

Winter 2009/2010

sanctuary

A Newsletter of The Ridges Sanctuary



VOLUNTEERS

The Spirit of The Ridges

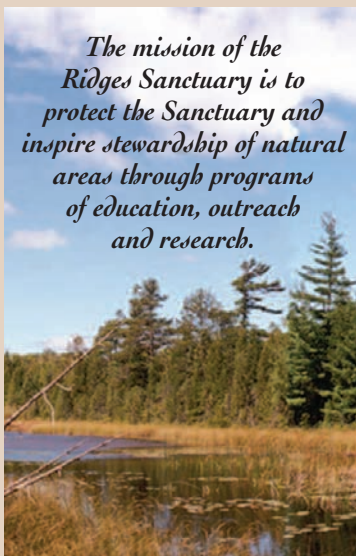


Photo by Paul Burron

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 photos:
Volunteer David Lea searches for macroinvertebrates during stream monitoring.
Inset: The Barberry Pirates 'take no prisoners' when it comes to invasive species.
(staff photos)

From the Rangelight

The Volunteer Spirit... Alive & Well at The Ridges

The phrase "time and talent" is often used to describe how people contribute to causes in which they believe. Throughout the past year, our success in protecting the Sanctuary and providing education and research programs is due to your contributions of time and talent. It is why we are dedicating this issue of "sanctuary" to all of our members and volunteers to celebrate the Spirit of The Ridges.

The volunteer spirit has been alive and well at The Ridges for over 70 years. Our founders, including Albert Fuller, Jens Jensen, Olivia Traven, Emma Toft and others, believed that the organization should be a center for environmental stewardship – promoting research for understanding, education for awareness, and land protection to care for the diversity of flora and fauna. The incredible natural landscapes and diversity of The Ridges inspired our founders and so many others over the years, to act as volunteer land stewards in many different ways.

Like Phoebe Erickson. She was a famous illustrator and author of children's books: "Slip, the Story of a Little Fox", 1948; "Black Penny", 1951; "Daniel Coon", 1954; just to mention a few. She grew up on North Bay where art, music, books, and nature were important family values. Her childhood memories of her family farm and exploring places like The Ridges were the inspiration behind writing her books.

In the annual membership letter in 1954, Erickson states, "One of my truest childhood impressions, and perhaps the most enduring, was the yearly discovery of favorite wildflowers blooming again. Their faithfulness, always appearing in their proper time and season

was, I now realize, a certain lesson in responsibility; once a job is started you don't fall down on it."

Faithful and responsible volunteers are still the foundation of The Ridges organization. For example, last winter, six volunteers met with staff to plan a new "Wild Places" program – a partnership with the McArdle Library to help children and families explore the outdoors. As we had coffee, and a lot of laughs, we reminisced about our childhood memories, just like Phoebe Erickson described, and those memories of outdoor explorations became the meaning behind the program. As the summer progressed, these volunteers and many others played key roles in making the program a great success. The "Wild Places" books, created by children who participated in the program, are posted on The Ridges' website.

The success of the Wild Places program, and how it developed among friends and community partners, is just one of many great stories of stewardship in 2009. It exemplifies why we've been so successful in so many ways – friends and a lot of good food, working toward a common goal of protecting the Sanctuary. The board and staff thank all who made the past year so successful by: organizing the archives; running the Nature Center; removing invasive species; maintaining the buildings, gardens and trails; helping with events; teaching school groups; developing programs and leading hikes; acting as citizen scientists monitoring streams, flora and fauna; contributing financially to support our mission. Even the simplest act, like the anonymous volunteer who plows our Logan Creek property parking lot, means a lot to everyone at The Ridges.

Thank you for continuing to fulfill the wishes of our founders to create and maintain a *Center for Environmental Stewardship*. Your dedication to protecting this special place is truly the *Spirit of The Ridges*.

Steve Leonard
Executive Director
steve@ridgessanctuary.org



Quick Notes

Matchless Members do a Match

In September, an anonymous donor challenged the membership to raise \$10,000 by October 1 in a campaign to bolster TRS operating fund. The membership responded enthusiastically with donations of \$15, \$25, \$50, \$100, and more! All those small donations added up to almost the entire \$10,000 and then a few larger donations put it over \$19,000! The entire TRS Board and staff plus over 100 Ridges' members contributed to the campaign. Thank you!

