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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toledo Community Foundation Awards Grant to Black Swamp Conservancy to Fund Stewardship Manager Position

Perrysburg, Ohio (December 31, 2007) – The Board of Trustees of the Toledo Community Foundation has approved a grant to Black Swamp Conservancy in the amount of \$50,000. These funds will be used to employ the conservancy's first-ever stewardship manager.

\$30,000 of the grant was awarded outright, with the remaining \$20,000 to be released when the conservancy receives an additional \$20,000 in matching funds.

The Toledo Community Foundation grant will be used to pay for the salary and benefits of the stewardship manager whom the conservancy will be hiring. The stewardship manager's responsibilities will include:

- Managing the land protection process from initial landowner inquiry to conclusion of the project by acquisition of property or, more often, through a voluntary land conservation agreement with the landowner;
- Coordinating the conservancy's Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, through which the Ohio Department of Agriculture pays qualifying farmland owners to keep their land in agricultural uses in perpetuity;
- Visiting each new conserved property and preparing a baseline documentation report, a lengthy report that describes the present condition of the property in detail, through words, pictures, maps and charts; and
- Conducting annual monitoring visits to each protected property.

Since the conservancy's inception in 1993, the executive director, volunteers or independent contractors have performed these responsibilities.

Black Swamp Conservancy is adding a stewardship manager as part of its strategic land conservation initiative, which will provide the conservancy with the human and financial resources to develop a strategic land conservation plan for northwest Ohio. The strategic conservation plan will identify priority areas for land conservation and, for each location, the partners with whom the conservancy will work to preserve those areas—partners such as park districts, The Nature Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited. The ultimate goal of this initiative is for the conservancy to provide land conservation services at the locations where those services are needed most, including the ability to address immediate threats to wetlands, farmland and water resources.

"This grant will improve our ability to protect our community's irreplaceable farmland and natural areas before they are lost forever," said Kevin Joyce, executive director of Black Swamp Conservancy. "Virtually every resident of northwest Ohio will benefit. Some will receive a tangible benefit, like a job on one of our protected farms. Others will enjoy access to conserved property that's open to the public, like The 577 Foundation in Perrysburg, or the scenic views at more than 50 locations."

"One of the greatest rewards of our conservancy's land conservation work is knowing that it benefits not only current residents of northwest Ohio, but also our children and grandchildren," added Joyce.

The Toledo Community Foundation, Inc. is a public charitable organization created by citizens of our community to enrich the quality of life for individuals and families in our area. In existence since 1973, the Foundation now has over 400 funds with assets of approximately \$147 million. The Foundation provides philanthropic services for individuals, families, businesses and corporations to meet their charitable giving needs. For more information on the Foundation, visit the organization's website at www.toledocf.org.

Black Swamp Conservancy, based in Perrysburg, Ohio, was established in 1993 for the purpose of conserving farmland and natural areas in northwest Ohio. The conservancy has permanently protected nearly 6,900 acres of woods, farmland, shoreline, meadows and wetlands, in eleven northwest Ohio counties and Monroe County, Michigan. The conservancy owns property or holds land conservation agreements in Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hardin, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Sandusky, Seneca, Williams and Wood counties in Ohio.

The conservancy's land conservation agreements limit the use of the property in order to protect important conservation values. The agreements do not result in any change in ownership of the protected property. The landowner continues to hold all the rights of ownership, except those they agreed to give up when they signed the document. The agreements are filed with the county recorder and are binding on the landowner who signs the document and on every future owner of the property. The conservancy visits each property at least once a year to assure that the terms of the agreement are fulfilled.

A landowner who donates the development rights on their property to Black Swamp Conservancy through a land conservation agreement may be able to claim a charitable deduction on their federal income tax return.

Black Swamp Conservancy is accepting donations to fund future land conservation efforts throughout northwest Ohio. For more information on Black Swamp Conservancy or how you can support its community efforts, please call the conservancy at 419-872-5263. Additional information is available online at www.blackswamp.org.