



Barbara Spies Labus

SHIRLEY HEINZE LAND TRUST POSTER

Artist's Narrative

A celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of Shirley Heinze Land Trust (SHLT), the artwork represents the unique and varied natural communities of Northwest Indiana.

At the top of the poster is the Lake Michigan shoreline and a depiction of the dunes that are the region's best-known natural feature. The bands beneath show different landscapes that are protected in SHLT nature preserves.

The second landscape represents the wet woods and flood plain of the *Little Calumet Wetlands Preserve* in Chesterton. Lying on both sides of the Little Calumet River, this property harbors a variety of wetland habitats, upland woods, and areas dominated by sedges and shrubs.

The third landscape represents the boreal flatwoods community at *Ambler Flatwoods Nature Preserve* in Michigan City. Featuring many examples of flora typical of a more northern climate, this dark, wet woodland is a haven for rare plants and wildlife.

The fourth landscape represents the sand prairie at *John Merle Coulter Nature Preserve* in Portage. More than 400 species of plants make their home here, including an abundance of prairie grasses and savanna wildflowers and the prickly pear cactus.

The fifth landscape represents the black-soil prairie at *Cressmoor Prairie Nature Preserve* in Hobart. This rare remnant of the great sea of tallgrass prairie that greeted early settlers is most impressive from mid-summer through early fall when the grasses are high and towering spikes of wildflowers abound.

The bottom landscape represents bur oak savanna at *Bur Oak Woods Nature Preserve* in Hobart. Dominated by centuries-old bur oak trees, this preserve has been transformed from a badly damaged woods to an outstanding example of one of the state's rarest natural communities.

The four large featured species represent the diversity of flora and fauna on SHLT nature preserves: *green heron*, *large yellow lady's slipper orchids*, *Karner blue butterfly*, and *Blanding's turtle*. The latter two are considered rare and endangered.

The scattered depictions of industry, railroads, and housing serve as a reminder of the general urban character of our region and the importance of SHLT's efforts to preserve and restore remaining natural areas.