



NEWS RELEASE-

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LILLY ENDOWMENT AWARDS \$20 MILLION DOLLAR GRANT TO RIVER HERITAGE CONSERVANCY FOR ORIGIN PARK

Major investment will advance Buttonbush Woods, environmental restoration and expanded public access.

CLARKSVILLE, Ind. - River Heritage Conservancy, the organization responsible for developing Origin Park, announced today that Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded a \$20 million grant toward the next phase of development at Origin Park, specifically Buttonbush Woods and related environmental restoration efforts.

"This is very significant in helping move us into our next phase in Buttonbush Woods, environmental cleanup efforts and much more," said Dennis Schnurbusch II, CEO of River Heritage Conservancy. "As recognition of this project spreads across Indiana and beyond, it is gratifying to know that an organization such as Lilly Endowment recognizes the importance of preserving history, restoring the environment and protecting this important habitat enough to invest in the project."

The grant will advance the closure and stabilization of former landfill areas, restoration of Mill Creek, and continued planning and design for Buttonbush Woods, including expanded public access to its 103 acres of forests, wetlands and other natural areas. The investment will also support infrastructure for trails, outdoor programming, environmental education and interpretation. Lilly Endowment has made \$15 million available for the project outright. The grant also provides a \$5 million matching opportunity through 2027 to support River Heritage Conservancy's broader efforts to continue development of Origin Park. The \$1-to-\$1 match is intended to help secure commitments from other funders to support the project.

The land upon which Origin Park is being developed holds both historical and ecological significance. Home to generations of multiple native American nations, the land became a gateway for westward expansion of the United States in the late 18th century and later a pivotal place for river transportation, industrial development and the Underground Railroad. Yet during the 20th century, repeated flooding in the area meant that much of the land was used for landfills, salvage yards and industrial facilities or abandoned.

"We appreciate River Heritage Conservancy's bold vision to restore historically and ecologically important land in southern Indiana and develop Origin Park into a community asset that honors its past and provides enjoyment for residents and visitors," said Ronni Kloth, Lilly Endowment's vice president for community development."

"This is a major lift and a much appreciated grant from Lilly Endowment," said Kent Lanum, Chairman of the River Heritage Conservancy Board of Directors. "This funding will provide much needed resources to address critical environmental work, advance projects within Buttonbush Woods and create new opportunities for the public to experience this important part of Origin Park. I can't thank Lilly Endowment enough for its generous support and confidence in this project."

Building on Momentum

The Lilly Endowment investment comes at an important point in Origin Park's development. The Vista at Origin Park opened in 2026, providing a new regional gathering place along the Ohio River, while the park's trails and natural areas continue to attract visitors.

Origin Park was also recognized as the No. 4 Best City Park in USA Today's 2026 Readers' Choice Awards, reflecting growing public awareness of the project.

The grant also provides a \$5 million challenge opportunity through 2027 to support River Heritage Conservancy's broader philanthropic efforts to continue development of Origin Park. The challenge will help leverage additional private charitable investment.

"This grant is an important step forward, but it is not the completion of our vision for Buttonbush Woods or Origin Park," Schnurbusch said. "There is still much more work to do. This support allows us to address critical environmental needs, begin opening more of Buttonbush Woods to the public and build the momentum necessary for the next stages of this extraordinary project."

About River Heritage Conservancy and Origin Park

Since its founding in 2016, River Heritage Conservancy has secured control of more than 340 acres of the planned 430 acre Origin Park footprint, raised more than \$58 million in public and private investment, completed extensive environmental remediation and opened The Vista at Origin Park. Located near the Falls of the Ohio in Clarksville, Indiana, Origin Park is transforming formerly industrial and environmentally challenged land into a public landscape focused on conservation, recreation, education, history and community. The landscape has played an important role in Indiana's history for thousands of years, with connections to Indigenous peoples, the Buffalo Trace, the founding of Clarksville, the Lewis and Clark Expedition and generations of river commerce and industry. Much of the riverfront was later occupied by landfills, salvage yards and other environmentally degraded uses.

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private foundation created in 1937 by J. K. Lilly and his sons, Eli and J.K. Jr., through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with its founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. The Endowment funds programs throughout the United States, especially in the field of religion, and maintains a special commitment to its founders' hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana

For more information go to www.originpark.org.