



Fall 2013

sanctuary

A Newsletter of The Ridges Sanctuary

*The mission of the
Ridges Sanctuary is to
protect the Sanctuary and
inspire stewardship of natural
areas through programs
of education, outreach
and research.*



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Cover image:
Fringed Gentian by Karen Newbern

Fall 2013 - Vol. 40, Issue 1



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From the Rangelight



Back to the Future.

In 2008, The Ridges Board of Directors adopted Pathway to Success, a strategic plan designed to strengthen the ways in which we serve our mission, provide a path for steady growth and development and secure the Sanctuary's future for decades to come. Perhaps the boldest goal contained in the five-year plan was this:

"Subject to favorable results of the feasibility study, construct a GREEN building, The Ridges Center for Environmental Stewardship - a place for everyone, of all ages, to support our efforts in land protection, education, outreach and research."

As we now know, the positive results of the site analysis conducted early in 2011 led to the eventual purchase of the former Sandpiper property later that year and, in 2012, to the launch of a \$3.5 million capital campaign to fund our new facility.

Never in the history of the Sanctuary has our membership undertaken a fundraising effort of this magnitude. Yet, at this writing, we are over 80% of the way to reaching our \$3.5 million goal and completing this historic campaign. And although support for the campaign also has come in the form of grants and donations from non-members, almost 75% of total funds raised have come from our Ridges membership, including the lead gift from lifetime member, the late Chester Cook.

Throughout the planning process and the

campaign phase, we have stressed that this project – so critically important to our strategic evolution – has never been about a building. Rather it has been about making it possible for us to reach out to more people, to expand the ways in which we support the mission upon which we were founded and to model responsible construction in a sensitive environment as part of the land ethic we represent.

The Ridges has been and will always be about the people whose spirit and commitment led to its founding and about those who have added their names and stories to its inspiring record of accomplishments. And so, in looking to the future, we have relied on the wisdom and foresight of our founders to keep us on a steady course. In this issue of *Sanctuary*, we want to share with you some of the exciting developments that are already underway.

We move closer each day to the realization of our vision for the Sanctuary's future. As we do so, I want to thank each and every one of you for the part you have played in the success of this unprecedented effort. Much has been asked of our membership, and you have risen to the challenge. I promise you that you will be proud of the results we achieve.

Steve Leonard
Executive Director
steve@ridgessanctuary.org

The Lower Range Light Restoration

The re-dedication of the beloved Baileys Harbor Lower Range Light on October 5, 2013, brings to a close one of our most significant and satisfying endeavors.

Following a Historic Structures Survey in 2010, fundraising for the restoration was completed in the fall of 2012 when members Marge Binder and Sarah Wright donated the remainder needed to fund the project.

Members of our Wednesday Crew lent their efforts to those of Peil Construction, Steve Shumway, Jeff Charles, Harbor Construction, Bay Electric and Schuette Movers to complete the restoration by June of this year.

The restoration was the first since 1993. It involved moving the Range Light from its original location to a new foundation 15 feet north of the original location to address a public safety issue presented by the Range Light's proximity to Ridges Road. The new location also will help alleviate any build-up of snow along the structure when Ridges Road is plowed. In addition, the full restoration included new siding, upper and lower windows, a new door, historically accurate hardware and new finishing stonework. The Range Light's signature red metal roof was replaced, as were the red triangular metal pieces at the structure's corners.

The final step in the restoration process took place during the dedication ceremony with the reattachment of the Door County Historical Society plaque that was originally designed and installed in 1981.

Built in 1869, the Upper and Lower Range Lights guided ships into the safety of Baileys Harbor for a century. These modest but enduring structures played a critical role in the history of Baileys Harbor and in the founding of The Ridges. They are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



“Henry Checks the Light” by Charles L. Peterson



A world class maritime artist with a parallel interest in the preservation of the American community, Charles L. Peterson's artwork is highly regarded by the private collector, art galleries, and public museums.

His original watercolor “Henry Checks the Light” was painted in 2011 and displayed at The Ridges Sanctuary's invitational art exhibit, Reading the Ridges II in 2012. The artist describes his inspiration for the painting this way:

Henry Gattie, keeper of the range lights operated by the U.S. Life Saving Service at Baileys Harbor 1896-1925, walks down to check the lower range light. He is observed by a red fox, likely ancestor of the foxes who, 60 years later, befriended Roy Lukes, Director of The Ridges Sanctuary, or Roy's internist, the young entomologist John Wilterding.

