

Spring 2010

Sanctuary

A Newsletter of The Ridges Sanctuary



Connecting

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



Photo by Paul Burron

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From the Rangelight

Education & Connecting...

Education and connecting audiences to the natural world is the foundation of The Ridges Sanctuary organization. It is the "root", the fundamental purpose, why the Sanctuary has been protected for over 70 years. It all started with one of our founders, Albert Fuller, writing letters, leading hikes, and providing presentations to educate others on the importance of the ridges and swales, now known as the most biologically diverse landscape in Wisconsin. It was his dedication to developing an appreciation and awareness for this unique landscape that inspired others like Olivia Traven and Emma Toft to start The Ridges Sanctuary organization.

Since 1937, the Sanctuary has been a place for learning. Trails were built along the ridges so people could learn about the orchids and other flora up close and in their natural environments. Bridges crossed over swales so one could see the geological formations, the ridges and swales defining old Lake Michigan shorelines. Founder Olivia Traven had visitors knocking on her front door asking for

Culture does not pass to new generations without conscious and persistent efforts."

tours of the Sanctuary - which she gladly provided. Emma Toft rounded up local children and took them out to Toft Point or The Ridges to make sure they developed an appreciation for what was in their own backyard. Local schools participated in conservation essay contests. Annual orchid pilgrimages were held with other evening events.

Jen Jensen wrote a series of natural history articles for the Door County Advocate. Past directors Roy Lukes and Paul Regnier and all the staff have helped expand and teach a variety of meaningful-learning experiences over the years.

Professor Jim Zimmerman stated it best when he wrote about the need for education programs, "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."

The Ridges needs your help as we continue to strengthen our "voice". This summer, we will be working with the Schmeckle Interpreters from UW-Stevens Point to develop an interpretive master plan to tell our cultural and natural history stories. We need your help by participating in surveys, focus groups, and community meetings as we define our future in a way that protects the Sanctuary, honors our founders, and defines programs to connect audiences of all ages to The Ridges and the natural world. Information on ways to participate will be posted throughout the summer.

We will continually strengthen our voice, to make sure our point is made to enough people so that our message will count, in a way that reflects the wishes of our founders and members. I look forward to working with you this summer on planning our future!

Steve Leonard

Executive Director

steve@ridgessanctuary.org

Early Ridges Educators

Albert Fuller



Jens Jensen



Emma Toft



Olivia Traven



Quick Notes

The Ridges' Natural Christmas

One hundred eighty luminarias lined the snow covered boardwalk between the Rangelights. Over 60 people turned out on a beautiful winter day to experience a simple old-fashioned Christmas celebration. The Ridges' staff and volunteers offered crafts, wreath making, hot chocolate, Christmas cookies and a campfire. World on a String provided live seasonal music.

Emma Toft Birthday Celebration – The Ridges' Great Waffle Breakfast

Seventeen volunteers and staff took to the irons to serve 150+ hungry people who stopped in to visit and eat elephant, lion, and chicken waffles. Native white spruce centerpieces decorated the red & white checkered tablecloths where lots of visiting went on after breakfast.

Some Statistics:

- 30 lbs of flour
- 1 1/2 gallons of Door County Maple Syrup from Jörn's Sugarbush, Country View Farms, & Hyline Orchards
- 3 lbs of real butter
- 5 gallons of Hyline Orchard's cherry sauce
- 4 lbs of Door County Coffee
- A whole lot of good times for everyone!

Naturally Speaking – Wisconsin Naturalists

Geology, weather, invasive species, natural & cultural history, tree and plant identification and many other subjects were presented to fourteen individuals last Fall. Wisconsin Naturalist training prepares volunteers for a variety of projects including trail interpretation, species monitoring, and invasive species control. The Ridges will again offer the program starting this September. Call The Ridges if interested in participating.

Seven Frogs and a Toad - Frog Monitoring

Ahhh! The sounds of Spring are almost as welcome as the first flowers. The 'peeping', 'snoring', 'quacking', and 'trilling' can be deafening as the little amphibians search for a mate. The Ridges' volunteers are helping track the occurrence of frogs and toads in Door County for the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey. They travel a specific route on a regular basis and listen for the various species. Door County boasts seven frog species and one toad species but when they are all calling at once, the volunteers need to distinguish the different calls.

