

Shirley Heinze Land Trust receives grant award from Efroymsen Family Fund, A Central Indiana Community Foundation Fund

The Shirley Heinze Land Trust recently received a grant award of \$5,000 from the Efroymsen Family Fund, a Central Indiana Community Foundation Fund (CICF). The funds will be used to purchase materials for a gravel parking lot at Bur Oak Woods Nature Preserve in Hobart Indiana. Bur Oak Woods is an 85 acre property featuring wet woodlands and centuries-old bur oak trees on the east side of Liverpool Road, south of Old Ridge Road, north of 41st Avenue.

Working closely with the City of Hobart, the Heinze Trust aims to increase both the public awareness and use of Bur Oak Woods Nature Preserve by residents of Hobart and residents of Lake County, in general. The education and outreach volunteer committee has determined that a gravel parking lot, prominent signage and trail improvements such as footbridges are vital to achieving these goals.

Paul Quinlan, stewardship program manager remarked, “Heinze Land Trust staff and volunteers will provide the labor to install the parking lot and footbridges and we are working with a local Boy Scouts troop to design and install interpretive signs for a self-guided tour of the nature preserve.”

Due to their proximity, residents of Hobart and the surrounding communities of Lake Station, New Chicago, and Gary are likely to benefit the most from the proposed trailhead improvements to Bur Oak Woods Nature Preserve.

Trailhead improvements at Bur Oak Woods nature preserve is part of a broader education and outreach project which aims to increase community awareness and public use of three nature preserves owned by the Heinze Trust including Ivanhoe South in Gary and Ambler Flatwoods in Michigan City. Paul Quinlan, stewardship program Manager explains, “due to their proximity to local population centers, these three nature preserves are ideal tools for teaching both adults and children about the importance of natural habitat preservation.” In the meantime, the Heinze Trust continues to raise awareness and promote public use of the nature preserve in Hobart and surrounding communities. In fact, a small community hike was held at the nature preserve last month and refreshments were served afterwards.

“We are very grateful to the Efroymsen Family Fund, A CICF Fund, for their generous support of our efforts to expand the public use of this valuable nature preserve for educational purposes.

Furthermore, their commitment will help us to realize our mission of educating the public about our precious natural areas in Northwest Indiana,” says Heinze Trust Executive Director Kris Krouse.”

The Efroymsen Family Fund is a donor-advised fund of Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF). The Fund continues a long legacy of charitable commitment by the Efroymsen family in central Indiana. Three generations, Gustave, Robert, and Dan, served without interruption on The Indianapolis Foundation Board of Trustees from 1919 to 1999. Currently, Lori Efroymsen-Aguilera serves as a CICF board member. This Fund perpetuates the family’s philanthropic tradition in central Indiana and beyond which includes the preservation of biological diversity through habitat preservation and increased public access to natural areas, primarily through greenways, trails, and nature preserves.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust, a Michigan City-based non-profit organization, owns over 1,000 acres of natural land in Lake, Porter and La Porte Counties. Properties are managed to promote biodiversity, preserve rare species, and provide examples of the rich natural heritage of the region. Heinze Trust preserves are open to the public for hiking, nature study, and other passive outdoors activities. To learn more about Shirley Heinze Land Trust’s work in Northwest Indiana, please go to www.heinzetrust.org or contact the office at 219-879-4725.