30 limited edition Giclee prints of the original watercolor are now available at a price of \$150. Each print in the series is signed and numbered by Mr. Peterson. All proceeds from the sale of these limited edition reproductions will benefit the restoration of the Upper Range Light.

Prints can be purchased and picked up at The Ridges Sanctuary's office, 8270 Hwy 57 in Baileys Harbor or ordered by calling 920-839-2802. There will be an additional charge of \$5 for shipping and handling.

The Living Exhibit: Rebirth



photo by Len Villano

Yellow Lady's-slipper

Long ago, before it was clear cut to allow cattle to graze, the area behind the site of our new building was home to delicate orchids and irises. These species were lost to grazing before The Ridges had an opportunity to purchase the property. In the years that followed, town boys played in its wilderness in summer and skated on its frozen swales in winter. Today this area is the focus of several ecological initiatives that will return it to its natural state and, in doing so, provide not only a living exhibit for visitors to explore but also a living laboratory in which we can study ecology and preservation.

The Orchid Conservation Project

Earlier this year, The Ridges entered the first phase of a project to reintroduce key orchid species and augment existing orchid species in the restored ridges and swales bordering the northeast end of the building site. The restoration process, which will take 2 – 4 years, began this spring with the hand pollination of Showy and Yellow Lady's-slippers and Ram's-head orchids. In late August, the developing seed capsules were collected from Showy and Yellow Lady's-slippers and wild-pollinated Grass Pink orchids. Later this fall, seed capsules will be collected from the Ram's-head orchid.

Wisconsin's native orchids are terrestrial, meaning they grow from underground roots. Terrestrial orchid species reproduce by means of minute seeds that contain little in the way of food reserves. Germination in the soil requires an external source of energy and mineral nutrients which comes in the form of soil fungi. In the case of this project, the seed will be germinated in labs by orchid growers Scott Weber (Bluestem Farm, Baraboo, WI) and William Steele (Spangle Creek Labs, Bovey, MN) with nutrients supplied in a liquid solution or gel medium.

Weber and Steele expect to produce 1,000 of each of the four orchid species – a total of 4,000 plants. We estimate that the first seedlings from this germination process will be ready for planting in the Sanctuary in the spring of 2015.

Rejuvenating the Dwarf Lake Iris

This tiny threatened Dwarf Lake iris grows nowhere else in the world except the Great Lakes Region. Carpets of its distinctive fanned

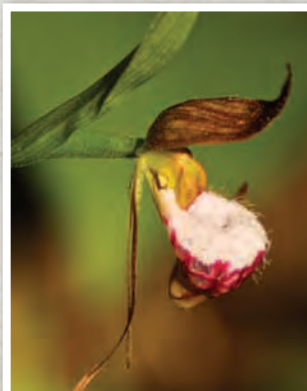


photo by Len Villano

Ram's-head



Melissa Curran (Stantec) demonstrates seed collection

L. to R. - Melissa Curran (Stantec) and Ridges volunteers Julie Knox and Jane Whitney collecting orchid seeds



photo by Len Villano

Showy Lady's-slipper



photo by Len Villano

Dwarf Lake Iris

of a Resilient Ecosystem

foliage are visible throughout the Hidden Brook area. However, over the years the dense tree canopy has negatively impacted flowering. To stimulate the blooming rate, we have strategically thinned the canopy. Additionally, we will relocate plants to those sections of the Hidden Brook area where the population has been diminished or lost.

Protecting the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly

One of the most precious gems of the Sanctuary is the Hine's Emerald dragonfly. This green-eyed beauty is the only dragonfly to be protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Its largest populations are found in Door County, particularly in The Ridges. Within the Sanctuary, the Hidden Brook area contains some of the best and most extensive Hine's Emerald habitat. Here the larvae of this federally endangered dragonfly flourish in the wetlands, taking shelter from drought and overwintering in the holes of the red devil crayfish.

As part of the planning and permitting process for the handicapped accessible boardwalk, great care was taken to mitigate potential impacts to the Hine's and its habitat.



Hine's Emerald Dragonfly

photo by Dan Jackson

Monitoring Northern Flying Squirrels

Northern flying squirrels are a species of special concern in the state of Wisconsin. Their habitat preference, distribution and local

abundance is not well understood. This summer, The

Ridges received a Wisconsin Citizen-Based Monitoring Network grant to fund the installation and monitoring of flying squirrel nesting boxes.

