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Shirley Heinze Land Trust Adds 70 Acres to Meadowbrook Nature Preserve

Shirley Heinze Land Trust announces that it has acquired a 70-acre property that is adjacent to the northeastern boundary of Meadowbrook Nature Preserve in Valparaiso. The acquisition increases the total amount of protected land in the preserve to just over 224 acres.

The majority of the new addition is currently in agriculture. Shirley Heinze plans to reforest the property, which will enhance habitat for native plants and animals by increasing connectivity between Meadowbrook, nearby Sunset Hill Farm County Park, and Moraine State Nature Preserve.

The western portion of the new property contains approximately four acres of relatively high quality second growth. The forest is dominated by young red maples and contains a suite of spring ephemeral wildflowers similar to those found elsewhere at Meadowbrook, including Dutchman's breeches, cutleaf toothwort, trout lily, and woodland phlox. The site also contains many large-flowered trillium, which are rare at Meadowbrook.

"We never imagined Meadowbrook becoming a 224-acre nature preserve when we first acquired the 74-acre Girl Scout camp in 2013," says Executive Director Kristopher Krouse. "It's quite an achievement, and we're just as excited that reforestation of the addition will commence in 2018."

The purchase was made possible with matching funds from the Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust. Funding and technical assistance was also made available as mitigation for impacts caused by the construction and maintenance of the Enbridge Energy, Limited Partnership, 6B Pipeline, in partnership with the Conservation Fund and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust has been protecting and preserving natural land in Northwest Indiana since 1981. The organization accomplishes its work through a partnership of volunteers, donors, and professionals. More than 2,300 acres in Lake, Porter, LaPorte, and St. Joseph Counties have been preserved for the public's benefit. 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.

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[photo attached: map of Meadowbrook addition]

