Black Swamp Conservancy is a land trust dedicated to protecting natural areas and family farms, now and for future generations, through land conservation agreements. We do this to preserve the rural heritage, unique natural habitats, and lakes and streams of northwest Ohio.

By protecting our valuable land and water resources, we hope to support healthier communities with strong, sustainable economies including agriculture and ecotourism.

As a nonprofit organization, Black Swamp Conservancy relies on the support of landowners, donors, and partnerships with other conservation organizations. We strive to be a wise investment for our supporters, whether they are giving us their land, time, or money.
We are making a difference in the future of northwest Ohio. With your help, Black Swamp Conservancy is creating new public preserves throughout the region, rebuilding natural habitats that had been lost, and helping beginning farmers access land on which to produce food in ecologically sensitive ways.

This year The Conservancy purchased two new nature preserves; one along Lake Erie and the other all the way upstream in its headwaters. The Kraft-Heinz Company also donated a parcel that expands our Red Horse Bend property, and will be critical to providing public access there.

These properties protect habitat for wildlife and help to safeguard water quality. They are also spaces for the community to relax, recreate and enjoy the natural world.

Our efforts to restore natural habitats continue on. This report highlights the Carter Farm project, but more work has also been accomplished at Forrest Woods … and there are other restoration projects now in the works.

The Conservancy’s Food and Farm Initiative is well underway, with the first farmer on-the-ground and a search for more land to help beginning farmers get their start next growing season.

Thank you for helping to make conservation possible in northwest Ohio. We couldn’t do it without your support.

Rob Krain | Executive Director
Wetlands are a natural feature emblematic of the landscape of northwest Ohio. They are some of the most biologically diverse ecosystems, providing habitat for many plant and animals. They play an important role in surface water purification and soil stabilization. Historically, the widespread wetlands of the Great Black Swamp kept silt and pollutants from reaching Lake Erie.

This past year, the Conservancy partnered with Wood County Park District to restore 15 acres of wetlands at Carter Historic Farm, located just north of Bowling Green. This project was designed to demonstrate that native habitats and working agricultural lands can not only coexist, but thrive side-by-side, as the wetlands treat runoff from the farm fields.

Since the wetland’s completion in April (including the planting of 5,750 trees and shrubs), the spring’s heavy rains have filled the newly-created wetland pools, and wildlife has begun to move in.

* This project was financed through a grant from the Ohio EPA under the provisions of the U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.
YOUR NEXT MEMORY ON LAKE ERIE

Odds are you have fond memories of a waterfront scene, perhaps a gathering on the beach, or a blazing sunset over the lake.

There’s something uniquely alluring about the shoreline, and to find this land undeveloped is an increasingly rare thing. As luck would have it, one such property recently came our way.

Thanks to funding from the Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program, we’ve saved another beautiful spot that also provides critical habitat on Lake Erie. The Dr. Robert L. Nehls Memorial Nature Preserve on Catawba Island will provide public access for bird and wildlife observation, fishing and boating.

We are partnering with the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge on this project under a 25-year co-management agreement, ensuring that this beautiful place will remain to the community.
Down a quiet gravel road in rural Paulding County sits one of Black Swamp Conservancy’s newest preserves. The Little Auglaize Wildlife Reserve takes its name from the river that winds along its western boundary and eventually empties into the Maumee River in Defiance. This 225-acre property contains a variety of natural habitats including emergent wetlands, forest and scrub-shrub areas. Habitats of this size are rare in northwest Ohio and offer safe haven for a variety of wildlife. Early surveys are showing significant bird, butterfly and dragonfly populations, and the preserve is a known location of the federally endangered Indiana Bat. Natural lands located in the upper reaches of the watershed, like this one, are critically important to the health of Lake Erie, too. Had the Conservancy not been able to purchase the site, it would have most likely been converted back to farmland and used for manure disposal from a nearby factory farm.

