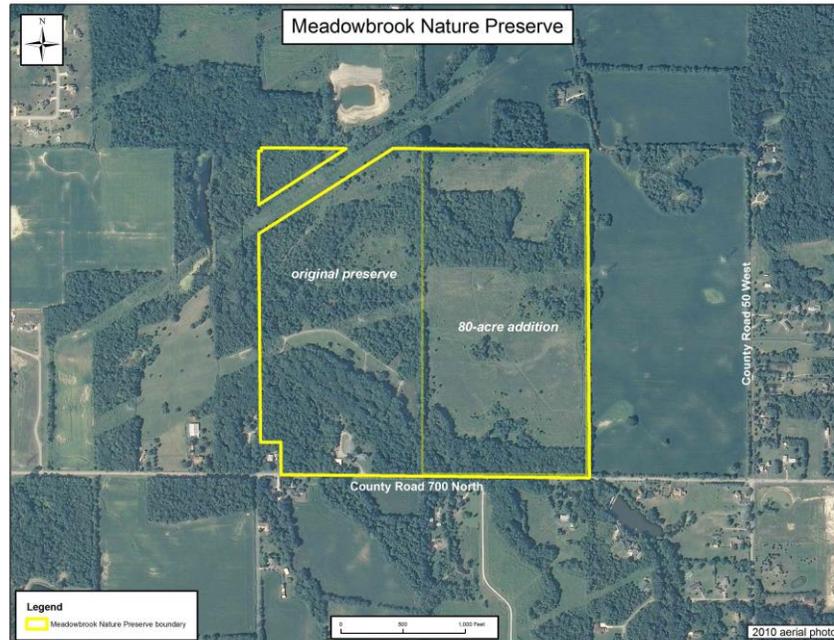


Shirley Heinze acquires 80 acres next to old Meadowbrook camp



Shirley Heinze addition to the former Camp Meadowbrook Girl Scout camp is at right

The Shirley Heinze Land Trust has acquired an 80-acre parcel adjacent to the former Meadowbrook Girl Scout Camp which it purchased in January 2013, and the two properties--154 total acres of protected land located in Liberty Township--will be managed as a nature preserve, Shirley Heinze said in a statement released today.

Also at the site is the Meadowbrook Conservation Center, a hub for environmental education and outdoor recreation activities. Meanwhile, plans are underway for a major restoration project which will transform fallow agricultural fields on the new addition into forested habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

“The expansion of Meadowbrook Nature Preserve is another significant advancement in our efforts to preserve natural land in the moraine forest of Porter and LaPorte Counties,” said Margaret Williford, president of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust Board of Directors. “With this area developing so quickly, we feel that green space is very important for the quality of life of the people living here. As with all our properties, we intend to enhance the biological health of this land through various restoration efforts, and we will encourage its use for educational and recreational activities.”

The acquisition is the result of a collaboration among several partners, noted Kris Krouse, executive director of Shirley Heinze. “We're grateful to the former owners, the heirs of John and Ruth Deters, who farmed the land for decades,” he said. “After ceasing cultivation in 1987, they protected the land under various government conservation programs. When it came time to sell, they had a clear preference for transferring ownership to a conservation organization, and they offered a bargain sale price that helped us meet matching requirements for grant funds.”

Half the purchase price was provided by the Bicentennial Nature Trust (BNT), which is an initiative established in 2012 by then-Governor Mitch Daniels to honor Indiana's 200th anniversary by preserving and protecting important conservation areas throughout the state.

The bulk of BNT funds made available for the acquisition were matched by the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO). “Meadowbrook is a great resource for our community, so we're glad to help it grow,” said Kelly Carmichael, director of environmental policy for NIPSCO. “Preserving this land will help make sure it's enjoyed by visitors and wildlife for years to come.”

As with the original acquisition, the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation was another integral partner, offering financial and other support for the project.

“We had a vision when we moved to Meadowbrook last year,” Krouse says. “We wanted this place to be an asset for the communities we serve, for those organizations that share our principles, and for the public in general. One year into our residency, we are well on our way to making that dream come true. This new addition opens up even more opportunities to serve the people of Porter County and the greater area.”

The Meadowbrook Conservation Centers houses the headquarters of Shirley Heinze Land Trust, the Chicago Region Headquarters of the Wildlife Habitat Council, and the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association, the statement said. Many community groups make use of the facility, including 4-H clubs, scouting groups, and master gardeners. Students from local universities conduct scientific studies at the site, and elementary school kids take field trips there. Last fall, during the federal government shutdown, campers scheduled for a program at the Dunes Learning Center used Meadowbrook as a replacement venue.

Since 1981, Shirley Heinze Land Trust has been protecting natural land in the southern Lake Michigan watershed of Indiana. It manages almost 1,500 acres in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. 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 programs of Shirley Heinze Land Trust, call (219) 242-8558 or visit www.heinzetrust.org