

sanctuary

Fall 2014

A Newsletter of The Ridges Sanctuary



Beginnings ...

*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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From the Rangelight

Making Our Message Count

*"A major task facing The Ridges is to strengthen its voice:
to make its point to enough people so that its message will count.
Culture does not pass to new generations without conscious and persistent
efforts . . . mere custodianship of the last few such spots is futility."*

— Dr. James Zimmerman, UW-Madison, co-author of "The Madison School Forest Guidebook"

In 2007 while working on a five-year strategic plan, the above-referenced quote provided inspiration for the goals that were ultimately established in the area of education. The board formally adopted the plan in December of that year and, as an organization, we relied on it to guide The Ridges through the critical developmental years from 2008 – 2012. That same plan addressed the longer-term need to construct a building, a center that would support our efforts in education as well as our initiatives in land protection and research.

Now, not quite seven years later, construction of the Cook-Albert Fuller Center is well underway and, while it represents the successful completion of that strategic plan, it is hardly an ending. Rather, it signifies the beginning of a new era for The Ridges – a launching pad for expanded education, outreach and stewardship.

This year, in preparation for having a year-round platform, we restructured our program format, designing a curriculum to connect people of all ages to nature and to support lifelong conservation and environmental awareness. The resulting program arc begins in the critical developmental years of childhood with our **Backyard Adventure Camps** and **Family Discovery Trail**, progresses to adult and family programs with our **Natural Connections** series and continues with lifelong learning opportunities for adults through **Lake Lessons** presentations, **Conservation Clinics** and **Adult Workshop** field courses.

Of course, program offerings alone are not enough. We have also reorganized staff and added several part-time positions to support the expanded schedule and ensure a positive, informative experience for our members and visitors (see page 3). Road-testing this structure this year will provide us with a good blueprint for staffing in 2015 and the future.

Throughout the campaign to raise money for our new facility, we stressed that the campaign was not about bricks and mortar, but about making a commitment to the future. As we look ahead to next year, we see increased opportunities to use the areas of our campus as outdoor classrooms, to utilize the cabins in new and exciting ways and to enhance and integrate those outdoor experiences with seasonally themed programs, activities and events at the Center.

In 1937, our founders understood that educating the surrounding community was key to protecting this significant area for future generations. We think it's so important, that we are devoting this issue of *Sanctuary* to an overview of the direction we've taken in education and outreach this year. Beginning in 2015, the Cook-Albert Fuller Center will provide us with even more opportunities to continue our founders' work, to ensure their legacy and to sustain their commitment to conservation. **To make our message count.**

Steve Leonard, *Executive Director*
steve@ridgessanctuary.org



Kanagaroo Lake Eco-Tour

Meet the Staff!

Judy Drew - Assistant Director

Judy actively works with the staff and board to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to support The Ridges' financial goals and provides oversight for Visitor Services, administrative and bookkeeping support. She is also responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy and brand to market The Ridges, its programs, activities and special events. In addition to the recently completed capital campaign, she develops, implements and manages all fundraising activities including the annual appeal, endowment and special projects.

Brian Forest - Education & Land Management Specialist

As Education & Land Management Specialist, Brian works with the Education Committee to develop, implement and oversee educational programming and workshops for children, families and adults. On Ridges properties, Brian establishes monitoring protocols for flora, fauna, water quality and other environmental factors to define best management practices for the protection of individual species, ecosystems, and landscapes and oversees the process and documentation for Ridges phenology records. Currently, he is working on site plan development for the new Center, as well as a management plan for the restoration of the area along Hidden Brook trail.

Kate LeRoy - Visitor Services Manager

Kate manages the daily operations for visitors and members and is responsible for both staffing and purchasing for the Nature Store. She also manages all aspects of our volunteer program, including recruitment, trainings, communication strategies, job descriptions and recognition. Additionally, she coordinates outreach activities for community events and works with Judy to

develop and oversee special events.

