

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **SHIRLEY HEINZE LAND TRUST 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Gala**

You don't have to speak French to understand "*la conservation*." So friends and supporters of Shirley Heinze Land Trust will gather from all corners of Northwest Indiana at 6 pm on Saturday, June 27 for the organization's 6<sup>th</sup> annual summer gala, "A Taste of Provence." Guests at this special evening under the stars will dine formally amidst the beauty of the International Friendship Gardens, Michigan City, on the banks of Trail Creek once traveled by French voyageurs in the early 1700's.

Since 1981, Shirley Heinze Land Trust has protected, preserved and restored ecologically significant and sensitive natural lands in Lake, La Porte and Porter counties. Its annual summer gala offers friends and supporters an elegant 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 gourmet French dinner, including a Provençal-style Coq au Vin entree, seasonal vegetables, French tarts and petit fours served by Sahara restaurant of Michigan City. Light French chamber music will be provided by La Porte Symphony and South Shore Chamber Orchestra musicians.

An outdoor silent auction market will feature a selection of fine artwork by local artists, visual and performing arts tickets and memberships, fine wine and dining packages, garden and nursery items, and an assortment of French gifts and culinary items. A live auction will feature one-of-a-kind getaway packages and outdoor adventure packages, including a weekend stay at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth Luxury Hotel in Montreal. A Kayak Outing will be offered by Northwest Indiana Paddling Association's (NWIPA) Founder and President, Dan Plath. Shirley Heinze Land Trust is a sponsor of NWIPA's Inaugural event, The Burnham to Marquette Water Trail Expedition which will be held on June 13 and 14<sup>th</sup>.

Honorary Co-Chairpersons are Rex Richards, Greater Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce President; John Swanson, Executive Director of Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC); and Indiana State Representative Scott Pelath.

Corporate sponsors include American Licorice Company, ArcelorMittal, General Insurance Services, Horizon Bank, J.F. New and Associates, Inc., Lakeside Wealth Management, MonoSol LLC, NiSource, Soil Solutions, and Taltree Arboretum and Gardens of Valparaiso.

Individual tickets are \$95, with \$65 of that amount tax deductible. 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 260 supporters were in attendance last year, and tables are filling up quickly.

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

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Photo provided

Marty Balogh, Dan Plath and his son Eric Plath, Anne Walsh and Kathy Dennis, members of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust summer benefit planning committee, say “*au revoir*” to Rick Narjes, French voyageur reenactment enthusiast, and wife Dawn Narjes, Shirley Heinze Land Trust 2008 Volunteer of the Year. French Europeans settled many towns in the Midwest, including areas in La Porte. Rick Narjes’ 20-ft. canoe is made of birch bark, and its interior woodwork was restored by Narjes himself. The Shirley Heinze Land Trust Summer Gala will echo this French theme at “A Taste of Provence” on Saturday, June 27 at International Friendship Gardens, Michigan City.