Logan Creek Clean-Up - Earth Day 2010

Earth Day 2010, saw 21 teenagers and two teachers from Sevastopol School along with members of The Ridges' Wednesday Crew, cleaning up an old dumpsite on The Ridges' Logan Creek property. There was an old cement enclosed bathtub along with years of household discard. The students also did roadside cleanup and trail work. Thanks to Brian O'Handley of Sevastopol Schools for coordinating and our wonderful Wednesday Crew for facilitating!

Lunch Breaks

Director Steve Leonard has volunteered as chef for the **volunteer bar-b-ques** this summer. Come and enjoy lunch and conversation with the staff and other volunteers (or want-to-be volunteers). Staff will supply burgers, buns, chips, and brownies. If you'd like to bring something to share, we would be grateful. These informal get-togethers are scheduled Wednesday June 16th, Tuesday, July 20th, Wednesday August 18th, and Tuesday, September 21st.

Log Cabin Close to Nature – The Ridges' Nature Center

The Ridges' Nature Center is the place to find out how the ridges (as in The Ridges) were formed, learn about the Range Lights, view bird nests, rocks, and butterflies under a microscope, or look at how the Niagara Escarpment affects Door County. It's a great place to find special field guides and books for kids or the perfect gift for the nature enthusiast on your list. The Ridges' Nature Center, located in a 130-year old log cabin, opens for the season on May 21 and is open daily, volunteer scheduling permitting, Monday through Saturday 9 AM - 4 PM and Sunday 1 PM - 3 PM. Here you can pay trail fees, pick up maps, play with microscopes, or join a naturalist for a guided hike.

Dazzle and Flash - Dragonflies

Long-time Ridges' member, Paul Burton, has published a beautifully illustrated guidebook of 'Common Dragonflies of Northern Door County' which is available at The Ridges' Nature Center and our online store (go to RidgesSanctuary.org and click on **Nature Store Online**). If you don't always search out dragonflies in Northern Door County, the guide is also useful in other parts of Wisconsin and Michigan. Paul can be found on summer days tracking all manner of dragonflies on the trails of the Sanctuary and is always willing to share his knowledge and excitement about these large colorful flying insects.

Those Were the Days –

The TRS Memories Project



In 2012, The Ridges Sanctuary will celebrate its 75th anniversary. Since its founding in 1937, many people have enjoyed the bridges and trails, have learned from the land and people, and have had wonderful experiences associated with the unique aspects of the Sanctuary. The goal of the **TRS Memories Project** is to collect and preserve memories and stories from individuals such as yourself – people who hold a special place in their heart for the beauty and spirit of The Ridges Sanctuary.

As volunteer Cathleen Haskins begins this new project, we invite you to be a part of it. We are seeking stories that communicate the essence of The Ridges, how you have lived, loved, and experienced the wonders of this extraordinary natural sanctuary. Do you have a special remembrance or cherished memory that could be included? Contact The Ridges to set up an appointment to share your memories.

“Reading The Ridges” – Art Show at The Link Gallery

The Ridges' Spring invitational art exhibition featured original works inspired by The Ridges Sanctuary and its Logan Creek property. The two and three dimensional pieces in the exhibit emphasized how The Ridges' effect on these 46 artists is as diverse as its ecology. I can't explain it – it was beautiful! Even though it was the 'off' season for Door County, the private and public receptions were attended by over 100 people. Watch for another exhibit in 2012 to celebrate The Ridges' 75th Anniversary!

Barberry Pirates are at it Again!

The pirates have been laying low over the winter, but now that the invasives are attacking The Ridges again, the pirates are ready with a counter attack! Last year they beat back the barberry, yanked the crown vetch and made an initial foray against the black swallow-wort. This year they started on May 11th on the deceptively pretty forget-me-not! No non-native invasive is safe from their vengeance. To be notified when the pirates are gathering for an assault, call The Ridges.

Partnering for Success

*“If we are together
nothing is impossible.
If we are divided all
will fail.”*

Winston Churchill

There is a scientific concept called “synergy,” which describes how two things working together can produce an effect greater than the sum of their individual effects. Synergy can also describe a situation where different entities cooperate to achieve a positive final outcome. Simply put, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

At The Ridges, we see synergy happening every day. Here are a few of the ways we work together, to reach more audiences and accomplish our mission – partnering with other organizations to achieve so much more than we can do alone.



Geocaching

Door County YMCA

This year we started a new series of programs with the Door County YMCA, called “No Family Left Inside.” These programs provide opportunities for parents and children to explore, discover and learn together in the outdoors. “No Family Left Inside” programs are held once a month at The Ridges and are promoted through the YMCA.