Marne Kaeske - Stewardship Coordinator

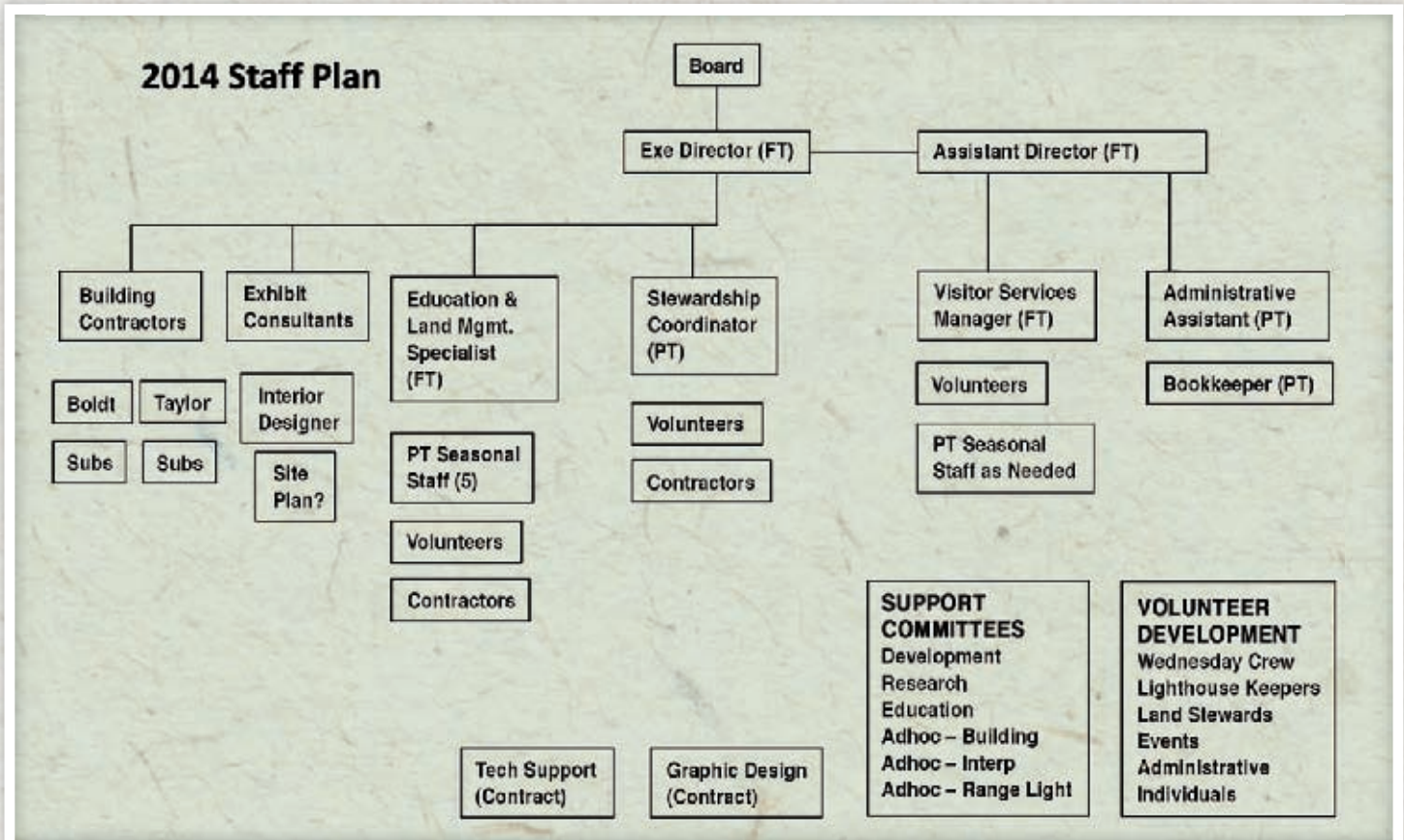
Marne acts as a liaison between The Ridges and the Door County community in identifying needs and strategies to protect The Ridges and local native landscapes. She assists with the development of long-term management plans for the Sanctuary and Logan Creek properties and is responsible for prioritizing and coordinating invasive species control on Ridges property. Marne also develops, implements and oversees our citizen monitoring programs and coordinates with the Research/Land Committee. Currently, she oversees the Flying Squirrel Monitoring project.

