

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 06, 2017

For more information:
Barbara Labus
Communications Coordinator
Shirley Heinze Land Trust
(219) 242-8558

Shirley Heinze Land Trust acquires 43.5 Acres along the Little Calumet River in Chesterton

Shirley Heinze Land Trust announces that it has acquired a 43.5-acre property along the Little Calumet River in Chesterton. The land consists of 13 acres of natural area along the river and 30.5 acres that is currently in agriculture. Located west of Brummitt Road and south of Brummitt Elementary School, the property increases to 420 acres the total amount of land held by Shirley Heinze along the river's East Branch.

"Shirley Heinze plans to manage the land as a natural area and undertake restoration work to enhance its environmental value," says Stewardship Director Eric Bird. "Reforestation of the agricultural portion of the property will be a long-term goal. Restoration will enhance the quality of local waterways and contribute to good storm water management for the community and the Little Calumet River."

Local conservation partner Save the Dunes is also pleased with the acquisition. "The East Branch of the Little Calumet River and its tributaries suffer from impaired biotic communities, meaning in-stream habitat is poor and doesn't do a good job of supporting the insects that fish depend on for food," says Natalie Johnson, Executive Director of Save the Dunes. "In 2015, Save the Dunes completed a watershed management plan for the river that identified water quality improvement goals that organizations and municipalities could undertake to improve this gem of a waterway. We're thrilled to see our partners at Shirley Heinze Land Trust implement the plan and improve water quality through reforestation efforts."

“We plan to install a kayak launch upstream at the nearby Wykes-Plampin Nature Preserve,” Bird adds. “From there paddlers will be able to navigate through the site. Natural features present here include upland forest and floodplain wetlands along the river. The location also provides good wildlife habitat.”

Purchase of the property 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.

The Chesterton property represents the most recent acquisition within the Little Calumet Conservation Corridor, which was approved in 2014 as an Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust Conservation Area. Since then, Shirley Heinze and its partners have worked to help connect already protected natural areas along the river. In total, more than 2,300 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, and the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation,” says Executive Director Kristopher Krouse.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust has been protecting and preserving natural land 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 northwestern 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.

[Aerial Map Attached]