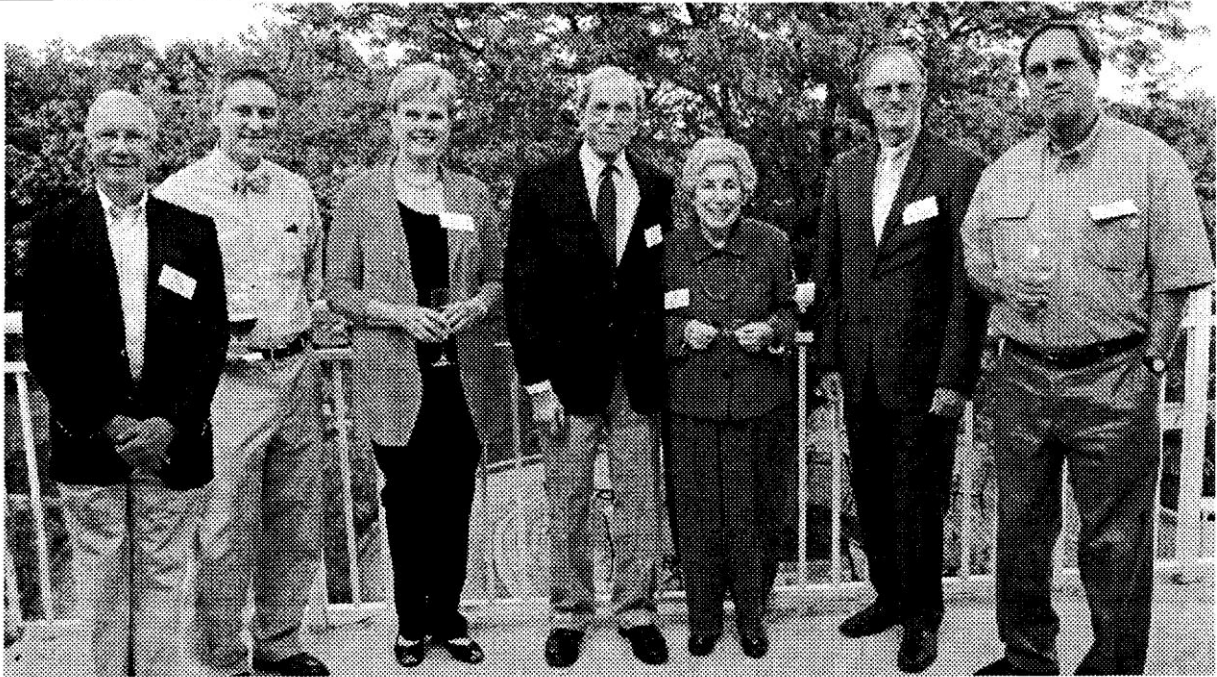


Shirley Heinze Land Trust celebrates 10th summer benefit



Shirley Heinze Board Members: Left to right, Tim Griffin, Jon Hildebrand, Margaret Williford, current Shirley Heinze Land Trust President, Ralph Lerner, Irene Herlocker-Meyer, John Swanson, former Executive Director of NIRPC, and Dr. Nick Timm. (Photo by Barb Labus)

On Saturday, June 8, Shirley Heinze Land Trust welcomed 330 friends and supporters at Sand Creek Country Club for the 10th Annual Summer benefit.

This year's benefit celebrated four of Indiana's natural gems: Ambler Flatwoods, Ivanhoe South, Little Calumet Wetlands, and Meadowbrook.

This year's benefit generated over \$100,000 to further advance the mission of preserving and restoring natural areas in Northwest Indiana.

"We are extremely thankful to each of our corporate and individual sponsors, along with all our friends and supporters who helped us raise the funds to continue our mission not just within these four natural gems, but throughout Northwest Indiana," said Kris Krouse, Executive Director of Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

This year's corporate sponsors included NIPSCO, BP Products North America, Phantom Technologies, ArcelorMittal, Horizon Trust and Investment Management, MonoSol LLC, Burke Costanza & Carberry LLC, Lakeside Wealth Management, and Rowley Bushue and Company LLC.

Guests were welcomed by local cellist Josh DeVries and glasses of champagne. There were elaborate native plant displays and hors d'oeuvre and food stations tended to by chefs. The seating was an open arrangement to promote networking and socializing.

The silent auction offered plenty of items including an Everglades of the North Kayak Trip donated by Northwest Indiana Paddling Association, a week stay on Elk Lake, Northern Michigan donated by Carol and Lance Alberti, and a three night San Diego stay donated by San Diego Tourism Authority.

Before the live auction Shirley Heinze Land Trust Board President Margaret Williford welcomed, thanked and recognized supporters.

The live auction offered five unique packages; an Austin City Unlimited Weekend in Austin, Texas; a Live, Eat, Hike in a Hoosier State Park at Indiana's Turkey Run State Park; a Mystery Dinner on the shores of Lake Michigan in which guests will be served by Executive Director Kris Krouse and his wife, Heidi Krouse; a Duneland Countryside tour in a 1929 Packard; and a Five Day Escape to Sleeping Bear Dunes in Northern Michigan.

Kris Krouse presented the evening's program highlighting Shirley Heinze Land Trust's land acquisition program and recent additions to Ivanhoe South Nature Preserve in Gary, Meadowbrook Nature Preserve in Valparaiso, the Little Calumet Wetlands Project in Chesterton, and Ambler Flatwoods Nature Preserve in Michigan City. Guests raised their paddles for the Funding the Cause Paddle Auction that immediately followed, with a total of \$38,000 raised for the land acquisition program.

The annual benefit is a celebration of the accomplishments of Shirley Heinze Land Trust and serves as a key source of support for organization. Since 1981, Shirley Heinze Land Trust has protected and preserved more than 1,300 acres in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties. The land is restored and managed to educate children and adults on the value of natural areas in Northwest Indiana.

Get involved

The next volunteer workday is Saturday, July 13, 10 a.m. ÷ 3 p.m. at Ambler Flatwoods, Michigan City. A free Community Hike at the Meadowbrook Conservation Center and Preserve is Saturday, July 20 from 10 a.m. ÷ Noon. The 2013 Hike Program includes a Dragonfly Hike Saturday, July 27 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Hoosier Prairie Hike on Saturday, August 10, 2013 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., a Bird Migration Workshop on Saturday, August 17 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., and an all day Bus Tour on Saturday, August 24.

If you participate in all of the 2013 Hike Program events, the cost is \$80 per person; otherwise it's \$25 - \$35 per person, per event. To learn more about Shirley Heinze properties and volunteer opportunities, visit www.heinzetrust.org, like them on Facebook, call (219) 242-8558, or e-mail land@heinzetrust.org