The geocaching program in February was so successful, we are planning a summer repeat. Leader Ray Osinski had a surprise up his sleeve with a ‘mini-cache’ in a pinecone!

Check The Ridges’ calendar at RidgesSanctuary.org for more offerings.

McArdle Library

In 2009, we began coordinating summer programs with the McArdle Library in Baileys Harbor. Children who took part in the “Wild Places” project could stop at the library, pick up a backpack of supplies for nature exploration, visit The Ridges or another natural area of their choice, and then create a journal documenting their outdoor adventures.

This summer’s cooperating program with the McArdle Library is an extension of the “No Family Left Inside” initiative. Kids will read books and do various nature activities around the county to earn colorful buttons to pin to a hat in the color of their choice. **See examples of last summer’s journals under Wild Places at RidgesSanctuary.org**

Sevastopol School Earth Day

Twenty-one students and two teachers worked side by side with Ridges volunteers cleaning up an old dump site on the Logan Creek Property. They also woodchipped some trails and cleaned garbage along Loritz Road and Highway 57

The kids were awesome! ‘Give me more to do’ seemed to be their mantra of the day. They were invaluable to improving the aesthetics of this lovely old growth forest. Hike the trails and see some of the evidence of their industry.

Festival of Nature

The Door County Festival of Nature, now in its eighth year, is a cooperative educational program of The Ridges and five other organizations. Each group’s mission and message is conveyed through field trips and workshops which reach over 200 participants each year.

You’re never too old for a new experience! Arnold was 80 when he went on a Festival hike to Toft Point. He commented at the end of the hike, “I have waited all my life to see trees like these!”

Ten year old Lisa was amazed at the plants on a trip to Kellner fen, “This is like another world!”



Aquatic critter looking



Fest canoeing

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” Henry Ford

Wisconsin Naturalist Program

For the past two years, The Ridges has coordinated the Wisconsin Naturalist Program teaching adults about Door County’s natural heritage and ways to help protect it. Programs are presented by professionals from partners such as The Nature Conservancy, The Clearing, UW-Green Bay, and other nature and education based organizations.

Graduates of the Wisconsin Naturalist program have gone on to volunteer many hours to nature programs in Door County. Woodside Park at Sawyer Elementary School in Sturgeon Bay was the focus of one graduate. She facilitated the clean-up of garbage and the clearing of invasives by the third grade classes.



Wisconsin Naturalists

Door County Invasive Species Team (DCIST)

Working with the members of DCIST, we will coordinate the education effort in teaching residents and visitors how to control invasive species in their own backyard. Invasive species are a major threat to The Ridges’ ecosystems. We need to continue to develop an awareness and ways volunteers can get involved.

The Barberry Pirates is a group of volunteers who meet regularly to battle invasives at The Ridges. These ‘pirates of the plants’ have attacked barberry (thus the spelling of the name), black swallow-wort, honeysuckle, crown vetch, and even forget-me-not. The goal is to protect the native wildflowers from the invasion of aggressive ‘outsider’



Invasive species tying

Land Acquisition

For many years, The Ridges has worked cooperatively with the Door County Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Together, we have identified “project areas” throughout the county – areas where each organization focuses its preservation efforts. We have also submitted joint grant proposals to the state Stewardship Fund and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, resulting in millions of dollars for land purchases and protection. The Ridges Sanctuary was able to use these grand funds to purchase 56 acres in 2009.

Some of the peripheral lands that have been purchased to protect The Ridges’ watershed are excellent outdoor classroom areas where kids can touch, turn over, explore, and examine all aspects of nature. Last summer (and most assuredly this summer), Peil pond on the Fuch’s property across the road from the Rangelight was the setting for an exciting watery adventure in which kids caught whirligig beetles, diving beetles, boatmen, and scuds.



Julie Dragon Lady

“They are much to be pitied who have no been... given a taste for nature early in life.”

- Jane Austin
(Mansfield Park)



Lucy net-dipping

Why Would You Let a Child...

...get Muddy, Wet, Scratched, Dirty, & HAPPY?

Children love anything muddy, wet, moving, or natural. They will spend long happy hours squishing their toes in the mud beside a stream as they watch for little critters and listen to the sounds of nature. Remember turning over a rock and becoming engrossed in the scurrying of the ants you disturbed?

