

Foothills Land Conservancy breaks in new digs at home on Rockford farm

BY WES WADE

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The nonprofit Foothills Land Conservancy has moved into its new office.

Located in a two-story home on a 314-acre farm in Rockford, it's the first permanent home for the group, said Foothills Land Conservancy (FLC) Executive Director Bill Clabough.

It's also the old home and property of FLC founding member Gail Harris and her late husband, James Harris.

Clabough said Harris worked with FLC to put a conservation easement on the property several years ago. The purpose of

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director of Foothills Land Conservancy

such an easement is to protect land from overdevelopment, Clabough said.

More recently, Harris decided to give her home to the organization as its new

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headquarters. Harris is now living in a modular home on the same property.

"Any business, any institution, any individual would like to have a permanent home," Clabough said. "So now, FLC has a permanent home."

The FLC started planning the move last year. The organization began moving from its old office in downtown Maryville May 26. The transfer to the new headquarters is done.

"We still have some rearranging to do, but it's complete," Clabough said. "We plan on getting back to work ... doing what we're paid to do. That's to help individuals protect their land."

Since forming in 1985, the FLC has been able to protect over 90,000 acres in seven states, Clabough said.

"Our main focus today is on protecting land with landowners through a tool called a conservation easement," Clabough said. "It's a voluntary contract between a land trust and a land own-



FOOTHILLS LAND CONSERVANCY EXECUTIVE Director Bill Clabough takes a break from clearing a fence row on Saturday to give a tour of the organization's new home office in Rockford. The binders on the shelf behind him contain information on various properties across the Southeast protected through conservation easements.

er that spells out what can and cannot happen on the property."

Properties the FLC protects are located in Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky and Virginia.

Clabough said the new headquarters will be an immense asset for the FLC to continue in its endeavors.

"Sometimes people wonder what actually happens when an easement goes in place," Clabough said. "So we're going to be able to demonstrate that here."

The FLC will also keep the property as a working farm, Clabough said, though the organization's board is still drawing up plans for the future.



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THE FOOTHILLS LAND CONSERVANCY'S new office is a two-story home located on a 314-acre farm in Rockford. Founding Foothills Land Conservancy member Gail Harris donated the home and property to the organization.



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THE NEW FOOTHILLS LAND Conservancy office is on a 314-acre farm in Rockford. It was donated to the organization by founding member Gail Harris.