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Piedmont Land Conservancy and Guilford College partner in an effort to protect historic Guilford Woods in Greensboro

In a major move to safeguard one of Greensboro's last remaining undeveloped woodlands, the Board of Directors of Piedmont Land Conservancy (PLC) and Board of Trustees of Guilford College have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to pursue a landmark conservation partnership. Under the agreement, PLC will purchase the development rights on 120 acres of land in what is known as Guilford Woods, permanently protecting it through a conservation easement and creating an enduring legacy for the community. The easement will ensure the land can never be developed, while allowing Guilford College to retain ownership.

Piedmont Land Conservancy and Guilford College campus leaders announced the plan to conserve Guilford Woods, a landscape of remarkable environmental and historical significance. This mature hardwood forest supports abundant plant and animal life and provides a natural buffer against the surrounding roads, subdivisions, and shopping centers. The land is also a site that has borne witness to centuries of history, from the presence of Native American communities, Revolutionary War skirmishes, and freedom seekers escaping along the Underground Railroad.

"This is a win-win-win for PLC, Guilford College, and the greater community," said Mary Magrinat, incoming PLC board president and longtime community advocate. "The land will be permanently protected, Guilford College will receive vital financial support for its programs, and the public will gain official access to pristine green space in a rapidly growing part of Greensboro."

Community leaders have long sought ways to leverage the value of Guilford Woods, which is owned by Guilford College, while also protecting the land from development. They seem to have found the perfect solution. "Guilford College is proud to be part of this partnership to preserve Guilford Woods," said Acting President Jean Bordewich. "We are committed to ensuring this beloved landscape remains protected and accessible for generations to come."

Guilford Woods is one of the few large privately owned hardwood forests in Greensboro and holds not only significant ecological value but also educational, historical, and recreational importance to our community. In 2017 the federal government recognized Guilford Woods as one of the earliest documented sites of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. For generations, Guilford College students have used this leafy haven as an outdoor classroom and place of reflection. The 120-

acre easement at Guilford Woods will connect to the neighboring 100-acre Julian and Ethel Clay Price Park, also protected by Piedmont Land Conservancy, creating a new link to become part of Greensboro's 100-mile trail network.

To fund the conservation effort, Piedmont Land Conservancy's Board of Directors is launching a capital campaign to raise \$8.5 million in private dollars that will fund the conservation easement to ensure the long-term protection of Guilford Woods.

Piedmont Land Conservancy is a grassroots land trust dedicated to permanently protecting important lands to conserve our rivers and streams, natural and scenic areas, wildlife habitat and farmland that make the Piedmont a healthy and vibrant place to live, work, and visit for present and future generations. PLC has protected over 32,000 acres across its nine-county region of Alamance, Caswell, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin counties. To learn more about the Conservancy, visit www.piedmontland.org.

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