



A gift from present generations
to the future ...

Spring 2015
sanctuary
A Newsletter of The Ridges

*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 photo by Doug Sherman



From the Rangelight

A Conservation Ethic: The Call to Stewardship



Photo by Doug Sherman

*"The most important environmental issue is one that is rarely mentioned,
and that is the lack of a conservation ethic in our culture."*

— Gaylord Nelson

In 1949 Aldo Leopold wrote that all ethics rest upon the single premise "...that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, animals, or collectively: the land."

The founding of The Ridges grew out of a commitment to the natural community coupled with the awareness that good stewardship is a gift from present generations to the future, principles that have guided our actions for almost 78 years. This year with the opening of our new nature center, we are well-positioned to fulfill our mission to inspire stewardship of natural areas through programs of research, education and outreach and preservation.

The late Gaylord Nelson also believed in fostering "a new awareness of the ecological

bonds between man and his environment." That goal was at the core of his founding of Earth Day in 1970. Today this global initiative serves as an inspirational reminder that the best way for us all to be good citizens of the world is to focus our efforts locally.

In honor of Nelson's conservation legacy, Wisconsin's signature public land acquisition program bears his name, as well as that of fellow environmentalist former Wisconsin governor Warren Knowles. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, which has funded permanent conservation of over 560,000 acres of land for public use in the state, is known nationally as a model for catalyzing partnerships among public and private, local and national contributors. And perhaps no place illustrates those partnerships better than Door County.

Each year the Wisconsin DNR purchases

continued on next page

A Conservation Ethic: The Call to Stewardship, *continued*

land for preservation and recreation through the Stewardship Program and also makes funds available in the form of grants to local units of government and nonprofit conservation organizations like The Ridges, The Nature Conservancy and the Door County Land Trust.

Since 1993, The Ridges has used Stewardship funds to purchase additional parcels of land, the most recent being the Parent property. This 67-acre tract now forms the northern boundary of The Ridges. Its addition provides vital foraging habitat within The Ridges. It is also part of a high recharge potential area contributing groundwater to Hine's Emerald dragonfly habitat and is suitable to support populations of other rare species, including the federally-threatened dwarf lake iris.

As with all lands purchased with Stewardship funds, this newest acquisition is subject to public use requirements such as hunting, hiking, trapping, cross country skiing and snowmobiling. And it's public use that stands at the heart of the Stewardship Program because it sets the stage for the development of a conservation ethic. By supporting the conservation of valuable natural areas and resources while also providing expanded opportunities for outdoor recreation, the Stewardship Program encourages people to have close personal relationships with the land and, as a result, a personal investment in the health of the environment.

Given its remarkable track record, the recommendation in the



current state budget proposal to freeze the program until 2028 came as a surprise to the conservation community. I recently had an opportunity to meet with newly elected Representative Joel Kitchens who accepted my invitation to tour The Ridges and the new center. I was encouraged that Representative Kitchens acknowledged the importance of conservation to Door County and listened to my concerns over the future of the Stewardship program.

As we go forward, our ability to continue purchasing open land for preservation and protection of the Sanctuary will depend upon landowners with an interest in conservation and the availability of grant programs like the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

At this writing, we are optimistic that there is support in the legislature for the continuation of the program.

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

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program



Established in 1989, the Stewardship Program is Wisconsin's most significant legislative land conservation program of the last 30 years.

This program was the result of a legislative review of the Department of Natural Resources' efforts to acquire and protect recreational and environmentally sensitive lands. Their review suggested a strong need to continue the land acquisition program to complete acquisition in existing projects, to protect additional environmentally and scenically sensitive land, and to create additional recreation opportunities.

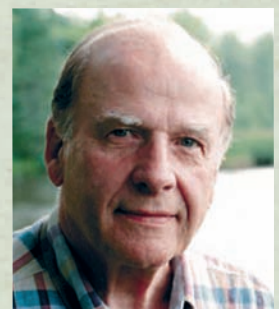
In 1993, the Stewardship Program was renamed the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship Program after two of Wisconsin's most revered conservation leaders, Warren Knowles (governor 1965-1971) and Gaylord Nelson (governor 1959-1963, U.S. Senator 1964-1981).

The Program began as a 10-year, \$250,000,000 program with funding for department acquisition grants to non-profit conservation organizations and communities and funds for conservation development. The program has been revised several times since 1989.

