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Shirley Heinze Land Trust Protects 16-Acre Woodland near Rolling Prairie

Shirley Heinze Land Trust announces that it has acquired a 16-acre wooded property in Wills Township, LaPorte County, southeast of Rolling Prairie. The woodland is home to an extremely diverse variety of plant species, including 41 plants whose presence is indicative of high quality, relatively undisturbed habitats. It also features a rich population of spring ephemeral wildflowers. Local botanists have long been aware the woods, and its surroundings and have been advocating for its protection for some time.

"This property is part of a large, rich forest that covers many more acres. Springtime displays of many kinds of wildflowers, including blue-eyed Mary, are breathtaking, and in summer the diversity of ferns, grasses, and sedges is superb. There is also a very nice array of wildlife here" says botanist Keith Board, who along with Life Board Member Barbara Plampin, began exploring the area many years ago.

Life Board Member Myrna Newgent adds, "The property has the most wonderful display of spring ephemerals anywhere in Northwest Indiana."

"Shirley Heinze Land Trust is proud to protect this biodiverse gem in the vicinity of Rolling Prairie and eastern LaPorte County where we historically haven't had a project area, and

we look forward to maintaining the site for generations to come” says Executive Director Kristopher Krouse.

There are currently no trails on the property. Visitation is by guided hike only until public access amenities can be created.

These lands are being conserved, in part, by funding and technical assistance made available as mitigation for habitat impacts anticipated to arise through construction of the Greentown Reynolds Transmission Line, in partnership with Shirley Heinze Land Trust and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Brian Kortum, Manager of Natural Resources Permitting at NiSource Environmental, says, “NIPSCO is very excited to be able to direct its mitigation funds toward conserving this site. The quality and diversity of this site far exceeds that of the fragmented wood lots impacted by the Greentown Reynolds project. By pooling these funds, we are able to help meet regional conservation goals as well as regional energy needs.”

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 2,400 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: Rolling Prairie Woodland in Spring Bloom]