Debbie Rzentkowski - Administrative Assistant

Debbie plays a key role in organizing and managing workflow in The Ridges business office. Her administrative support functions include answering phone, maintaining our membership database, preparing donation acknowledgements, membership renewal notices and new member welcome packets. Debbie also works closely with our bookkeeper on the reconciliation of financial accounts to ensure the accuracy of our financial reporting.

2014 Part-Time Naturalists: Lydia Doerr, Tony Kiszonas, Samantha Phillips, Shannon Pump, Carol Schuster and Amanda Surfus

Under Brian's direction, our part-time seasonal naturalists have conducted and/or staffed educational programs, led guided hikes, participated in the development of the Family Discovery trail, staffed the Backpack Adventure camps and assisted visitors in the Nature Center. Tony Kiszonas, who returned for a second year as our Summer Naturalist, took an important lead role with both the camps and the Family Discovery Trail.



Connecting People of

Backpack Adventure Camps

This summer, our camps were revamped from top to bottom. The new Backpack Adventure Camps were designed to provide children with outdoor experiences exploring wetlands, forests and fields. Programs focused on natural discoveries, children's literature and artwork. Each day, children hiked our trails using Ridges backpacks filled with bug boxes, nets and other tools needed to participate in hands-on activities as they explored the wonders of the outdoors.

This year camps were supervised by Tony Kiszonas with additional support from part-time naturalist, Samantha Phillips.

Although children can register by the day, when taken in sequence, the full-week camps are constructed to build on skills and awareness from one camp to the next.

At her family's request, the 2014 Backpack Adventure Camps were supported, in part, with donations made in memory of Virginia Johnson.

Family Discovery Trail

Sometimes kids just need to be kids – and so do adults! That's part of the concept behind the Family Discovery Trail which made its debut on June 25, welcoming 60 children from the Sturgeon Bay YMCA to try out the ten interactive stations along the Trail. Since that time, we have hosted the Northern Door YMCA, Girl Scout Troop #4374 and the Boys and Girls Club of Door County.

While not totally unstructured, the Family Discovery Trail is definitely an exercise in free play in the great outdoors. Its location on the west side of Hwy 57 was selected for the hardiness of the landscape. Children are encouraged to use their imaginations, to play and to explore their surroundings through a series of activities along the trail and by using a variety of learning resources. Activities will vary throughout the year, using each season to enhance children's curiosity about the natural world.

This summer, we partnered with the McArdle Library and the Door County Library Summer Reading Program. Discovery Libraries are located along the trail and contain children's books for families to read together surrounded by the beauty of nature.

The Trail is a new and evolving part of The Ridges campus, and we are actively soliciting feedback from families who use the trail. As a thank you for helping us, families receive a unique, compostable birdhouse for their own backyards.

The Family Discovery Trail is made possible with funding by The Cordon Family Foundation. Books for the Discovery Libraries were purchased by the McArdle Library with funds provided by the Harbor Ridge Association.



all Ages to Nature

Natural Connections

Our Natural Connections programs are available year-round and are the perfect way for adults and families to enjoy the seasons. Like our annual Festival of Nature, these programs are a blend of recreation and education and, unless specified, are suitable for all ages. Our programs enable adults, families and

children to explore in natural settings, promote a deeper understanding of the environment and help participants to develop an appreciation of the natural world around them. Unless otherwise noted, programs are suitable for all ages. Highlights for this year's schedule included our **Bluebird House Building Workshop**, **Eco Paddle Tours**, **Paul Burton's Dragonfly Workshop**, **Edible Mushrooms 101**, **Family Overnights**, **The Bizziness of Bees** and **Evening Exploration hikes** at the Sanctuary and Logan Creek.



