conservation easement.

Those values are:

- » Open Space
- » Water Quality
- » Scenic Views
- » Recreation
- » Agriculture & Education

### Craft an Executable Plan

Create a plan and phasing strategy that is executable within a realistic timeframe, process and budget, and one that Wake County can successfully operate and maintain.

### Connect with Neighbors and Wake County

Follow a thoughtful and engaging process throughout planning and design that prioritizes the needs and

desires of adjacent communities through access, education, and engagement; and promotes walkability, immersion in nature, and connections with local agriculture.

### Balance Stewardship and Access Through Sustainable Infrastructure

Implement environmentally and economically sustainable, long-term strategies for infrastructure and programming that protect natural systems, maximize performance, mitigate uncontrollable site influences, and are low-maintenance.

Strategies should be evidence-based, measurable, and serve as a model for other projects by providing insight for other Wake County properties.

## SITE INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

The Kellam-Wyatt Farm site has a long agricultural history that largely mirrors the history of land cultivation and development throughout Wake County. The Kellam-Wyatt Farm Master Plan identifies opportunities to weave those threads of history — along with lessons about sustainable practices and the restoration of native ecosystems — through new site features, programming, demonstration agriculture and interpretive signage.

Today Kellam-Wyatt Farm is a 59-acre island of remnant woodland and farmfields, surrounded by residential neighborhoods and in close proximity to shopping centers and the major thoroughfares of New Bern Avenue, I-540, I-440 and I-87.

Exploration of the site's community, agricultural and environmental contexts helped the design team to





Existing Kellam-Wyatt Farm infrastructure, drainage, landcover and Farmstead Areas

develop and fine-tune their outreach measures, identify programming opportunities, and understand the site's potential function within larger agricultural and environmental systems.

The design team's inventory and analysis of site conditions informed the identification of site opportunities and constraints, which in turn informed the development of master plan concepts and recommendations.

The team's analysis considered the following site conditions:

- » Conservation Easement
- » Buildings & Infrastructure
- » Natural & Historical Resources
- » Soundscape
- » Edges & Access
- » Capacity & Zoning

## MASTER PLAN APPROACH

### Striking a Balance

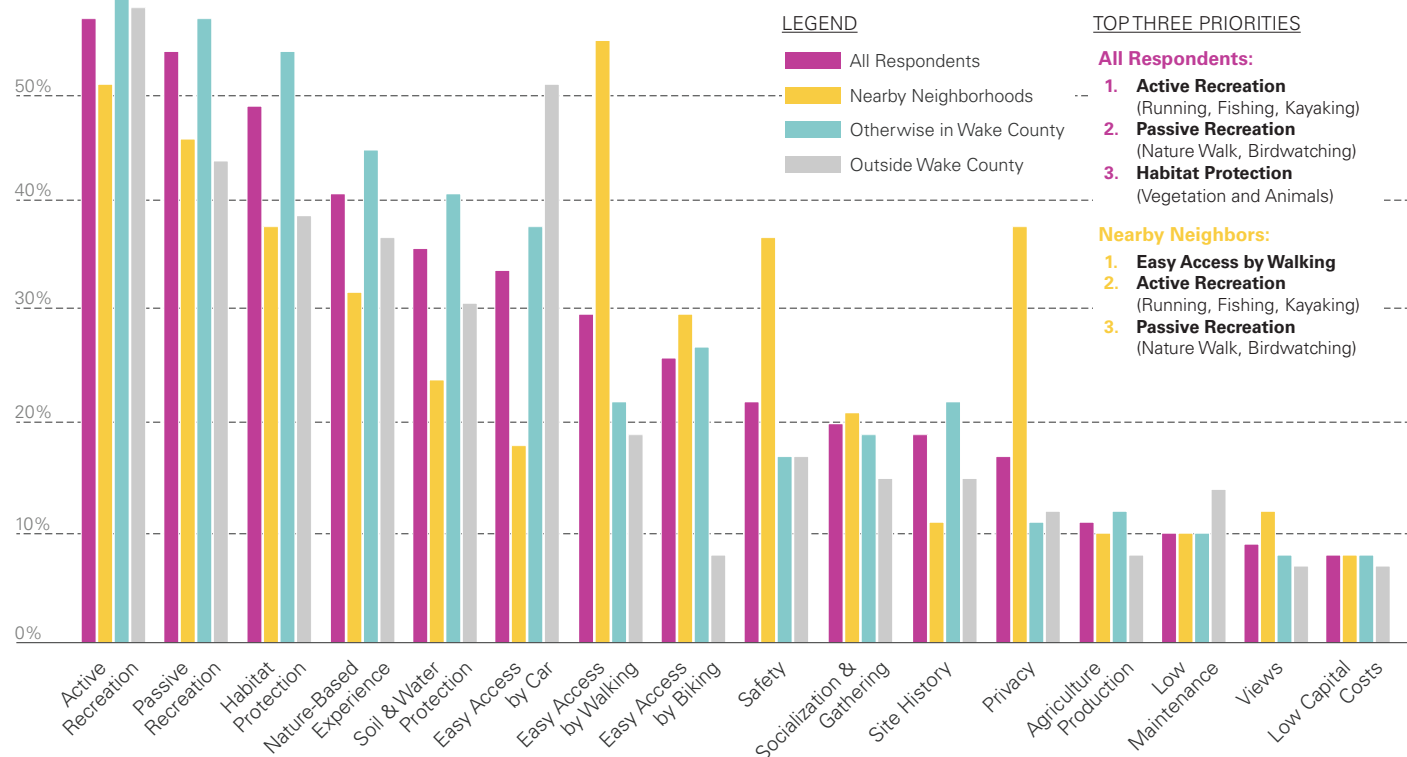
The primary design challenge for the Kellam-Wyatt Farm Master Plan is creating new opportunities for public access, education, recreation and agriculture while protecting the natural and scenic qualities that make the site unique.

