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Shirley Heinze Land Trust Acquires 42 Acres along Sand Creek in Chesterton

Shirley Heinze Land Trust announces that it has acquired two properties along Sand Creek, a tributary of the Little Calumet River, in Chesterton. The properties, approximately 18 and 24 acres respectively, are located on the east bank of Sand Creek, south of Indian Boundary Road.

Shirley Heinze plans to manage the land as a natural area, undertake restoration work to enhance its environmental value, and make it available as a community resource for educational and recreational activities. Restoration will enhance the quality of local waterways and contribute to good storm water management for the community and the Little Calumet River.

Natural features present here include beech and maple upland forest, and floodplain wetlands along the creek. A variety of spring ephemeral wildflowers bloom on the forest floor, including a notable display of large-flowered trillium. The location also provides significant habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, including migrating and nesting birds.

Though not currently open to the public, the organization plans to build and maintain public trails for hiking, birding, and other passive recreational activities.

The properties are the latest acquisitions within the Little Calumet Conservation Corridor, which was approved in 2014 as an Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust Conservation Area. Its goal is to help connect protected natural areas along the Little Calumet River through funding assistance. Including these two acquisitions, which took place in December, Shirley Heinze Land Trust added 220 acres to its holdings in the Corridor during 2016.

In total, more than 2,200 acres have been protected along the East Branch of the Little Calumet River by several conservation organizations, agencies, and municipalities. “A tremendous amount of work has been achieved over the past few years thanks to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and other local partners, including Save the Dunes, The Nature Conservancy, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, ArcelorMittal, Northern Indiana Public Service Company, Porter County Izaak Walton League, the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, and others,” says Executive Director Kristopher Krouse.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust has been protecting and preserving natural land for the public’s benefit since 1981. The organization accomplishes its work through a partnership of volunteers, donors, and professionals. Located in Lake, Porter, LaPorte and St. Joseph Counties, Shirley Heinze nature preserves feature significant scenic and ecological value, and most are open to the public for hiking and enjoying nature. The organization protects, restores, and maintains examples of the entire spectrum of Northwest Indiana’s rich and significant natural communities, including tallgrass prairie, high dune, oak savanna, boreal flatwoods, dune-and-swale, woodlands, marshes, swamps, ponds, fens, bogs, and riparian habitat. 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.

For more information on the work and nature preserves of Shirley Heinze Land Trust, visit www.heinzetrust.org, call (219) 242-8558, or access its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/heinzetrust.

{photo attached: Large-flowered trillium in bloom at newly preserved Sand Creek property]

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