



Fall 2016

sanctuary

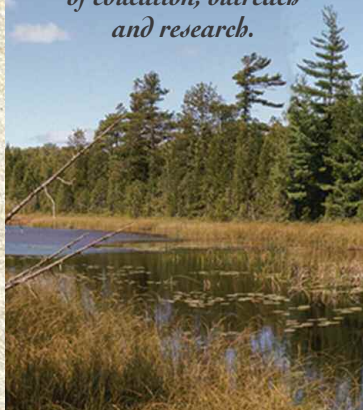
A Newsletter of The Ridges

*“The future belongs to those
who believe in the beauty
of their dreams”*

– Eleanor Roosevelt

WE HAVE ONLY JUST BEGUN.

*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 Drew Richmond



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From the Rangelight

So, why did we do this?



Cook-Albert Fuller Center



Orchid Restoration



Hidden Brook Boardwalk

Over the past 5 years, The Ridges has taken on arguably the 3 largest initiatives in its 79 year history. The impact these initiatives have on those who visit is the reason we took them on.

When the fundraising began for the Cook-Albert Fuller Center and its adjoining properties in 2011, it launched the largest Capital Campaign in The Ridges 74 year history. Through hard work, precision planning, dedicated and passionate donors, and skilled craftsmanship, the Cook-Albert Fuller Center was opened just 3 short years after the first funds arrived.

In the spring of 2013, a dedicated group of volunteers, staff, and students set out into the Sanctuary to find orchids. But this wasn't just another hike in the woods, this was the first step in the largest orchid restoration project in the history of The Ridges. This involved coordinating research initiatives and to create a native orchid recovery plan for The Ridges, Door County and along the Door Peninsula institutionalizing propagation and out-planting requirements for the 26 orchid species once known to The Ridges. Our survivability rates are off the charts and we are moving ahead for our fourth year.

With the vision of Lee Traven, the Hidden Brook Boardwalk became a concept. Gifts from donors over the years and most recently from Marsha Krueger, it became a possibility. And with the dedication of Peil Construction and hundreds of volunteer hours, it became a reality.

The Hidden Brook Boardwalk was dedicated on September 1st, 2016. Throughout the summer, visitors of all ages and all walks of life have enjoyed walking its meandering trails through the ridges and swales. It's a new pathway to experience the Sanctuary for those who might not have been able to hike the rustic trails.

So why was it so important to take on these major initiatives? The answer is clear – to fulfill our mission in preservation, education, and research. The following pages recap the last 5 years: what was the vision, why did we do it, and what the impact has been thus far.

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

...for the future.



Cook-Albert Fuller Center

The Cook-Albert Fuller Center has allowed us to expand the reach of our education and research initiatives and to continue to share the power of possibility – one family, one child, one landowner at a time – for generations to come. Since opening its doors in June 2015, the number of visitors to The Ridges has tripled. The vision of this space was to create a center for environmental stewardship. The staff and board wanted a place where education and inspiration could happen on a daily basis. It has exceeded their wildest expectations.



Through much planning, the Board of Directors and staff kicked off the campaign in 2012 with a one million dollar gift in hand. A gentleman by the name of Chester Cook had reached out to Steve Leonard, Executive Director, and shared his story of how The Ridges had such an incredible impact on his life, especially an individual

by the name of Albert Fuller. Chester Cook wanted to support our vision by honoring Albert Fuller – our founding father and good friend to Chester - and with that, a one million dollar gift was made.

In April of 2014 we broke ground and the dream became a reality. Over the next 14 months the Cook-Albert Fuller Center began to take shape. With the goals of increased visibility, providing interpretive media and programs, adequate space to inform and welcome visitors, and a model of sustainability, the air was filled with much anticipation. With a now highly visible center on Highway 57, a common day saw up-

ward of 120 visitors in July and August. Programs like Monarch Madness saw over 100 people, all learning about the monarch's life cycle, migration patterns, and how to track them through tagging and citizen monitoring. People have learned about mushrooms, the importance of pollinators, and birds of prey. The Thursday evening Lake Lessons educational sessions filled the Discovery room with energy. The Nature Store, with its mission to extend the educational and outreach experience of the Sanctuary to its visitors and provides financial support to the operations of The Ridges, had never seen sales like this before. The Ridges was now able to deliver its mission to so many more.



Over the next few months the center will go through another transformation when the exhibits are put into place. With installation scheduled for late February, early March, visitors will have the opportunity to be greeted by a volunteer or staff member, then be fully immersed in the rich cultural and natural history of The Ridges. The exhibits will take them on a journey from how the ridges were formed, to who fought to save this place, and how important these 1,600 acres are. As visitors leave the center for the Hidden Brook Boardwalk, they will have a full understanding of this unique area and experience a hike through The Ridges Sanctuary like never before.

