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## **For Immediate Release**

### ***Sir Paul McCartney Helps Conservancy Reach Goal 53-acre goal now a reality***

**ATLANTA (August 18, 2009)** – Sir Paul McCartney, playing decades of hits to more than 36,000 fans, helped the Conservancy close the Breaking New Ground Campaign to add 40% more green space to Piedmont Park. Thanks to the generous support of the community, the remaining dollars needed to finish the \$41.25 million goal were raised, and the promised first phase of the park expansion is on schedule to be complete by the end of next year.

With the successful completion of fundraising efforts, the Conservancy can continue moving forward with the plans for the restoration of Clear Creek, the opening of the hardwood forest, the recapturing of wetlands, redesigning the dog park, opening two new meadows, adding new paths and trails and building an interactive fountain. Already complete but a part of this program, are the new Piedmont Park Aquatic Center and restored historic bathhouse, now called Greystone, which opened in May.

Campaign Chair and Conservancy Board member, Larry Gellerstedt III, President of Cousins Properties Office/Multi-Family Division, has led the campaign and said he is amazed and inspired by the generous support the campaign has received from the local and national community.

In a region where every acre of green space is precious and rare, and with the economic issue facing the country, it is amazing how the community has come together to raise the funds for this expansion,” Gellerstedt said. “It just proves how important parks are to our community,” he added.

The Atlanta City Council approved the planned expansion in 2005 and the fundraising began in the fall of 2007 with The Green Concert featuring the Dave Matthews Band and The Allman Brothers Band. The approved expansion plan addresses the final project outlined in the 1995 Piedmont Park Master Plan, and adheres to the fundamental principles guiding the rehabilitation of the Park.

“We are thrilled the Green Concert helped us reach our goal in significantly surpassing the \$180,000 shortfall needed to trigger more than \$20 million in challenge grants already pledged towards this effort,” said Yvette Bowden, president and CEO of Piedmont Park Conservancy. “With the Concert, we also incorporated many environmentally friendly guidelines, but the main green aspect is adding new park land for our community,” added Ms. Bowden.

More than 75 festivals and large gatherings are held annually in Piedmont Park but only those run by the Conservancy actually fund the Park’s ongoing care. All proceeds from The Green Concert will be invested in the Park’s 53-acre expansion and daily maintenance.

One goal of the Green Concert has been to establish a template to help other organizers minimize their event’s impact on the environment. The Conservancy promoted the concert as a car-less event, used bio-diesel generators, solar powered ATMs, and arranged recycling and composting of food waste.

Prior to the start of the Concert, Conservancy volunteers conducted intercept surveys with more than 17,000 attendees, which showed that approximately 82% of respondents walked, biked or took Marta – one of the event’s many successes.

Marta reported that the rail stations that served the concert - Midtown and Arts Center – experienced an increase of almost 15,000 additional entries or triple the activity that occurs at these stations on a standard Saturday with no events at the Park.

Additionally, the Conservancy reported that more than 4.3 tons of plastic and aluminum were recycled after the event.

“As always, we appreciate our partner, The City of Atlanta, and the Conservancy’s many supporters. Our thanks is beyond measure,” said Bowden.

#### **About Piedmont Park Conservancy**

*Piedmont Park Conservancy is a member and donor funded nonprofit working in partnership with the City of Atlanta to maintain and enhance historic Piedmont Park. Founded in 1989, the Conservancy has raised and invested more than \$23 million in private funds for Park improvements, and today manages over 90% of the overall maintenance and security. By 2010, the Conservancy will have invested an additional \$41.25 million in Phase I expansion projects.*

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