

# SHIRLEY HEINZE LAND TRUST

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Evening Under the Stars

A record crowd of more than 260 friends and supporters of Shirley Heinze Land Trust gathered at International Friendship Gardens recently to celebrate the summer solstice and all of the organization's accomplishments over the past year. The occasion was the organization's fifth annual summer banquet and fundraiser. "Summer Solstice ~ The Magic of Nature" was this year's theme. Rachel Saxon, Board President of the Michigan City-based land trust, which protects and restores natural areas in Northwest Indiana, proclaimed the evening a resounding success.

"We exceeded all of our goals," she said. "We strengthened our relationships with long-time friends, introduced the Heinze Trust and its work to newcomers and raised over \$45,000 for our land protection and restoration work. And of course we wanted our guests to enjoy a memorable summer solstice evening, which they definitely did."

In his remarks at the banquet, Executive Director Kris Krouse stressed the importance of individual and corporate contributions to the Heinze Trust's financial health. He also thanked everyone for their commitment to the organization.

Guests were served champagne and Nature's Beer supplied by The Upland Brewing Company as they arrived and mingled, while jazz music played in the background. The reception was followed by a formal gourmet dinner featuring locally raised roasted duck breast, paired with locally grown asparagus and Great Lakes wild rice. Complimentary wine featured a 2002 Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon. Guests were delightfully entertained throughout the evening by the spellbinding sounds of local jazz singer, Bunny Fisher, and her trio of musicians.

At the always popular silent auction, guests perused a variety 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, a Bird Hike, an Orchid Tour, and a Lake Michigan Sunset Sailboat Cruise were a few of the featured eco-adventures this year. Lee J. Wainscott, an auctioneer from LaPorte, donated his services for the live portion of the auction, where guests could bid on "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. Committee member 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 were 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 included 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, J&D Realty Holdings LLC, and Taltree Arboretum. Under the direction of local artist, Michelle Weiser, Michigan City Boys and Girls Club members decorated “one of a kind” birdhouses for table centerpieces.

The annual benefit is a celebration of the accomplishments of Shirley Heinze Land Trust and serves as a key source of support for land acquisition and restoration programs. Since 1981, Shirley Heinze Land Trust has protected, preserved and restored ecologically significant and sensitive natural lands in Lake, LaPorte and Porter counties. To learn more about its properties and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.heinzetrust.org](http://www.heinzetrust.org), call (219) 879-4725, or e-mail [land@heinzetrust.org](mailto:land@heinzetrust.org)

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