



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEER MANAGEMENT AT ORIGIN PARK PLACED ON HOLD

Having successfully raised and spent millions of dollars over the last 10 years, River Heritage Conservancy has rescued the land from its junkyards, landfills and even an EPA Superfund site. While opening this landscape brings results such as wildlife and fauna coming back stronger than ever, it also brings with it additional new challenges for its proper management and use long-term. River Heritage Conservancy remains firmly committed to protecting the ecological health and long-term sustainability of Origin Park.

Recent public discussion has included statements that do not accurately reflect the professional guidance received or the intent behind the proposed deer population management effort. We believe it is important to clarify the record.

In consultation with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the United States Department of Agriculture, River Heritage Conservancy was advised that the deer population within the park is exceeding what the habitat can sustainably support. Indicators observed across the landscape demonstrate pressure on forest regeneration and long-term ecosystem health. These conclusions were reached through professional wildlife assessment and are consistent with challenges faced by many urban and suburban natural areas.

In continued consultation with wildlife professionals from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, we have been advised that we are nearing the end of the appropriate seasonal window during which a responsible and effective reduction could occur. Timing is essential to ensure humane practices and meaningful ecological outcomes.

River Heritage Conservancy is a private nonprofit organization entrusted with managing Origin Park. We reserve the right to make responsible and lawful management decisions based on science and expert guidance.

At this time, we have chosen to pause any immediate action. This decision does not reflect a change in the underlying ecological concerns. Rather, it reflects our commitment to gather additional information, continue monitoring conditions, and improve public understanding of responsible wildlife and habitat stewardship. When complex ecological matters are discussed without complete context, misunderstandings can develop. We will take meaningful steps to

strengthen communication so that our community has a clearer understanding of both the challenges and the long-term goals for the park. This will include a meeting with members of Town of Clarksville Council, at a later date, to provide further information about the process and the research behind it.

“Healthy forests do not happen by accident,” said Dennis Schnurbusch, CEO of River Heritage Conservancy. “They require active stewardship and sometimes difficult decisions. We believe the community deserves a clear understanding of why wildlife management can be necessary, and we are committed to providing that clarity while continuing to evaluate conditions carefully and responsibly.”

Our focus remains on restoring native habitat, supporting healthy wildlife populations, and building a world class park that serves the broader region. We will continue to work with state and federal wildlife professionals and maintain constructive dialogue with community partners as we move forward.

River Heritage Conservancy remains committed to transparency, sound stewardship, and steady leadership as Origin Park continues to evolve for future generations.