Lifelong Learning

If there's one thing we've learned, it's that our adult members and visitors are tireless in their pursuit of increasing their nature knowledge base. Earlier this year, we introduced **Conservation Clinics**, free in-depth classroom training on topics like the Geologic & Cultural History of The Ridges, Flora of the Sanctuary, Trees of the Sanctuary and Insects. This fall, we'll offer a **Fireside Series**, discussions of Pre-Settlement Door County and other cultural topics.



Our summer Thursday evening speaker series, **Lake Lessons**, presents programs by natural resource professionals, educators, photographers, authors, and noted naturalists on a variety of topics. This year's presenters included wildlife biologist, Dick Nikolai, Beers-Bascom Professor Emeritus Stan Temple, fisheries biologist Nick Legler, Natural Areas Specialist Mark Martin

and archeologist Heather Walder. In August, over 70 people attended Scott Craven's (pictured above) presentation on "Snakes of Wisconsin."

Adult Workshops provide opportunities to participate in in-depth field courses with experts on invasive species, wetland plants, birds, lichen, Great Lakes ecology, historical archaeology and more. Earlier this year, an intrepid group refused to let the elements deter them from an opportunity to explore area lichen with Mary Bartkowiak (pictured at right) of the UW-Stevens Point Herbarium.



Culture does not pass to new generations

without conscious and persistent efforts . . .

Connecting People of all Ages to Nature, continued

Special Events

Along with the expansion of our program offerings, you'll notice some new additions to our special events beginning this September with *Ramble Thru The Ridges* (see article on page 8).



In evaluating our special events, we've noticed that the ones that receive the warmest response are those that most closely reflect the character of The Ridges and its mission. Our fall golf event, *A Round for The Ridges* has been retired and replaced with the Ramble, a 2.3 mile walk through the Sanctuary. Next year, you'll see an expanded *Door County Festival of Nature*. The Festival has been our signature event for a dozen years now, and we feel we've only scratched the surface of its potential. Its blend of recreation and education will serve as the model for other, smaller events we host throughout the year.



Not to worry, both the *Great Waffle Breakfast* and *Natural Christmas* are on the calendar in 2015. And we'll continue to find ways to make our *Annual Gathering* memorable. And speaking of the Annual Gathering, mark your calendars for Saturday, August 1, 2015 when nationally recognized and self-proclaimed Grillologists, Mad Dog & Merrill, will entertain and educate us on the finer points of grilling while cooking up a summer feast for our enjoyment!

2014 Outreach

As part of the ongoing mission of The Ridges Sanctuary, staff has always made a concerted effort to make themselves available for education and outreach opportunities; 2014 has not been an exception. In April, Marne Kaeske (pictured at left) and Brian Forest participated in the Earth Day Fair at Gibraltar High School. The Ridges and other conservation organizations set up displays promoting conservation and environmental awareness. Students spent a full day focusing on Earth Day and rotated through the display area in conjunction with other activities throughout the school and the Door Community Auditorium. Each display involved students with hands-on opportunities to understand the earth, its resources, the habitats that it supports and our impact.

Brian also contributed to Earth Day celebrations held by Sturgeon Bay Elementary Schools at Crossroads at Big Creek. Participants included the first and second grade classes from Sawyer School on May 21 and the third, fourth and fifth grade classes from Sunrise School on May 29. At each event, students were rotated throughout the campus to stations that involved them in hands-on learning about what goes on under the Earth's surface. Brian gave a brief presentation about Door County's geologic history and some of the threats to our ground and surface water resources, shared his fossil collection and discussed groundwater movement via a Karst Groundwater Model (pictured at left).