The design team observed the following guiding principles to strike that balance:

- » Protect existing woodlands, drainage channels and pond's-edge habitats. Place trails through these areas where they are likely to cause the least amount of disturbance, and incorporate trailside signage and other elements that allow



## % OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED EACH OPTION AS ONE OF THEIR TOP FIVE PRIORITIES



Survey No. 1 responses and number of respondents by ZIP code

## Engaged Stakeholder Groups

- » Nearby Homeowners Associations
- » Southeast Raleigh Citizen Advisory Council
- » N.C. Cooperative Extension
- » Wake County Soil & Water Conservation District
- » Capital Area Food Network
- » City of Oaks Foundation
- » City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources
- » City of Raleigh Transportation
- » The Conservation Fund
- » Triangle Land Conservancy
- » Alice Aycock Poe Center for Health Education

for the layering of open space, recreational and educational benefits within these limited trail corridors.

- » Limit activity and disturbance west of the pond in order to protect the site's relatively high-quality soundscapes and to maintain the limited profile of the road across the dam.
- » Concentrate those features that are likely to attract the highest levels of day-to-day activities in parts of the site that are already disturbed and relatively loud.
- » Honor both the letter and the spirit of the conservation easement through a focus on low-impact development, open space preservation and restoration, sustainable and regenerative agriculture, and integrated stormwater management.

## Engaging the Public & Stakeholders

Early in the master planning process, the design team interviewed stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of local models for community agriculture and open space preservation and how Kellam-Wyatt Farm might fill local programming and outreach gaps. From those interviews emerged a focus on:

- » Creating a centralized site hub for educational and demonstration agriculture, with a focus on community gardens and small-scale, sustainable, regenerative and innovative agriculture.
- » Creating dispersed, sitewide opportunities for discovery and interaction with food forests, edible landscaping, site and agricultural history, and the natural environment.



## POND'S EDGE



## FOOD FOREST



## DEMO GARDEN



## MEADOW



## WOODLAND



Rendering of future Kellam-Wyatt Farm site trail and user experiences

- » Promoting visitors' understanding of the relationships between the site's natural and agricultural systems.
- » Embedding flexibility in the master plan to allow future agricultural programming to emerge from evolving partnerships and community needs.
- » Satisfy demonstrated community needs and preferences **while**
- » Co-existing with preserved habitats and sensitive environmental systems, **or**
- » Are able to be located in the site's designated higher-activity areas.

## Design Concept Alternatives

The County and design team throughout the planning process have sought to manage expectations about what Kellam-Wyatt Farm can and cannot be, given the opportunities and constraints of the conservation easement and of the site itself.

At every opportunity for public feedback, the design team sought to provide clarity about possible program and design choices and their tradeoffs, inviting the public to rank and prioritize their preferences. For the master plan, the result is a prioritization of new features and programming that:

