McKinney Climate Fellows Program 2023 Climate Action Planning Fellow – River Heritage Conservancy, Origin Park project

CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT
Origin Park is a new 430-acre urban river landscape that will transform our community’s interaction with the Ohio River and serve as the final link in a two-state river-crossing loop of public parks in our region. The nonprofit River Heritage Conservancy was created in 2016 to envision, acquire land for, restore, build, and operate the park – becoming self-sustaining from revenue generated by the park’s facilities. With a master plan created with OLIN – renowned landscape architects whose works include the Getty Museum and the Washington Monument – we are poised to begin Phase 1 of construction in 2023, with completion by 2026. Over the next decade, abused and degraded land near the Falls of the Ohio will evolve into the nation’s first climate-resilient park, offering year-round recreation for all. Origin Park’s master plan embraces the river’s changing dynamics and its raw awe, serving as a national model for how to design for endurance and climate resilience: it is designed to be experienced when flooded.

POSITION SUMMARY
Origin Park is meant to be the nation’s first truly climate resilient park, an ambitious and pioneering goal. River Heritage Conservancy seeks a researcher who can employ rigorous, thoughtful research to critically assess just what that means and how the park is meeting its stated mission. The organization’s goal for hosting a McKinney fellow is to generate meaningful research to define, measure, assess, and offer actionable recommendations for the climate resiliency of the park. Expected tasks include:

- Developing a thorough and detailed understanding of the park’s master plan as well as other fundamental documents like its environmental planning charter
- Participating in team meetings as requested
- Working with Origin Park’s team to develop definitions and objectives for what a “climate resilient” park should be
- Creating a clear methodology and a short-, medium- and long-term plan for measuring and assessing the park’s climate resilience metrics
- Investigating and researching similar climate-resilient park projects and their climate impacts, and sharing their best practices
- Conducting research on the park’s impact on its surrounding areas, including community research on how the park impacts attitudes towards climate change in the area
- Crafting clear, scientifically-sound written and visual reports with recommendations for how the park’s climate resilience can be improved

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS
The best candidate will be a critical and innovative thinker who is detail oriented and has experience and/or coursework in sustainability studies, strong verbal and written communication, and ability to independently prioritize and manage multiple ongoing tasks. Desired majors include Environmental and Sustainability Studies, Environmental Science, or related fields. Skills and experience expected include:

- Thorough understanding of the park’s design concept and organizational mission
- Excellent working understanding of the natural and built environments of Southern Indiana and also of local climate data and projections
• Understanding of and ability to apply climate resilience metrics
• Knowledge and experience with data tracking of measurable outcomes on projects, such as tracking greenhouse gas emissions reduction over time, or other similar quantifiable processes related to climate resilience
• Ability to read and analyze plan documentation generated by landscape architects, architects, or engineers, as well as a basic understanding of those professions
• Ability to identify and articulate measurable, actionable changes to the park’s design, construction materials, messaging, programming or any other aspects that would enhance its qualities as a climate-resilient place
• Strong scientific writing skills and also the ability to ‘translate’ complex scientific data into written or visual content accessible for a general audience

COMPENSATION
Compensation will be in the form of a scholarship through the Environmental Resilience Institute.

HOURS
The Fellow will work full time for 10 weeks starting in May of 2023.

FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION
The Fellow will be supervised by a member of the River Heritage Conservancy team and given regular feedback on progress and performance. Success in the fellowship will be determined by the completion of specified projects in a professional and timely manner.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION
The McKinney Climate Fellows Program supports the continual advancement and development of diverse, inclusive and equitable spaces. Indiana climate change solutions should be equitable in implementation, and projects with equity considerations are encouraged to reduce climate change impacts on marginalized communities in the state.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
To apply for this position, complete an application on the Environmental Resilience Institute’s website. If you have questions about the program or any of the positions available, email the Environmental Resilience Institute at eri@iu.edu. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis (first come, first serve) until Friday, January 13, 2023.