This research is designed to shed light on two areas: 1) if there are Northern and/or Southern flying squirrels in on the peninsula; and 2) if there is a difference in micro-habitat selection based on forest type.

Nest boxes have been secured to trees throughout the Hidden Brook area, along the Family Discovery Trail and throughout The Ridges'

Logan Creek Preserve. These site choices will help determine if resident flying squirrels prefer white cedar forest or upland maple-beech peak climax forest. Cameras will be placed in two nest boxes to air some flying squirrel reality TV. Watch our website for updates!

Students presented on similar flying squirrel research conducted by UW-Stevens Point at our volunteer training workshop. Volunteer participants conducted habitat assessments, learned the monitoring protocol and took a nest box home to watch resident flying squirrels in their backyard.



Flying Squirrel nest box locations at Hidden Brook



Northern Flying Squirrel



Flying Squirrel nest box

The Family Discovery Trail

Based on the concept of more deeply connecting children and families to the world around them, the Family Discovery Trail will enhance the experience of The Ridges for young visitors and their parents.

Working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, The Ridges is developing the trail as a model for other natural areas to use in creating similar experiences. We will also work with the McArde Library and the Town of Baileys Harbor to develop programs and outdoor activities to

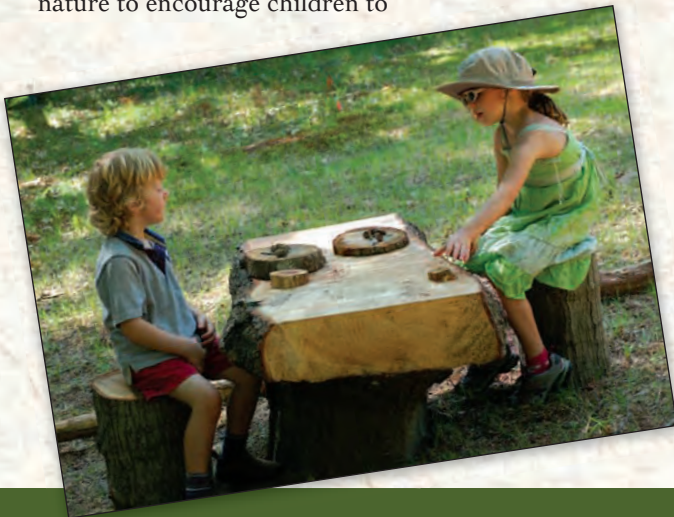
further enrich the experience for residents and visitors.



Work began earlier this year on property on the west side of Highway 57 that has been designated for this important part of our ongoing commitment to environmental education thanks to full funding from the Cordon Family Foundation and a 2012 Scenic Byways grant. A parking area has completed, and we are now in a

position to take the next step and use our concepts for the trail to develop detailed designs.

Situated in the woods, the new trail will teach children informally about trees, plants, landscape and animals through a series of interactive Discovery Stations. These stations, as depicted in the conceptual images here, will use objects naturally occurring in nature to encourage children to



Families can enter the Discovery Trail on the west side of Hwy 57 or from the fire station parking lot on Cty F

play and explore the environment around them. Families will be able to travel the trail on their own or use The Ridges Discovery Trail Guide to enhance their outdoor adventures.

Research has shown that children need opportunities to experience nature in order to develop positive environmental values, attitudes and behaviors as adults. By providing these natural experiences for all ages, we can inspire every generation to commit to conservation, stewardship and responsible enjoyment of natural resources.



*"Nature is nothing at all when it is twice removed.
It is only real when you reach out and touch it with your hands." - John Burroughs*

Weaving in the Wild! by Marge Trocki

Be creative and look to the ground! Have you ever noticed how many loose parts there are in nature? Whether it is seeds, leaves, or twigs, their unique shapes and colors are just the ingredients needed for weaving a wild piece of art! Hit the trails, or your own backyard, and start collecting ingredients for your very own masterpiece!

You will need:

- Four large twigs or small branches
- Thick twine or string
- Scissors
- Loose parts found in nature – grass, reeds, leaves, pods, twigs, flower petals and more.