Kids Program

There's nothing more fun than exploring nature with a child leading the way! That's exactly what we did during the Summer Children's Programs at The Ridges. This year, 40 children from age 4 through 12 investigated, played in and learned about the habitats of the Sanctuary and the wild creatures that make their homes here. The kids led staff and parents as we built nests, netted and identified aquatic creatures and analyzed wildlife clues. We can't wait until next summer's explorations start!

Appeal Letter

Keep The Ridges in your heart and your giving plans this season. Watch for the annual appeal letter. Your contribution supports our mission in land protection, education and research.

WI DNR Landowner Incentive Grant Program

Over the past two years, The Ridges has received a total of \$15,000 from Wisconsin DNR to help control the invasive species *Phragmites australis* out in Pickerel Pond. Staff and volunteers have been working alongside contractors to match hours as part of the grant. Acres of *Phragmites* were treated in Pickerel Pond, but thirty plus acres remain. We will continue to pursue grants to help fund invasive species control projects for Pickerel Pond and other areas of concern.

Call of the Wild

Forty kids responded to the call of the Wild Places this last summer to join in a cooperative venture between The Ridges and the McArdle Library to get kids exploring the outdoors. Each participant received a bag, a blank book, art supplies and was encouraged to find a special place to observe and illustrate. The kids took to the outdoors and each added his or her own personal touch to the writing of a book chronicling observations made in the Wild Place. To see some of the completed books, visit the



McArdle Library in Baileys Harbor or visit: www.RidgesSanctuary.org/2009/09/wild_places_books/.

Fundraisers/Events

The 21st annual **Ridges Ride for Nature** had 350 riders and raised over \$8,000 for The Ridges' educational programs.

a'Round for the Ridges, the second annual golf outing, added an evening pizza get-together with a Silent Auction and raised over \$5,000 for The Ridges.

The **Recycling Extravaganza-Flea Market** included a Ridges' booth with donated items and raised over \$1,000 for The Ridges. The 'Muffins in the Morning' and the lunch were a big hit with vendors, volunteers and buyers.

Door County Festival of Nature

With 50 field trips, 35 leaders, and over 200 participants who enjoyed the spring beauty of Door County, this year's Door County Festival of Nature was an educational success. The profit from the event raised over \$9,000 for The Ridges' other education programs.

Celebrating Volunteers

Bruce Frudden, Marilyn Mahlberg, and Maureen McGrath were recognized as "Volunteers of The Year" at The Ridges' 2009 Volunteer Celebration at Bjorklund. The day was gorgeous, the setting was beautiful, the food was excellent, the music was toe-tapping good, and everyone went home pleased, full, and tired. Without these selfless, energetic, and dedicated friends of The Ridges, many of the programs and initiatives that follow the mission simply would not be realized. They are as diverse as The Ridges itself and each brings a special focus and energy that lightens the load and the hearts of the Board of Directors and the Ridges'

Staff. (Special thanks to Harbor Fish Market & Grille for donating the food and to Lee Nordgren's trio for the music.)

Event(s) to Remember

NATURAL CHRISTMAS

December 12, 2009 Enjoy the simple pleasures of nature this Christmas. The log cabins at The Ridges Sanctuary are decorated with natural materials and open to residents and visitors. Make a fresh Christmas wreath, nature crafts, or natural decorations. Take a winter hike in the Sanctuary and enjoy luminarias lining the boardwalk from the Upper window of the Rangelight. Gather around the fire to toast marshmallows and nibble on cookies dipped in hot chocolate. Lots of homemade treats, music by World on a String, and 'natural' fun. 3 PM – 6 PM. Info: (920) 839-2802.

SNOWSHOE HIKES

Fridays in January & February
...starting January 8, 1:00 PM.

WAFFLE BREAKFAST

February 6
At the Baileys Harbor Town Hall.

'READING THE RIDGES'

March 1 – April 12
Art show at the Link Gallery, Door Community Auditorium, Fish Creek.

