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**Four Community Groups Join River Fields in its Legal Action to
Keep River Road Safe**

One Lane Bridge Compels Drivers to Slow Down

Louisville, (August 29, 2008)—Four community groups, the River Creek Homeowners Association, the Wolf Pen Preservation Association, OPEN Louisville and the Harrods Creek Boat Owners Association, have joined River Fields in its federal lawsuit as co-plaintiffs to preserve the safety of River Road by maintaining the Harrods Creek Bridge a one-lane structure.

River Fields, a bi-state citizens group with over 2,100 members, filed suit in May against the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) to challenge the proposed widening of the River Road's historic, one-lane bridge.

"Safety is our major concern. A one-lane bridge forces people to slow down," said Robert E. Kulp, Jr., Board President of River Fields. "Maintaining the safety and beauty of River Road is essential for the traveling public. In the last few years, there have been at least two fatal accidents on the curves leading to the bridge, not at the bridge. Widening the bridge encourages drivers to speed and will cause more accidents."

The Harrods Creek Boat Owners Association is a non-profit group whose primary purpose is to preserve and protect the Ohio River, Harrods Creek and surrounding areas. OPEN Louisville is a citizens group whose primary purposes include the preservation of historical, physical and cultural heritage that is essential to the identity of Louisville. The River Creek Homeowners Association is a non-profit organization serving as an effective forum and voice for persons who own lots in the River Creek Estates subdivision. The Wolf Pen Preservation Association is a Kentucky non-profit organization created to preserve, maintain, protect and enhance the character of the rural residential areas of Jefferson County, including its flora, fauna, historic structures, and its scenic corridors and byways.

“Our group is concerned with a number of safety issues that will result from this widening,” said Jim Butt, President of the Harrods Creek Boat Owners Association. “There are 284 boat slips on Harrods Creek that will be impacted by the project. Our members frequently use and appreciate the one-lane historic bridge. Construction of the bridge will interfere with our member’s travel, impede their access to boat slips, and diminish their boating enjoyment.”

A Kentucky Transportation Cabinet study, from 2002-2006, shows that the Harrods Creek Bridge is safer than comparable bridges in Kentucky. Its design has a speed dampening effect on the curves that lead to the bridge. River Fields agrees the bridge is in need of repair but proposes a “preservation option,” which should be less expensive and safer than the widening proposal. It calls for resurfacing the bridge, fixing the guardrails, and improving signage.

“If the one-lane Harrods Creek bridge is restored and made safe, it will continue to calm traffic by the polite exchange of east/west traffic,” said Alice Gunnison, a member of the Wolf Pen Branch Historic Preservation Association. “The newest and fastest is not always the best choice.”

“OPEN Louisville understands that pieces of the past can still fit in our present and future,” said Steve Porter, the group’s president. “In this case, the historic narrow bridge fits better than a modern one.”

The lawsuit, under Section 4(f) of the Federal Transportation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), was filed by River Fields specifically to protect the historic character of the Harrods Creek Bridge, which is endangered by a \$2.5 million plan to expand the bridge into two lanes. River Road, from Zorn Avenue to U.S. 42. is Louisville Metro’s only state-designated Scenic Byway.

Don Cox, local attorney for River Fields, said the suit is the last resort after eight years of attempting to hold government agencies responsible for obeying the law and thoroughly analyzing options. The law they have failed to follow was enacted in the 1960s to reduce the destruction of historic properties by the FHWA for highways and roads, said Andrea Ferster, River Fields Washington, D.C. attorney. Ferster is nationally known for her expertise in this area.

River Fields, along with nine other groups and individuals, participated in the federal study process for the proposed bridge widening from 2001-2005. Other participants included Scenic Kentucky, Preservation Kentucky, and the River Creek Homeowners Association. The Washington, D.C.-based National Trust for Historic Preservation, another participant, objected to the government’s claim that all one-lane bridges must be replaced and are unsafe. The Kentucky State Historic Preservation Officer at the time, David L. Morgan, concurred with the National Trust’s position.

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River Fields is the largest and oldest river conservancy along the 981- mile Ohio River. For nearly 50 years, River Fields has utilized its resources to effectively protect, preserve and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the land and water around the Ohio River in our region. Through its programs of land conservation, advocacy, and education, River Fields strives to create harmony between nature, history and the people who live here. River Fields owns land or holds conservation easements on 34 properties, totaling more than 2,200 acres, most of which is preserved forever. River Fields is one of the nation's few land trusts tackling regional advocacy work and land conservation.

www.riverfields.org