

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shirley Heinze Land Trust, Inc.

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7th Annual Summer Benefit, "Moonlight in Duneland" a glowing success for Shirley Heinze Land Trust

At its 7th annual summer benefit, "Moonlight in Duneland," Shirley Heinze Land Trust raised nearly \$80,000 dollars from nearly 90 donors toward the purchase of a major addition to the Ambler Flatwoods Nature Preserve Boreal Flatwoods Complex east of Michigan City during a Funding The Cause paddle raiser. "We are delighted and gratified by the generosity of our supporters and the community," said Board President, Dale Engquist. "Ambler is a very special place and we are excited by the opportunity to protect another piece of this unusual landscape for the people of Northwest Indiana. The Heinze Trust and The Nature Conservancy are partners in the effort to purchase a 40-acre parcel east of Michigan City Paul Labus, Northwest Indiana Regional Director of The Nature Conservancy, addressed the audience regarding the joint purchase and partnership between The Nature Conservancy and the Heinze Trust. Executive director Kris Krouse expects the sale to be completed this summer.

More than 315 guests attended the fundraising dinner at the Waterbird Lakeside Banquet Center in Chesterton on Saturday, June 26. The organization and its guests were delighted by the participation of Geoffrey Baer from WTTW 11, who served as master of ceremonies and showed clips of programs he produced about the interaction of people and nature along the shore of Lake Michigan. While the National Emmy Award-winning producer for WTTW 11 may be best known for his work on the architectural history of Chicago and the beauty of Lake Michigan, he greatly supports the restoration of the natural environment in his "backyard" of Northwest Indiana.

Don Babcock, Director of Economic Development at NIPSCO stressed the importance of conservationists working together with business leaders to protect our natural areas and create new employment opportunities. NIPSCO was the Event Sponsor for "Moonlight in Duneland" this year. Over the years, NIPSCO has been a substantial supporter of Shirley Heinze, last year contributing over \$75,000 to support a project to improve public access to the Little Calumet River in Chesterton. We continue to be extremely grateful for

NIPSCO's long standing commitment to land conservation in Northwest Indiana and the relationship we've developed with them over the years," said Kris Krouse, Executive Director, Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

Corporate table sponsors were Lakeside Wealth Management Services, BP Whiting Refinery, MonoSol LLC, Concept Beyond Tomorrow Solar, and ArcelorMittal. Additional corporate sponsors include SouthShore Freight Railroad, Purdue University Calumet, AudioBahn, JF New, LaPorte Savings Bank, and General Insurance Services. Honorary Chairpersons this year were Erin Heskett, Midwest Director of Land Trust Alliance; Chesterton Town Manager Bernard Doyle; Mayor Chuck Oberlie of Michigan City and Mayor Kathy Chrobak of La Porte. The Louise H. Landau Foundation was also honored for its ongoing support of the Heinze Trust.

Guests were served champagne and appetizers as they arrived and mingled, while local musicians Silver Rain performed nature themed music in the background. The reception was followed by a formal gourmet dinner featuring Beef Tenderloin in a crimini mushroom sauce. A red and white wine selection was served throughout the evening and white chocolate raspberry cake was served for dessert,

At the always popular silent auction, guests perused a variety of enticing items including nature-related *objets d'art*, paintings, and unique outings and expeditions. A Trail Creek kayaking expedition hosted by Dan Plath, Shirley Heinze Board Member and President of the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association, was featured, along with a "Behind the Scenes" tour of the Field Museum. The live portion of the auction, where guests could bid on "one of a kind" getaway and adventure packages, featured a tour of Grand Teton National Park with a former National Geographic Photographer, tickets to the International Philadelphia Flower Show, a Dream Day at Wrigley Field and a "Green Tour" of Vancouver and Luxurious Hotel Stay. Brett Baugh of Baugh Auctioneers donated his services for the Live Auction portion of the program.

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, call (219) 879-4725, or e-mail land@heinzetrust.org

Photo page also attached

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