DOOR COUNTY FESTIVAL OF NATURE

May 27 – 29
Pre-registration required. Watch for hike description online and in the mail.

THE RIDGES' RIDE FOR NATURE

June 19
Register online at www.RidgesSanctuary.org

MEET & MUNCH

August 8
The Ridges' Annual Meeting & Member Picnic

Volunteers: *The Spirit of The Ridges*



Photo by Marc Demoly

Stream monitoring at Reiboldt's Creek



Fall 2009 Work (Fun) Day



Invasive species removal, aka Barberry Pirates

Milwaukee Public Museum curator and noted botanist Albert Fuller, and pioneering Door County conservationists Emma Toft and Olivia Traven — saw an extraordinary piece of land threatened by conversion to commercial use. Their foresight and dedication saved the land for current and future generations to enjoy, and launched a tradition of grassroots volunteerism that continues today with our members — who maintain our trails and buildings, lead nature walks, teach youth programs, operate our Nature Store, and perform myriad other tasks. The Ridges was built through the efforts of volunteers and is still growing today because of their dedication, talents, and energy. What better way to tell the story of The Ridges' volunteers than through their own words.

🌱 The day I stumbled upon the Ridges Sanctuary was a happy day, indeed. In early 2008, my husband, Mike, and I had not yet moved to Door County and were visiting a friend who lives on Ridges Road; my friend and I decided to take a walk, and as we passed the lower range light, I asked, "Is that a lighthouse?" She replied, "Not exactly," but wasn't quite sure how to explain what it was. I saw the boardwalk that led to the Upper Range Light and said, "Come with me — we'll find out what's in your back yard!" She declined, but I kept going, discovering a lovely sanctuary filled with trails, log cabins and friendly people. As luck would have it, Karen Newbern was hiking along one of the trails and took me under her wing. As we walked, she described the fascinating plants, trees, lichens and flowers we were passing. I was charmed. Karen invited me into the Marshall Cabin to meet some Nature Center volunteers. Again, it was my lucky day because sitting next to me was Pam Gregory. She asked if we lived here. I told her not yet, but we were seriously considering it. "Would you like to volunteer at the Ridges?" Pam asked me innocently. "Oh, yes," I replied remembering Karen's encompassing wing, "I think it would be a hoot!"

Soon we did live here, and my days of being a Ridges volunteer began. The Nature Center was a wonderful place to start, full of natural treasures and fascinating visitors. I learned far more from our informed guests about snakes, frogs, peepers, and dragonflies than I was able to teach them about swales, ridges, or native flowers. Their interested questions helped me learn about our area and made me proud to be part of this wonderful community.

The Ridges was starting to feel like home, and Marc Demoly's hamburgers and Carol Schuster's cookies sealed the deal! Then the emails began...the Barberry Pirates needed help ridding the Ridges of invasive species. How do you say no to pulling miles of prickly, tangled, snarled, toxic, heinous, hideous weeds?? You can't! That's the beauty of volunteering at the Ridges — the friends you meet, the laughs you share, and the work you do together bind you to this special place, making it meaningful for yourself and those who come to visit. ~ *Sue Spitz*

🌱 Volunteering at The Ridges means many things for me. It is spending time in a beautiful environment. It is working on the trails, gardens and buildings to maintain The Ridges and to provide a beautiful and meaningful experience for our members and visitors. It is explaining to our visitors how the beach ridges are formed and the historical significance of the range lights. And of prime importance is the fellowship with other volunteers. ~ *Bruce Frudden*

🌱 I had a special volunteer treat this summer. I went out twice with Marne Kaeske to check the health of two of Door County's creeks (Logan & Reiboldt's) as

“The Ridges was built through the efforts of volunteers...”

part of The Ridges' ongoing Watershed Monitoring Program. We measured length, width, oxygen levels, stream flow, vegetation, creek bed, and then... the fun part: Sampling and recording the critters that live in the water! It was such a great experience... Marne is a fine naturalist... good “explainer”, patient and encouraging. I hope to continue monitoring next summer. ~ *Lee Ann Harling.*

🌿 What do the following items have in common: a Leopold bench, hearty chili and homemade corn bread, heritage roses around the “outhouse,” Marc's burgers; Blue Bird houses, Bruce's juicy homegrown tomatoes and veggies; a Monarch butterfly way station, brownies “to die for?” - The Ridges Sanctuary!