Children are born with a natural sense of wonder about the natural world. The Ridges Sanctuary is working with schools and other Door County organizations to get kids and fami-

lies outside and looking around. We do have some places at The Ridges where kids (and adults) can *splish, splash, squish, and observe* with no squelching of their curiosity. The Ridges' **No Family Left Inside** program, a cooperative venture with the YMCA and the McArde Library, is an effort to reconnect kids with nature. Studies have shown many positive effects resulting from a familiarity with the natural world including:

- Improved awareness, reasoning, and observational skills.
- Increased attention span, concentration, and self-discipline.
- Development of imagination and creativity.
- Increased social interaction and cooperation with other children.
- Better physical health – less obesity, improved balance, coordination and motor skills.
- Has a positive influence on psychological well-being.

That's why you let a child get muddy, wet, scratched, dirty, and happy.

A muddy child is a happy child.



Wet, happy kids!

Reasons for Kids To Explore Nature:

Nature is always there - even when it's raining.

You can explore alone or with a friend.

There's always something to do.

No special equipment required.

Reasons for Parents & Grandparents To Explore Nature:

Nature is always there - even when it's raining.

You can explore with your child.

There's always something to do.

No special equipment required.

Nature Notes



Sandhill Crane nesting

🌿 Spring arrived early this year. March temperatures were about 6 degrees above average, and April about 4 degrees above. It's also been a dry spring, with only 3.5" of rainfall in April and May (about 1.3" below normal).

🌿 On April 4, we were serenaded by a chorus of Wood Frogs and Spring Peepers calling in the swales.

🌿 A pair of Sandhill Cranes have nested just off the Observation Deck on Winter Wren Trail.

The nest was first reported on April 15, and we expect the two eggs to hatch in mid-May.

🌿 Dwarf Lake Iris was in bloom by late April – about three weeks ahead of their usual starting date. Indian Paintbrush was showing its bright orange bracts by May 3.

🌿 The warm weather of early May brought out lots of butterflies – Red Admirals, American Painted Ladies, and Spring Azures. Green Darner dragonflies have been cruising the Sanctuary, feeding on the midges that are emerging in huge swarms.

Kids' Activity Page



Grow Your Own Playhouse!

By Marge Trocki

Wouldn't it be great to have a little hideaway where you can hang out, read a book, and sip lemonade by yourself, or with a few friends? Well, why not grow your own playhouse in your own backyard!

You will need:

- Small patch of land
- Gardening tool to break up the ground
- Stakes
- String
- Seeds to grow tall flowers or grasses (sunflowers work well)
- Watering can

Here's what you do:

1. Choose an area to **plant your playhouse**.
2. Decide on the size and shape. For example, it can be round, square or rectangular. Dig around the edges and make sure the soil is loose and crumbly.
3. Push the stakes in the ground at the corners or at several places if it's a circle. Be sure to put a couple stakes where **your doorway** will be.
4. Tie the string to one doorway stake, and run the string around your playhouse to the other doorway stake. This helps to keep a nice shape when you **plant your walls**.
5. Plant your seeds under your string according to the instructions. Do not plant where your doorway will be.
6. Water your seeds.
7. As your seeds sprout and your plants grow taller, you may need to thin them out if they get too crowded.

Now, enjoy spending time in your own little house as it grows taller and taller around you each day! You may want to do some landscaping and plant some smaller flowers in front. Gather some rocks or stones and line a walkway leading to your front door. Be sure to keep your sketchbook and pencil handy. You will have a close-up view of many birds and insects who will be feasting on the walls of your new playhouse!



A sense of curiosity is nature's original school of education.

– Smiley Blanton

*If You
Can't Beat 'Em*

*Join
'Em
Mosquito*



CELEBRATION

*They're inevitable,
so why not have some fun
with these much-maligned
denizens ...
of the moist and muggy!*

*Lots of fun
and opportunities to
Bite 'Em Back*

August 13th



THE RIDGES SANCTUARY

Preservation, education and research since 1937

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Repetition

Some things are worth repeating

- Hearing that great story for the 10th time.
- Mom's special apple dessert
- A forest full of Trilliums
- A baby's smile

With a repeating (recurring) donation from your credit card you could give \$25 a month to The Ridges Sanctuary and at the end of the year have a \$300 deduction. You also get the great feeling that you have supported the preservation of 13 threatened and endangered species and the education of hundreds of children and adults.

Sign up at our website RidgesSanctuary.org
(monthly donation) or call Pam: (920) 839-2802