FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Indiana Conservation Groups Deplore Racist July 4th Incident at Lake Monroe

Groups Call for Transparent, Timely Briefings and a DNR Internal Review

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, July 7 – The Friends of Lake Monroe, Hoosier Chapter of the Sierra Club, and the Hoosier Environmental Council, deplore the evidence of a violent racist incident at Lake Monroe near Bloomington, Indiana, this past weekend. Vauhxx Rush Booker, a prominent civil rights leader in Bloomington and a member of the Monroe County Human Rights Commission, was attacked while walking to a beach on the lake. He was singled out from a group of hikers because he is Black. Videos taken at the scene document this attack.

“Our organizations believe that the outdoors is for all to enjoy and that access to nature is a human right. Time and again, it is demonstrated that people of color do not enjoy the same safe experience in nature, which should be a place of respite, relaxation, and joy for all. This is unacceptable. We call on the Monroe County Prosecutor’s Office and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to keep the public fully informed of the steps they are taking to investigate this incident and bring the culprits to justice.

More generally, we call on the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to join us in saying that racism on Indiana’s public lands will not be tolerated by the DNR, and we ask DNR to reassure the public that everyone is welcome at our state parks, forests, recreational areas, trails, and other outdoor lands. As many institutions across the country are doing, we also urge the DNR to take a fresh look at its policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that people of color feel welcome, protected, and safe while enjoying the outdoors.”

Friends of Lake Monroe is a citizens group dedicated to finding solutions to improve the water quality of Lake Monroe and enhancing its use as a drinking water, recreational, and ecological resource for all who use it. We envision a regional community that appreciates, sustains and enjoys the Lake, including its larger surrounding ecosystem to ensure drinkable, swimmable, and fishable waters.

The Hoosier Environmental Council is Indiana’s largest environmental policy organization, focused on protecting land & water, advancing environmental health & justice, and fostering a sustainable economy.

The Sierra Club is the largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization in the United States with more than three million members and supporters. It was founded in 1892 by the conservationist John Muir. The Sierra Club has hundreds of thousands of members in chapters located throughout the United States. The Hoosier Chapter has more than 10,000 members.

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