Those of us who are lucky enough to volunteer at the Ridges for all types of activities are well fed and very much appreciated. We are treated so special that we keep coming back season after season. If you have some extra time, any time of the day, any time of the week-call 920-839-2802 and volunteer at the Ridges. Bring your wonderful lifetime experiences with you and help the Ridges Sanctuary expand its programs and facilities. Help us grow to be a better Environmental Center and Sanctuary than we ever dreamed we could be.

We can't promise to feed you once a month – but we will appreciate your spirit and expertise every minute of every day! ~ *The Wednesday Crew and the Lighthouse Keepers*

🌿 There are two primary reasons why I am a “Ridges Volunteer”. First and foremost, the staff is the best, and by that I mean they are all hard-working, talented, cheerful and totally dedicated to the welfare of The Ridges. I really like that! Second, volunteering at The Ridges allows me to be a part of the effort to both understand and protect each and every square inch of this unique sanctuary.

Also, being a volunteer/member of the “Ridges family” gives me a way to meet and work with some really wonderful people and at the same time provides me with an opportunity to do challenging projects. For those members who haven't tried volunteering you need to get your act together and give it a try. I think you will love being a part of the “Ridges family”.

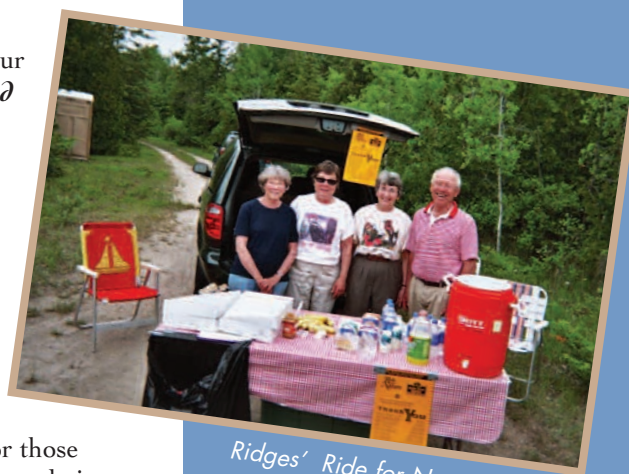
~ *Marilyn Mahlberg*

🌿 Working out on the beach in the sand selectively pulling crown vetch from the grasses and flowers on the beach makes me look at all the plants very closely. Welcome sun hitting my back, pleasant weather in the 60s... what a zen experience! I am part of a group loosely spread around a small sand dune talking quietly as they work, about things as diverse as “What is this plant?” to “How do we fix those schools?” Pulling, pulling, piles of crown vetch grow as time moves quickly in the summer sun. Too soon it is time to leave and go to a lunch of burgers on the grill and yummy side dishes. ~ *Sue Fedenia*

Volunteers at The Ridges exhibit a special spirit that is infectious and inspiring. The Ridges' work day this Fall started out drizzly and dreary. With a mountain of wood chips and enough chili, cornbread and brownies to feed the Packer roster, the staff was a little gloomy, thinking of all the work to be done before winter and what to do with all that food! Who would come out to help on such a morning? At 8:30, 27 volunteers showed up with rain jackets, pitchforks, and wheelbarrows and whittled down the wood chip pile with over 150 wheelbarrow trips out Winter Wren trail. Others cleared the gardens and cleaned the Range Light, getting it ready for winter. They also took care of the concern about the food! After working hard all morning, many of them thanked us for the opportunity to help! That is the Spirit of The Ridges. These wonderful, selfless volunteers are invaluable for the work they do but also for their spirit!



Phragmites control



Ridges' Ride for Nature rest stop



Family Discovery Night

Applying What They've Learned

Preserving Door County's Natural Legacy

In the fall of 2008, The Ridges began a new and exciting program to train volunteers for conservation and environmental programs around the county. Modeled after highly-successful Master Naturalist Programs in other states, the Wisconsin Naturalists Program provides 25 hours of classroom training in water resources, geology and soil, wildlife, plant communities, and other natural resource topics. After training, participants share what they've learned by contributing volunteer time to The Ridges, schools, state and local parks, and nonprofit environmental groups.