* This land was conserved, in part, by funding and technical assistance made available as mitigation for habitat impacts to arise through construction of Texas Eastern Transmission’s LP’s Access South, Adair Southwest and Lebanon Extension Projects and the Nexus Pipeline Project in partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and The Conservation Fund.
Running a farm is never easy, but the spring of 2019 set new standards for challenging conditions. Luckily for all of us, farmers are a hardy and innovative bunch, and enthusiasm for the trade hasn’t been dampened nearly as much as the fields. New and aspiring farmers are watching and learning, and are eager to get onto land of their own. One of the biggest hurdles they face is stable and affordable access to that farmland.

Our Food & Farm Initiative aims to bridge that gap by administering stable, low-rate leases and eventual sales of prime farmland to up-and-coming farmers, while protecting our waterways by requiring ecologically-friendly methods. Our first farmer started this spring and is getting up to full operations, adapting to wet ground, overgrown grass, and now hot, dry days. The field is filling with fragrant herbs and lush flowers bound for local establishments. Thanks to your support, we’re helping today’s new farmers learn the ropes and settle into a life that is very hard but supremely rewarding - farming the land and feeding our communities.

Come visit our first Initiative farm: Herbaceous, Ltd. herb farm located on land next to the Conservancy’s office.
GETTING THE COMMUNITY OUTSIDE

As a community organization, we work to build connection between our natural world and those who call this region home. We believe the best way to do this is to let our lands and waters tell their own story. In the past year, more than 3,000 people have joined the Conservancy at more than 25 events to enjoy, work on, and learn about the places we protect.

**nature walks:** From frogs to birds to wildflowers, there’s always something wonderful to see in the wild. Our walks are led by knowledgeable guides, and are a great way to learn about native plants and animals while exploring our protected properties.

**paddles:** Northwest Ohio is home to many scenic waterways. Our free, guided paddles allow community members to experience the water first-hand.

**nature photography:** These outings are geared specifically toward photographers with a focus on plants, animals, and scenery with distinct visual impact, sometimes in locations not generally open to the public.

**nature education:** This year, we collaborated on the creation and distribution of Ohio Wildlife: A Coloring Field Guide, providing 1,000 free copies to area kids. We’ve also installed Story Trails in several locations, including our own homestead.

**volunteers:** We couldn’t accomplish all that we do without the generosity and dedication of our volunteers. In addition to helping fulfill the important role of property monitoring, they’ve put in more than 1,200 hours of office, event, and conservation work. A special thank you to the Toledo ZOOTeens, FedEx, Eastwood Schools, the Boy Scouts of Paulding County, Antwerp Conservation Club and BGSU for offering your time and talents throughout the year.
MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN NORTHWEST OHIO

1230 volunteer hrs

25 events drawing 3,000 PEOPLE

138 PROPERTIES

17 PUBLIC PRESERVES PROTECTED by the Conservancy

1,000 copies of Ohio Wildlife: A Coloring Field Guide given to schools & children

17,700 ACRES PROTECTED

6 PROPERTIES OWNED by the Conservancy

10+ miles of scenic river frontage

2019 ANNUAL REPORT
Acres protected by county

- Seneca 4,604
- Fulton 3,869
- Sandusky 4,488
- Williams - 48
- Wood - 1,216
- Defiance - 451
- Erie - 1
- Hancock - 64
- Hardin - 712
- Henry - 79
- Lucas - 591
- Monroe - 4
- Ottawa - 999
- Paulding - 719

Acres protected by year

- 2002: 0
- 2004: 2
- 2006: 5
- 2008: 8
- 2010: 10
- 2012: 12
- 2014: 15
- 2016: 19
- 2018: 21
2018 Operating Support & Revenue

- 55% Individual Donations
- 6% Miscellaneous
- 9% Investments Net Revenue
- 7% Events Net Revenue
- 2% Corporate Donations
- 21% Charitable Foundations

2018 Expenses

- 3% General and Administrative
- 2% Fundraising
- 95% Program Services
2019-2020 BOARD TRUSTEES

Officers
Eric Britton, President
Brian Kennedy, Vice President
Tim Minning, Treasurer
Virginia Keller, Secretary

Advisory Council
Sara Jane DeHoff
Don Leary
Clint Mauk
Steve Pollick
Deke Welles

Trustees
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Dani Kusner
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Elisabeth Anderson
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Linda Wegman
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