The conservation and recreation goals of the Stewardship Program are achieved through the acquisition of land and easements, development of recreational facilities, and restoration of wildlife habitat.

The program has been an outstanding success.

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



Gaylord Nelson



Warren Knowles

Land Protection:

Land acquisition is only possible when landowners have an interest in selling to The Ridges and The Ridges has enough funds to cover the costs. We thank all landowners who shared our vision for protection and The Ridges members for their dedication and support. Together they have made The Ridges what it is today.

Owner	Acres	Year
Door County	30	1937
Parkinson	40	1938
Hotz	40	1938
Grange	40	1938
Traven	40	1941
Rottman	40	1943
Hotz	120	1944
Toft	124	1946
Friedlund	150	1951
Logerquist	11	1960
Jonas	10	1961
Barnard	12	1962
Parent	40	1968
Campfire	3	1970
Parent	13	1970
Nimrod	30	1974
Voeks	123	1978
Erickson	40	1986
Schram	40	1987
Vogel	12	1987
Leasum	40	1990
Norman	35	1991
Beisler	40	1992
Butts	139	1992
Butts	29	1994
Lurie	1.1	1995
Law	8	1996
Chesney	2.5	1997
Leander	6	1998
Dieterich	2.5	1999
Shively	8	1999
Crotty	1	1999
Wilson	11	2003
Schultz	40	2004
Fuchs	120	2005
Peil	40	2006
Livingston	37	2007
Hedeen	15	2009
Blue Sky Harbor	1	2009
Warecki	35	2010
Gigstead	40	2010
McDonald	5	2010
Whipple	2.5	2011
Valenti	1	2011
Parent	68	2015

The First 50 years - A Thousand Acres

Since The Ridges was formed in 1937, land protection has been, and always will be, one of three pillars of our mission. In fact, our commitment to land protection began when the organization signed an agreement with the Door County Parks Commission to protect the original 30 acres from development. But the founders of our young organization also knew that to protect this unique habitat and the variety of native orchids, it would take a lot more than 30 acres. They quickly set an ambitious goal to acquire much more land knowing there were no grants or other funding sources at the time, only donations from their members and community. As stated in the original Articles of Incorporation, The Ridges Sanctuary pursued a land acquisition program:

"To acquire by gift, purchase or otherwise, part or all of the real estate in the area in the town of Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin, known as "The Ridges" or "The Bog" and to protect the native plant and animal life on the same and to preserve the same in its natural or aboriginal state ..."

Despite facing a number of challenges, the Sanctuary grew to 520 acres through land acquisitions from its membership between 1938 and 1946.

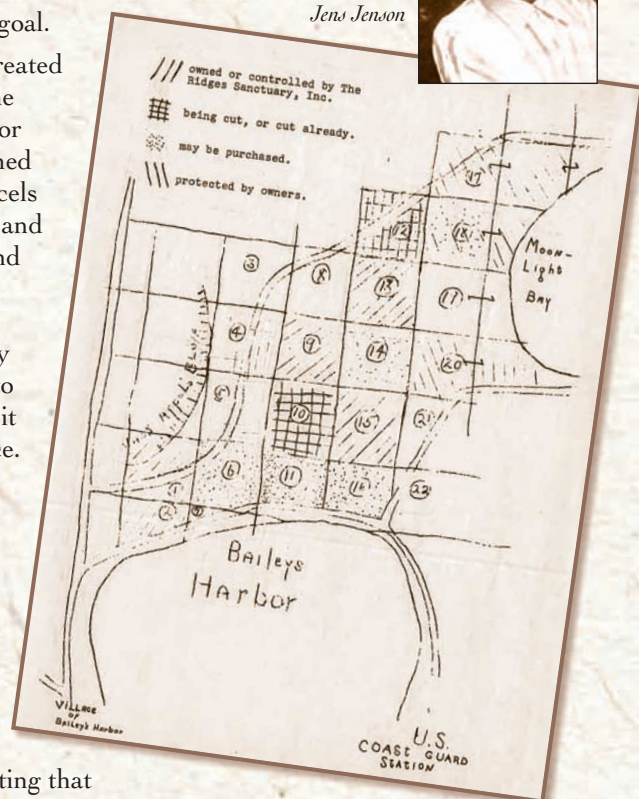
In the late 30s and early 40s, land was in demand for housing and logging. No one really knew about The Ridges or its goal to purchase land for preservation, but our founders never faltered. In 1937, board member Jens Jensen challenged the organization to acquire and protect 1,000 acres. A short time later, in January 1938, The Ridges acquired its first parcel when the late Ferdinand Hotz of Chicago, Illinois, donated forty acres. It was at this time that the first appeal brochure was developed. "Save The Ridges" (pictured on following page) sought to build awareness about the organization and its mission and to enlist the support of the greater community in reaching its goal.