Here's what to do:

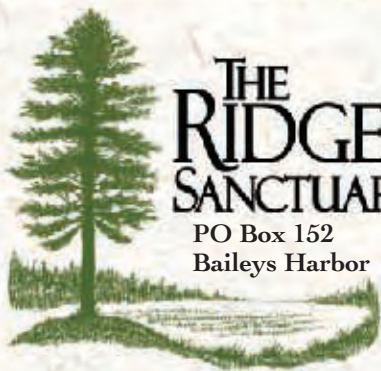
1. Lay out the four twigs or branches to make a square frame.
2. Snip four pieces of twine and use them to tie each of the four corners together.
The more twine that is wound around the edge, the stronger it will be.
3. Next, tie twine to the top of the square starting at one side. Wrap the twine around the top branch a couple times and bring it to the bottom branch and wrap it around a couple times. Bring the twine back up to the top repeating these steps as you continue winding the twine from one side of the frame to the other until it spans across the whole square.
4. Now weave your natural items in and out of the twine until it is pleasing to the eye.
5. Continue to add more natural items as they are discovered.



Variations:

- Use three small branches and make a triangle frame, or experiment to make other shaped frames.
- Instead of twine, use long flexible twigs or grasses to weave up and down.
- Make mini frames using smaller twigs instead of branches.
- Tie several big twigs together in the middle, and fan them to make a circle of spokes. Tie twine from twig to twig starting in the middle and going outwards like a spider web. Weave in your nature items round and round.
- Make a permanent frame by weaving twine from one tree to another.
- Choose different topics and weave corresponding items. For example:
 - **Birds** – feathers and old nests
 - **Trees** – various shaped leaves, twigs and seeds
 - **Flowers** – petals, stems and seeds
 - **Animals** – fur, antlers, and snake skins

Start a collection of weavings and invite your friends to add to the collection. Don't be surprised when people start lining up to catch a glimpse of your weaving masterpieces!



THE RIDGES SANCTUARY

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Experience, Explore...

Exhale.

Sanctuary - Fall 2013; Volume 40, No. 1

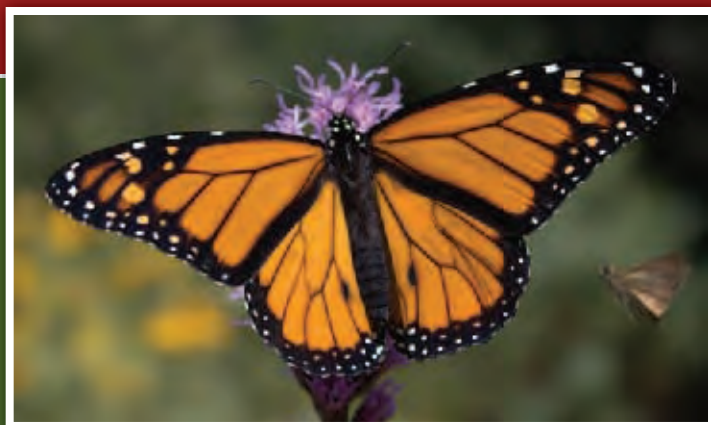
Nature Notes

Many visitors this summer commented on the scarcity of Monarch butterflies. Although their populations have been declining for a number of years, drought conditions in 2012 were especially hard on the Monarchs. Both caterpillars and adults had difficulty finding food as milkweed and nectar plants dried up early in the season. The wintering population in Mexico was the lowest ever recorded, which meant lower numbers moving north in the spring. Many plants were developing more slowly because of the cool, wet spring conditions, which also impacted monarch numbers. Later summer conditions were good for monarch survival, but it is likely that this winter's population will again be at or near record lows.

In July we had a most unusual (and a little disturbing – consider yourself

warned!) wildlife sighting. Hikers heard a commotion in a pine tree and noticed a female Robin flying around a branch and calling excitedly. Then they saw a large Fox Snake in the tree, wrapped around her nest and feasting on the nestlings. Fox Snakes are frequently seen in The Ridges, but are usually on the ground and not raiding bird's nests.

Several of our native orchids had good blooming conditions this summer. Grass Pink orchids were exceptionally abundant near the Baileys Harbor shoreline, and Nodding Ladies'-Tresses have made a great showing in Septem-



ber. At The Ridges' Logan Creek Property, a small population of Large Round-leaved Orchids was discovered. This orchid had not been documented on the site before.

Ever wonder if invasive species control is truly effective? The Ridges has been assisting with control of Phragmites around Clark Lake for 5-6 years. Areas that were once choked by this non-native grass now have an incredible diversity of native plants.