

SHIRLEY HEINZE LAND TRUST

5th Annual Evening Under the Stars

Friends and Supporters of Shirley Heinze Land Trust will gather from all corners of Northwest Indiana at 6 pm on June 21 for the organization's 5th annual summer gala, "*Summer Solstice ~ The Magic of Nature.*" Guests at this special Evening under the Stars will dine formally amidst the beauty of the International Friendship Gardens in Michigan City.

Since 1981, Shirley Heinze Land Trust has protected, preserved and restored ecologically significant and sensitive natural lands in Lake, LaPorte and Porter counties. Its annual summer gala offers friends and supporters a special and festive celebration of the organization's accomplishments over the past year. It also offers the opportunity to learn more about the organization and its work, and it is an essential source of financial support for land acquisition and natural area restoration programs.

The evening will begin with a champagne and hors d'oeuvres reception, followed by a formal gourmet dinner featuring locally raised roasted duck breast, paired with locally grown asparagus and Great Lakes wild rice. Complimentary wine selections will feature a 2002 Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon and "Nature's Beer" by The Upland Brewing Company based in Bloomington and furnished compliments of North Coast Distributing.

Guests will be entertained throughout the evening by the spellbinding sounds of local jazz singer, Bunny Fisher, and her trio of musicians. As for attire, guests are encouraged to choose colors which are light, ethereal and earthy or to dress to reflect their spiritual environment. Some guests may choose just to slide a festive garden flower into their hair.

At the always popular silent auction, guests will choose among all manner of enticing items including nature-related objets d'art, paintings, and unique tour and eco-adventure outings and expeditions. A Trail Creek kayaking expedition with a Bridges Inn and Grille overnight stay, a Power Boat tour on Lake Michigan, Bird Hike, an Orchid Tour and a Lake Michigan Sunset Sailboat Cruise are a few of our featured eco-adventures this year. Lee J. Wainscott, an auctioneer from LaPorte, will donate his services for the live portion of the auction, where bidders won't want to miss "one of a kind" getaway and adventure packages.

Summer benefit committee members worked diligently this year to secure unique items and adventures for guests to bid on throughout the evening. Jerry Storey of Ludington Nissan remarked, "since working on the fundraiser, I've really come to understand the need to leverage all of our resources to protect and restore our beautiful natural areas in Northwest Indiana."

Honorary Co-Chairpersons are Chuck Oberlie, Mayor of Michigan City; Geof Benson, President of Beverly Shores Town Council; Brian Snedecor, Mayor of Hobart; Debra Shore, Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago; and Lee Botts, prominent environmental activist.

Corporate sponsors include ArcelorMittal, First State Bank of Porter, JF New & Associates, NiSource Environmental Health and Safety General Insurance Services of Michigan City, Lakeside Wealth Management, Michigan City Wal-Mart, MonoSol LLC, Aide Rentals and Sales II, Horizon Bank, and J&D Realty Holdings LLC and Taltree Arboretum.

Under the direction of local artist, Michelle Weiser, Michigan City Boys and Girls Club students decorated “one of a kind” birdhouses for table centerpieces.

Rachel Saxon, President of Shirley Heinze Land Trust says, “this year’s event, which marks the summer solstice, will be truly an enchanting evening for our friends and supporters.”

Tickets at \$85 each (\$50 tax deductible) are still available for the June 21 benefit. Individual and corporate sponsors can reserve a table for \$1,000. Call Shirley Heinze Land Trust at 219-879-4725 for reservations and additional information. A record 250 supporters were in attendance last year, and tables are filling up quickly.

The setting for the evening is the 106-acre International Friendship Gardens, located in Michigan City and traversed by Trail Creek. Founded in 1936, it was inspired by a garden at the Chicago World’s Fair and its theme of “Peace and Friendship to All Nations.” It features 14 ethnic gardens and hosts a variety of cultural and special events.

To learn more about Shirley Heinze Land Trust and its commitment to preserving ecologically significant natural areas in Northwest Indiana, visit www.heinzetrust.org or contact the organization at (219) 879-4725 or land@heinzetrust.org

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