Twenty-three participants from all over Door County took part in our first Wisconsin Naturalists training. Here are a few of the projects undertaken by volunteers since they completed their training last fall:



Photo: Marc Demedy

Several Wisconsin Naturalists participated in a Hines Emerald Dragonfly survey this summer (photo at left). Members assisted researchers from the University of South Dakota, checking for road-killed dragonflies along a section of County

Highway Q in Baileys Harbor which goes through critical dragonfly habitat. This research is helpful in determining population trends for the federally-endangered dragonfly.

Led by two Wisconsin Naturalists, third grade students at Gibraltar School explored and learned more about the outdoor classroom adjacent to their school. The students then took a field trip to compare that environment with the diverse habitats of The Ridges Sanctuary.

Woodside Park in Sturgeon Bay is closer to being weed-free, thanks to the efforts of a Wisconsin Naturalist and the second grade classes at Sawyer School. The kids learned about Garlic Mustard and how it was crowding out the wildflowers in the park which lies behind their school. Students then assisted with removing the garlic mustard.

Another Wisconsin Naturalist volunteer monitors bluebird houses in Newport State Park, and leads walks to teach people about bluebirds and the conservation efforts in their behalf.

One of the most exciting aspects of this program is seeing how volunteers become environmental stewards, demonstrating ways that we can all help protect and preserve Door County's natural legacy and others to get involved. Their efforts benefit not only The Ridges, but conservation and education efforts throughout the county.

Who knows what great things the 2009 Wisconsin Naturalists will accomplish?



Wisconsin Naturalists in training

Great-spangled fritillary



Nature Notes

* "Firsts" of the 2009 season: Hummingbird on May 9; Dwarf Lake Iris, May 10; Indian Paintbrush, May 16; Monarch butterfly, June 4; Hines Emerald dragonfly, June 18.

* On July 8, hikers reported watching a Fox Snake eating a Shrew along the trails.

* Participants in the July dragonfly workshop saw many Skimmers, especially 4-Spotted and 12-Spotted. Also seen were several species of Meadowhawks and a few Hines Emeralds. Overall, dragonfly numbers were quite low.

* The weather this summer was like a roller coaster. Cool spring and early summer, continued cool and dry in July, warmer and very dry in September, ending with almost 8 inches of rain and below normal temperatures in October. What will winter bring?

* Dark-eyed Juncos returned to the Ridges on October 26.

* After the rains of October, salmon were seen running from Baileys Harbor up Hidden Brook and in to the swales.

* "Last" – the late blooming Witch hazel bush was still flowering on November 18.



Witch hazel

Kids' Activity Page

Become a Human Bird Feeder!

By Marge Trocki

Help out our feathered friends! As the weather turns colder and snow begins to cover the ground, birds have a difficult time finding food. How about letting them feed from your hand or, better yet, from the top of your head?! Follow these instructions, be patient, and become a "Human Bird Feeder!"

You will need:

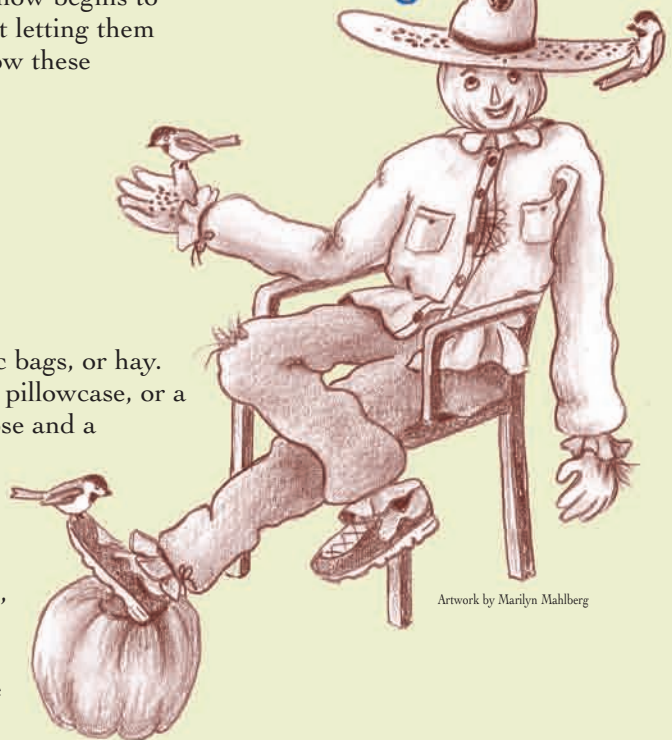
- Clothing to make a scarecrow
- Pillowcase or bag
- Stuffing (plastic bags, newspapers, hay)
- Wide-brimmed hat
- Chair
- Birdseed

