

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 13, 2012

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***“Bringing Nature Home” Awards***  
**Friends of Shirley Heinze Land Trust**

Two gardens were honored at the *“Bringing Nature Home” Awards* program on Saturday, September 8, by the Friends of Shirley Heinze Land Trust. The ceremony took place during the luncheon part of the Heinze Trust’s annual donor appreciation hike held at Coulter Nature Preserve in Portage. The *“Bringing Nature Home” Awards* encourage all gardeners to use native plants in their landscaping to help bring back ecosystems that human development has greatly reduced. The ecosystems before European settlement were built on a foundation of native plants which provided food and shelter for butterflies, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and more.

Lorri and Kevin Cornett of Valparaiso received an award for the rain garden they installed with help from Save the Dunes and an IDEM grant. During heavy rain events, water had flowed from three directions and sped through their side yard causing erosion, flooding, and polluted runoff. After alteration of the soil and planting of native wetland and prairie plants, their yard can withstand a three-inch rain event before any water flows into the street. This drainage solution is disguised as a beautiful garden which attracts birds and butterflies.

Spencer Cortwright, also of Valparaiso, was honored for his yard, which has been largely converted to a native prairie. Besides being a continuously changing colorful landscape through the growing season, this planting is largely self-sustaining now. After a few years of establishing the plants, Spencer reports no mowing, no weeding, no

watering, no herbicides, and no pesticides are needed for maintenance. The added benefit is to the local birds, butterflies, and other creatures depending on native plants.

The Friends of Shirley Heinze is a group which supports the Heinze Trust's efforts at preservation of native ecosystems in its approximately 1,200 acres of natural land in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. Five of its properties – Cressmoor Prairie, Seidner Dune & Swale, John Merle Coulter Preserve, Barker Woods, and Ambler Flatwoods – have been dedicated to the people of Indiana as State Nature Preserves. 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. The Heinze Trust has also made contributions toward the purchase of natural areas owned by other entities, including the Indiana DNR, The Nature Conservancy, LaPorte County Parks, Lake County Parks, and the Portage Parks Department.

To learn more about Shirley Heinze Land Trust and its properties in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties, please visit its website at [www.heinzetrust.org](http://www.heinzetrust.org), call (219) 879-4725, or e-mail [land@heinzetrust.org](mailto:land@heinzetrust.org).

**END**

Photos provided

Photo #1: Lorri Cornett and Spencer Cortwright show the “*Bringing Nature Home*” *awards* they received from the Friends of Shirley Heinze Land Trust honoring their native plant landscaping.

The other two pictures are of the two gardens.