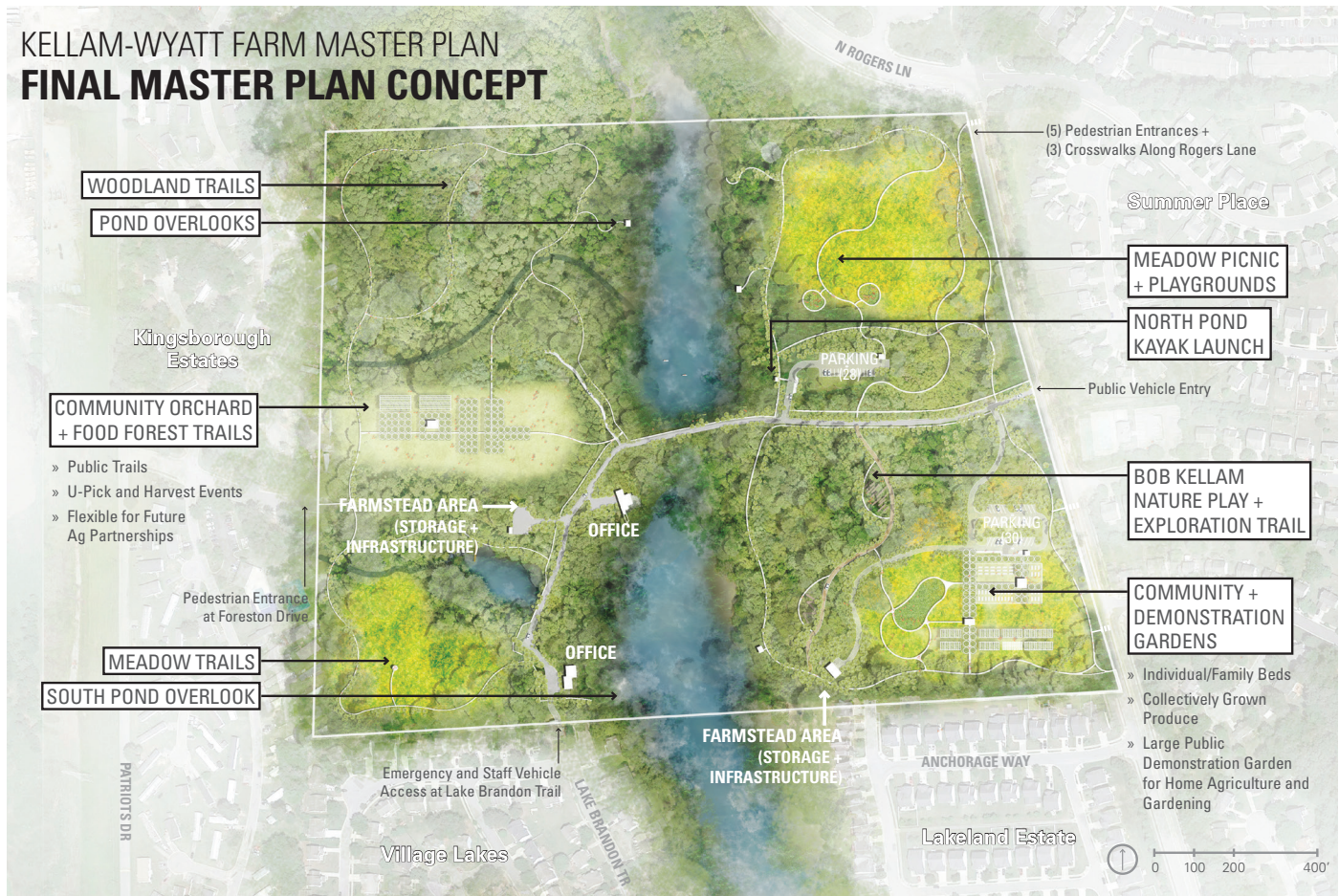
The design team translated initial public and stakeholder feedback into the creation of two master plan concept alternatives, which shared common values but offered different visions for how to balance resource protection and new site amenities and programming.

Public feedback on the alternate scenarios drove development of a final Kellam-Wyatt Farm Master Plan that mixed and matched the preferred elements.



## KELLAM-WYATT FARM MASTER PLAN

### FINAL MASTER PLAN CONCEPT



Final Kellam-Wyatt Farm Master Plan

# 2.5

miles of site trails

# 6

pedestrian/bike entries

# 1

public vehicle entry

# 1

staff/emergency vehicle entry

## FINAL MASTER PLAN VISION

The final Kellam-Wyatt Farm Master Plan envisions a variety of site experiences, with 2.5 miles of interconnected trails that weave through bustling gardens, serene woodland, whimsical nature play, foraging forests, overgrown homesteads, former cotton fields and pond's-edge boardwalks. Site visitors can come for one purpose — to join a volunteer workday in the garden or to take a quiet walk to a pond overlook — or they can wander and enjoy a diversity of spaces and experiences.

The master plan concentrates day-to-day site traffic and activity in the southeast corner, with community

gardens, a demonstration garden, open play fields, nature play and trails.

A more passive food destination is shown across the pond in the existing agricultural field — a community orchard and food forest with day-to-day site trails and foraging, along with opportunities several times per year for larger-scale public harvest events.

The northeast site quadrant is shown as a restored meadow with woodland and food forest edges and two trail spurs leading to pond overlooks. In the woods just north of the site entry is an interpretive trail that weaves around the former sharecropper home and tobacco curing barns. A boat launch provides ADA canoe and kayak access on the northern pond.





Rendering of a future boardwalk along the interior Kellam-Wyatt Farm site pond

The northwest quadrant is shown as a protected and restored woodland with site trails and a spur to a pond overlook. There is ample opportunity in this wooded area — with its former cotton fields, varied stages of woodland succession, recent mushroom cultivation, centrally located timber stand and pond views — for education, interpretation, research and respite.

In the southwest quadrant are trails and a boardwalk around the site's small interior pond, surrounded by mature hardwood forest. The restored meadow and wildlife blind in the existing open field preserve the peaceful soundscape and create new habitat and biodiversity in this former tobacco field.

The master plan also provides specific recommendations for:

- » Preservation, Restoration & Management
- » Food & Agriculture
- » Site Edges & Relationships
- » Site Plans & Permitting

## COSTS & PHASING

To inform future planning and design for Kellam-Wyatt Farm, the design team generated a high-level opinion of probable costs for construction of the final master plan vision, along with potential costs for Phase 1 as informed by public priorities.

The total opinion of probable cost for buildout of the Kellam-Wyatt Farm Master Plan is \$###,###,###, and for Phase 1 is \$#,###,###.