Start by stuffing a pair of pants and a shirt with newspaper, plastic bags, or hay. You can even put gloves on to make hands, and attach shoes. Stuff a pillowcase, or a bag to make a head, and attach. Be creative and put on hair, eyes, nose and a mouth. Be sure to put a smile on it!

Next, set your scarecrow on a chair out in your yard. A good place would be by a tree where many birds usually hang out. Put a straw hat, or any kind of wide-brimmed hat, on your scarecrow's head. Sprinkle birdseed on the brim all the way around. If you'd like, put some of the seed on the shoulders or in the hands – that is, if your scarecrow has hands! Give the birds time to discover your "friendly scarecrow". This may take days. After you see that they are comfortable eating off of it, throw them a curve. Take the scarecrow off the chair and sit down with the scarecrow's hat on "your" head. Make sure there is birdseed on the brim. Give it some time and sit real still. Eventually, birds will be eating off your head!

You can also hold out your hands with birdseed on them. If you are patient enough, and still enough, birds will eat right from your hands. Chickadees have been known to warm-up to us "human feeders" quickly!

Keep a log of how many different kinds of birds use "you" for their dinner table. Before you know it, your friends will be lining up to take turns as "Human Bird Feeders!"



Artwork by Marilyn Mahlberg

What's In YOUR Watershed?

by Marne Kaeske – Summer Naturalist

In May, twelve volunteers were trained in stream monitoring techniques through the Wisconsin Water Action Volunteer network (<http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/wav/>). They learned to measure parameters that indicate water quality:

Volunteers then adopted a local stream, in The Ridges' water-



Megan helps with the stream monitoring.

shed or other key streams in Door County, and monitored them throughout the summer and fall. The data collected was then recorded in the State database (<http://www.uwex.edu/erc/wavdb/>) as baseline data for identifying changes over time.

Thanks to all the stream monitoring volunteers. Volunteers monitoring The Ridges Watershed: Sharon and George Cobb, Sarah Freyman, Jane Whitney, and Julie Knox. Jane and Julie typically would have their grandkids along, Ida Whitney and Collette Ullman, making stream monitoring a learning experience for all generations. LeeAnn Harling concentrated on Logan Creek. Volunteers Marilyn Hansotia and Marc Demoly monitored Three Springs Creek.

Next year, the program will focus on Kangaroo Lake watershed with interested volunteers Lucy Klug, Jim Walsh, Marilyn and Paul Mahlberg and Bill and Lynn Antholine. If you are interested in getting your feet wet with this fledgling program by adopting a local stream, please call The Ridges at 920-839-2802.



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A VIP (Very Important Plant)
Ram's Head orchid
(Wisconsin threatened)

Photo by Len Villano
www.lenvillano.com

Ridges Sanctuary **VIP** VOLUNTEER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Many companies reward their employees and retirees for involvement in the community by matching their volunteer hours with dollars. Another benefit to employees (and non-profits like The Ridges) is a company's Matching Gift program in which the employer matches donations from employees with a 'matching' donation from the company.

To see if your company has a VIP or Matching Gift program:

- Check with your Human Resources department
- Visit www.RidgesSanctuary.org/donate/ and look for the VIP/Company Match link
- Call The Ridges (920) 839-2802



Long-time (since 1938) volunteer, **Lee Traven**, last year traded his 140 hours of volunteering at the Nature Center for a \$2,000 gift to The Ridges. Lee also uses his company's Matching Gift program to double his donations to The Ridges.