

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TRAILHEAD DEDICATED AT GARY'S IVANHOE SOUTH NATURE PRESERVE

Shirley Heinze Land Trust hosted a dedication ceremony on May 15, 2010 at the new trailhead and parking lot at Ivanhoe South Nature Preserve on Gary's West Side.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust began acquiring the property comprising Ivanhoe South Nature Preserve over 20 years ago. The property, which now totals more than 30 acres, features globally rare "dune and swale" topography with black oak savanna and interdunal wetland habitats. The site has undergone significant restoration in recent years, and it is being managed to improve potential habitat for the Karner Blue Butterfly, a federally endangered species which exists at several other nearby natural areas.

The improvements at Ivanhoe South include a parking lot, interpretive signage, and trail enhancement. They are intended to increase public access and encourage the preserve's use as an outdoor classroom. Funding for the project was provided by a 2009 grant from the Legacy Foundation of Lake County; individual donations from Heinze Trust supporters matched the grant funds.

Heinze Trust Executive Director Kris Krouse greeted the neighbors and supporters who gathered at the preserve. "The success we have achieved in restoring this special natural area and making it accessible to the public is the result of a true team effort. We are grateful to the many volunteers who have worked with us here and especially to the Legacy Foundation for providing the seed money for the improvements we dedicate today. Our goal all along," he continued, "has been to make this nature preserve

available to the community as an outdoor classroom. I hope our neighbors – especially the children – will embrace it as a place to enjoy and learn about nature.”

Gary City Councilwoman Marilyn Krusas offered her support for the concept of making nature accessible in an urban setting, and Cara Spicer, Grants and Communications Director for the Legacy Foundation, praised the cooperative spirit that made the project possible.

Paul Quinlan, who heads the Heinze Trust’s stewardship program, spoke briefly about the characteristics of a dune-and-swale landscape and described the work that has been undertaken to restore habitats at the preserve. He then led neighborhood children and other supporters on a hike to introduce them firsthand to the local flora and fauna.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust has been protecting natural land in the southern Lake Michigan watershed since 1981. It manages nearly 1,200 acres in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. Included in the Heinze Trust’s holdings are examples of the entire spectrum of natural communities in this area: tallgrass prairie, high dune, oak savanna, boreal flatwoods, dune-and-swale, woodlands, marshes, swamps, ponds, fens, and riparian habitat. Five Heinze Trust properties are dedicated Indiana State Nature Preserves. For more information on Shirley Heinze Land Trust, consult its website www.heinzetrust.org.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS

Photo A: Shirley Heinze Land Trust Executive Director Kris Krouse welcomes friends and neighbors to the dedication ceremony.

Photo B: Paul Quinlan, Shirley Heinze Land Trust stewardship chief, leads a nature hike at Ivanhoe South Nature Preserve.