Door Peninsula Conservation Action Plan

2014 Update

In 2003, a collaborative effort by a group working under the affectionately-assigned acronym N.A.G. (Natural Areas Group) developed a document titled *A Guide to Significant Wildlife Habitat and Natural Areas of Door County, Wisconsin*. The intent of this document was to help preserve Door County's communities of plants and animals and their habitats. It was acknowledged by the participating organizations that most of the remaining natural landscapes and open space in the county is seriously threatened by continued commercial and residential development. As a result, this initiative was organized to examine this threat and formulate a strategy to help minimize the consequences.

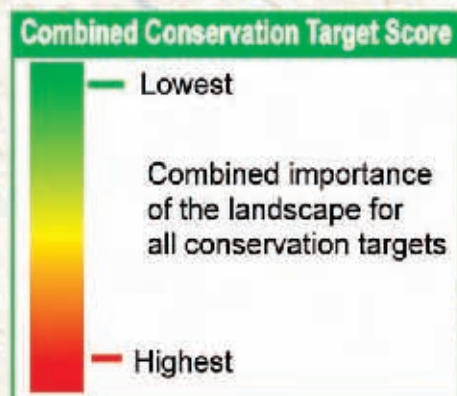
In April 2014, in an effort spearheaded by The Nature Conservancy, a collection of resource professionals began meeting to revisit the goals of the 2003 document. This ongoing conservation planning group has consisted of individuals from the following organizations: **The Nature Conservancy** (Door County Office and Madison Chapter Office), **Door County Land Trust**, **The Ridges Sanctuary**, **United States Fish and Wildlife Service**, **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**, **Door County Soil and Water Conservation Department** and **Door County Planning Department**.

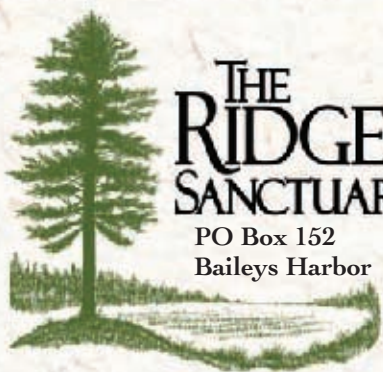
The goal of this collaboration is to evaluate the success of each group's individual mission in meeting the goals of the original plan and to develop an updated set of targets for conservation of Door County's natural resources, a set of goals to protect those resources and strategies to meet those goals.

Through a series of planning meetings and associated "homework", the group developed what they identified to be the resource targets of highest priority for conservation through preservation, restoration and education on the Door County landscape. The identified targets are as follows:

- Door County Native Forest
- Niagara Escarpment
- Native Fish Migratory and Spawning Habitat
- Groundwater Driven Wetlands and Surface Waters
- Hine's Emerald Dragonfly
- Shoreline Systems
- Islands Suitable for Colonial Nesting Birds
- Invasive Species Control

Each of the targets listed above will be addressed in a final plan with measurable goals that will have one or more strategies assigned to them. Each of the participating organizations, and others, will use the resulting plan to prioritize conservation activities in coming years. Each of the targets will also have an associated map with priority areas identified. The map picture here was produced by the culmination of all of the above targets will also serve to identify conservation opportunities throughout the county.





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Experience, Explore...

Exhale.

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RAMBLE THRU The Ridges



New Event!

Saturday, September 27 at 9 AM

What's better than a ramble through the early fall beauty of the Sanctuary trails? How about a ramble that lowers your blood pressure AND raises money for The Ridges?

Join us on Saturday, September 27, for a 2.3 miles walk on our scenic trails. Naturalists and interpretive stations along the route will add to your enjoyment, and a special appearance by the Bag Monster will add to the fun. After you walk, enjoy refreshments and a special program featuring birds of prey back at the cabins

Entry fees for the Ramble are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children under 18. Adult entry fee includes a high quality, reusable shopping bag made by ChicoBag featuring The Ridges logo. Children receive a Ridges patch! Register before September 10 and receive a 20% discount. Register online or call 920.839.2802.

We hope to see you on the trails this fall!