By 1945, the organization had created a Project Area Map to prioritize the acquisition of parcels through gift or purchase. These parcels were defined as the "Heart of The Ridges" - parcels that were critical to the protection and preservation of the unique ridge and swale geological formations. Year after year of negotiations and fundraising followed and, parcel by parcel, these lands were acquired to form the Sanctuary and to protect it for future generations to experience.

On September 29, 1987, The Ridges finally met the challenge issued by Jens Jensen with a donation of 11.9 acres by the Vogel family. With that addition, the grand total of protected land reached 1001.9 acres, a milestone achieved just prior to our 50th anniversary celebration on October 4, 1987. It bears repeating that this goal was achieved without state aid and without grants. It was possible only because of our members' dedication to the vision of land stewardship and their commitment to see it through to fruition.



Jens Jensen



A History of Stewardship

The Stewardship Program

In 1989, Wisconsin passed the Stewardship Program in an effort to protect recreational and environmentally sensitive land. It was an opportunity for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, nonprofits, and government agencies receive financial support from the fund to protect land.

With the main ridge and swale complex already protected, The Ridges began to purchase land using Stewardship funds to protect its surrounding watershed and Hine's emerald dragonfly critical habitat. Although the surrounding lands are not as biologically diverse as the existing ridges and swales, it is imperative to protect the water quality flowing into the Sanctuary. The Stewardship Fund also helped in the purchase of our Logan Creek property.

Protecting Water Quality

The Ridges worked with UW-Green Bay faculty members for many years to study the Ridges hydrology and identify whether it was surface water or seeping up from the groundwater. Based on the results of this research, we purchased adjacent parcels that directly influenced the water quality flowing into the swales. It was this research that led to the 2005 purchase of 160 acres west of Highway 57. This area drains into Hidden Brook and the swales parallel to Hwy 57. It is now known as the Family Discovery Trail.



Hine's Emerald Dragonfly Habitat

In 2008, a study was published identifying areas contributing groundwater to the Hine's emerald dragonfly critical habitat. For The Ridges, most of these areas are north of the Sanctuary, between Highway 57 and County Q. Several US Fish & Wildlife grants were used in concert with the Stewardship Fund to purchase land in this

groundwater contributing area, including the recently acquired Parent parcel. Over the years, these land purchases have helped protect the swales and other parts of the Sanctuary from potential contamination.

Logan Creek – Our First Stewardship Fund Grant

In 1992, a variety of circumstances resulted in the need for quick action to protect this ecologically significant area from development. As a result, The Ridges purchased 140 acres down along Logan Creek in Jacksonport. The story of why The Ridges reached beyond its project area in Baileys Harbor while interesting, is not as important as knowing this diverse woodland has now been protected in perpetuity. The purchase was made possible by assistance from The Nature Conservancy, the Stewardship Fund and The Ridges members. One walk along the trails and you will understand why The Ridges reached beyond its boundaries to protect Logan Creek before it was developed and lost forever.

In the years since 1987, we have gone well beyond the challenge made by Jens Jensen. With the continued support of our members and with the financial support of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, we have been able to grow thoughtfully and strategically to ensure the protection of one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in Wisconsin.

