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**Map: (source: Orange County Tax Administration/Land Records Department)**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **PRESERVE RURAL ORANGE ASKS NC ATTORNEY GENERAL & STATE AUDITOR TO INVESTIGATE UNC ACQUIRING RURAL PROPERTIES WHILE PUBLIC APPEALS TO COUNTY AND STATE OFFICIALS WERE STILL PENDING**

Orange County, NC, September 24, 2012—The citizen nonprofit Preserve Rural Orange (PRO) has asked North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper and State Auditor Beth Wood to investigate recent acquisitions of rural property by the University of North Carolina's Animal Research Facility in Bingham Township.

Earlier this month UNC Vice Chancellor Bob Lowman sent an email message to PRO and facility neighbors announcing that UNC had acquired an 8.32-acre property on Maynard Farm Road and planned to acquire an additional 10.56 acres. University officials first requested the acquisition on April 18, 2012 and closed on the property on September 6, 2012 without disclosing to the State Property Office that appeals made by the seller to the Orange County Board of Adjustment (BOA) and North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ) were pending.

On March 1, 2012, the seller and PRO filed a joint appeal to the BOA for a public hearing regarding a UNC Bingham site plan that was approved without requiring the University to apply for a Special Use Permit. The BOA hearing has not yet been held, but will go forward with another neighbor joining the appeal. In October 2011, the seller signed on to a public hearing request sent by PRO and the Haw River Assembly to the DWQ. The DWQ hearing to receive public comments on UNC's wastewater permit application took place on August 22, 2012 at the White Cross Recreation Center with 100 community members in attendance.

PRO asked the State Auditor to look into sources of funding used by the UNC Animal Research Facility to build and replace failed infrastructure as well as to acquire real estate. The real estate expenditures were authorized by UNC-Chapel Hill's Board of Trustees and the UNC Board of Governors in closed session. UNC paid for the properties with Facilities & Administrative (F&A) receipts, which are

funds built into research grants and contracts to cover overhead costs of conducting research, at rates set by the federal government. Over 70% of all UNC F&A receipts are public funds from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

PRO contacted the Attorney General and State Auditor's offices after three years of unanswered questions about environmental compliance and long-range expansion plans at the UNC Animal Research Facility. The seller and PRO requested public hearings following a series of violations, illegal wastewater discharges and infrastructure failures at the facility in 2009 and 2010. After PRO exposed these incidents, neighbors asked the University to test for environmental impacts on surrounding properties, wells, groundwater and creeks. Despite UNC officials' verbal commitments since 2010 to develop protocols and conduct well tests, UNC has not tested for contaminants in neighboring wells and properties. At the DWQ hearing in August, Lowman told PRO that the University does not have funds for testing neighbors' water.

Over the past two years UNC has spent \$715,000 in grant funds to acquire 13 acres on Maynard Farm Road with two residences next to the UNC Animal Research Facility's failed waste lagoons, creek and wetlands. The University plans to spend an estimated \$95,000 for an additional ten acres off Orange Chapel Clover Garden Road, next to the large lagoon that failed in 2009, illegally discharging animal wastewater into Collins Creek. The three acquisitions will add twenty-three acres, expanding the UNC property from fifty-seven to eighty acres. The added acreage does not appear in UNC's 2006 Master Plan for a rural Resource Research Campus. Currently UNC is renting out one property as a private residence and plans to seek a tenant to rent the second property. The new properties are listed in State Property Office records as educational land use.

[http://preserveruralorange.org/UNC\\_AnimalResearch\\_Facility.html](http://preserveruralorange.org/UNC_AnimalResearch_Facility.html)

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