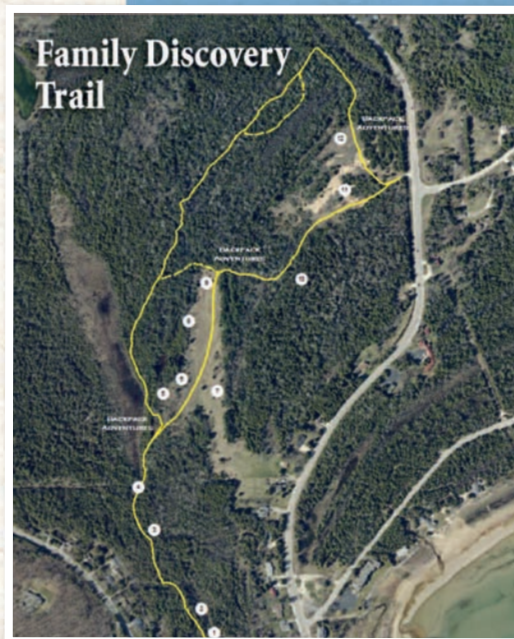
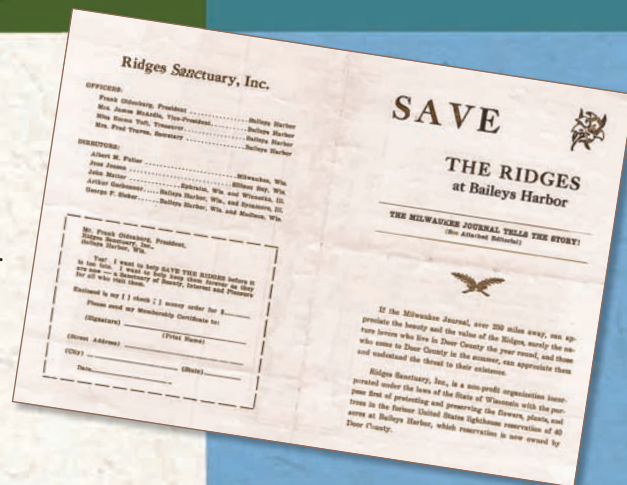


Photo by Julie Schartner

Land Protection: *Stewardship in Action*



Managing multiple uses while protecting the biological integrity of the Sanctuary can be challenging at times. As part of The Ridges' strategic planning process and as a result of new requirements tied to the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, we continually address land management needs and map out the best locations for different visitor experiences and research projects in order to provide meaningful experiences for visitors while still protecting the most biologically diverse part of the Sanctuary. The decision about where to build our new center was selected only after this same kind of analysis.

Land Management

Controlling invasive species, managing different hunting seasons and phenology studies are some of the annual management programs The Ridges supports. The Ridges also coordinates several citizen monitoring programs which helps collect the vital field data necessary to make better management decisions.

The Ridges also knows the importance of looking beyond our borders to work with Door County landowners in protecting water quality and native species in their own backyard. Our Landowner Stewardship Program provides staff to conduct landowner visits to identify ways landowners, both commercial and residential, can protect water quality, control invasive species and protect biodiversity.

Research

Albert Fuller, our founding father, realized in 1935 that land acquisition alone would not be enough to save Wisconsin's orchids. He knew it would take continued research to add to our knowledge base and ongoing education to raise awareness in order to successfully protect the Sanctuary. As he stated in his 1935 book *Orchids of Wisconsin*,

Conservation of native plants is possible in two ways: by the establishment of permanent wildlife sanctuaries . . . and growing them in our gardens.

The establishment of wildlife sanctuaries is imperative if the natural habitats of native plants are to be preserved for posterity.

It is hoped, in a few years, that scientific research will disclose methods will disclose methods whereby the seeds of our native orchids can be made to germinate readily . . . even though natural habitats are preserved, our choicest (orchid) species will become extinct."



Photo by Doug Sherman

Thanks to botanist Melissa Curran, Stantec Engineering, The Ridges has been able to make connections with the scientific labs that will make Albert Fuller's vision a reality. On May 12 of this year, the first round of orchids, specifically 1,000 ram's head orchids, were planted in the Sanctuary along the proposed boardwalk route. This area was grazed at one time and consequently lost its diversity and orchid populations. Each year, different orchid species will be reintroduced in this part of the Sanctuary and studied to identify best management practices to ensure the genetic integrity of The Ridges' orchids and sustain its populations. This research will be shared with the Smithsonian, which is coordinating a nation-wide orchid project. Ultimately, our goal will be to help repopulate native orchid species throughout the Door Peninsula.



Land Protection: *Stewardship in Action*, continued

Sustainability

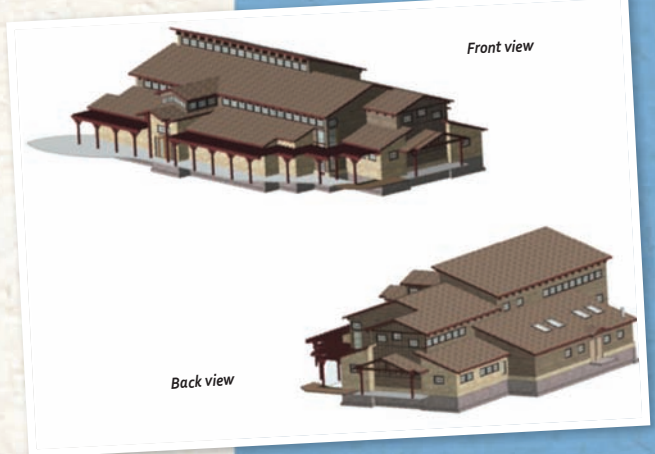
Sustainable development is a balance between meeting the needs of the local community and economy while minimizing the negative impact to the environment. The Ridges used sustainability as a guideline in creating its vision for the organization's future.

- The location of the Cook-Albert Fuller Center was selected because it developed an existing commercial site and made a physical connection between the Sanctuary and Baileys Harbor.
- Visitors can experience The Ridges as well as Baileys Harbor, financially supporting both while providing a holistic experience of the Baileys Harbor community.
- The building site was designed to educate visitors on best management practices in water quality and quantity control.
- Remediation of the contaminated soil that resulted from the common practice of fish boils on site is now an outdoor classroom for backyard habitats.
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification set the benchmark standards for building construction and site design, both of which represent models for responsible development in a sensitive environment.

Visitor Experiences

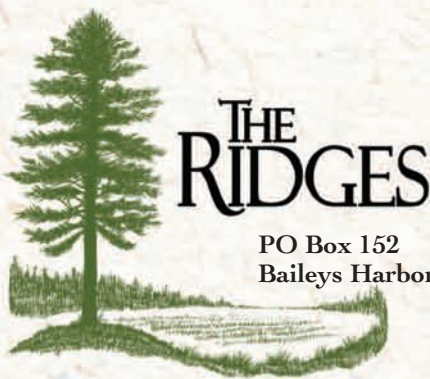
A recent change with the Knowles–Nelson Stewardship fund allows public access for hiking, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing and trapping. This is something we welcome and will promote as we acquire land. However, we've also addressed many other land uses as we developed our strategic plan, center and campus:

- The existing trails through the "heart of the Sanctuary" will not be developed. This part of the sanctuary will remain rustic to protect the diversity of flora and fauna and maintain its unique character.
- A handicapped accessible boardwalk will be built between the new center and the Range Lights to facilitate access for all visitors.
- The Family Discovery Trail, an area not as rich in diversity but critical in protecting our water quality, will be used for families to explore off trail, making personal connections to the natural world.



A Note of Thanks

to our Archives Committee – Marilyn Mahlberg, Gwynne Schultz and former Committee member Gloria Drummond – for their meticulous attention to organizing and maintaining our archived records. Their hard work was much appreciated as we researched the information for this issue of Sanctuary.



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Experience, Explore...

Exhale.

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Mark Your Calendar for These Summer Events!

Living Green Tour of Homes

JULY 17 & 18 - Friday & Saturday, 9 AM - 4 PM

This self-guided tour begins at The Ridges new nature center and spotlights 5 Door County examples of green living practices. Begin or end the circuit with a tour of the Cook-Albert Fuller Center to learn about our green design features and Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

Tickets are \$25 and include a map and description of each home. Tickets available in advance or at The Ridges on tour dates.



2015 Annual Gathering

AUGUST 1 - Saturday, 4 - 7 PM

Nationally recognized and self-proclaimed Grillologists Mad Dog and Merrill entertain while cooking up a summer feast under the big tent behind the cabins! Eating has never been so much fun! Appetizers and beverages and a brief Year in Review program at 4 PM, followed by dinner at 5.

Tickets are \$40/person. Space is limited. RSVPs requested by July 20.

Ramble Thru The Ridges

SEPTEMBER 26 - Saturday, 9 AM

What's better than a ramble through the early fall beauty of the Sanctuary? Join us for a 2.3 miles walk on our scenic trails. Naturalists and interpretive stations along the way will add to your enjoyment and a special program will follow the walk.

Entry fees for the Ramble are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children under 18.

Register before September 1st and receive a 20% discount.



Don't wait! Register online or call 920.839.2802