The Cook-Albert Fuller Center has had a tremendous impact on The Ridges operation. It has allowed the dedicated volunteers, board members, and staff to deliver the mission in a way that was previously not possible. With planning for 2017 well underway, the opportunities for more impact are endless.



Orchid Restoration Project

Where does The Ridges fit into the global picture of conservation? Understanding the vision created by our founders and talking with our partners over the last year, The Ridges can be the leader in orchid conservation for the Midwest. Orchid conservation is where we can make a world-wide difference in plant conservation and in protecting biodiversity.

In 1935, our Founding Father Albert Fuller said there are two ways to save native orchid species: first, protect the land through acquisition, which we have done since 1937; second, learn how to propagate native orchid species. Throughout his writings over the years, he knew it would take more than just purchasing land to save orchids. He knew orchid species would decline due to predation, changes in habitats and other factors . . . and they have. He also understood the need to propagate native species so we could repopulate areas that have lost native orchid species.

From Fuller's 1935 survey, we know there were 26 species at the Sanctuary. This gives us and our partners an opportunity to concentrate research efforts in the Midwest to study 26 out of the 49 native orchid species in Wisconsin. These efforts include studying how orchids fit into their surrounding habitats, their symbiotic relationships to fungal species in the soil, their pollinators, and so many more unanswered questions.

We recognized that the first step in protecting the native orchid population, and returning them to self-propagating populations, would be to locate the existing populations and use them to provide a source of seeds for future efforts. Staff and volunteers surveyed the sanctuary and located 15 of the 26 species recognized in the 1935 survey. In 2013, the restoration process began with hand pollination and seed collection for orchids that would be grown to seedlings, off-site, and returned to The Ridges for future planting. 2014 saw additional hand pollination and seed collection, as well as continued survey and inventory work to locate existing populations. In 2015, 1,400 Ram's Head Lady's Slipper seedlings were purchased and returned to The Ridges to be planted in eleven test plots. Monitoring efforts in July of that year showed a survival rate of 45.7%; we were ecstatic!

By the fall of 2015, we had gained the attention of the Smithsonian and several universities, who all began to step forward to help through technical lab analysis, sending students to perform field work and networking our efforts through the North American Orchid Conservation Center.

This past spring and summer, we continued the project by planting an additional 800 Ram's Head Orchids throughout the Sanctuary and a shade

house was built to grow orchids on site. Three students from University of Wisconsin – Green Bay collected soil and fungi samples and high school students and volunteers learned the lab procedures for propagating orchids. In July, two Research Experience for Undergraduate Students program participants partnered with staff from the Chicago Botanic Gardens to study survivability rates from this year's out-planting. The Ram's Head Orchids planted in May and monitored in July had a 54.3% survivorship!

A future, more systematic survey with more support is needed to find the remaining orchids.

Our ultimate goal is to coordinate research initiatives to create a native orchid recovery plan for The Ridges, Door County and along the Door Peninsula. This will institutionalize propagation and out-planting requirements for the 26 orchid species. With each step along this journey, our research will be shared with local organizations, universities, the Smithsonian and other international partners to help save orchids around the world.

We are obligated as an organization to raise the funds and support research in orchid conservation to save these 26 native orchid species. Within our membership, I hope to find a core group of donors who will help us along this journey in orchid conservation. The gifts received will be matched to grants and other means on an annual basis to support our orchid conservation research efforts.



Photo by Doug Sherman

"...scientific research will disclose methods whereby the seeds of our native orchids can be made to germinate readily."

ALBERT FULLER, 1935

Hidden Brook Boardwalk

The Hidden Brook Boardwalk was built to provide a universally accessible path for all. For those who walked the paths of The Ridges Sanctuary for decades, finding that their physical limitations prevented this from happening was disappointing. Through careful planning, donations and a generous gift from Marsha Krueger, plus hundreds, if not thousands of volunteer hours, this disappointment perhaps was no longer necessary.



The boardwalk has had a profound impact on who can experience the beautiful sanctuary and all it has to offer. A spectacle in itself, those that visit are equally amazed at the boardwalk as they are to its purpose. Built with wheelchair and walker users in mind, the unexpected ability for families with infants and young children to explore the sanctuary with strollers was also realized.

Stretching nearly a third of a mile, the Hidden Brook Boardwalk welcomes visitors and members right from the doors of the Cook-Albert Fuller Center to the ridges, swales, flora and fauna of the sanctuary. Its eight-foot wide path allows for plenty of space for two-way traffic, especially with wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers. Its carefully designed path features ridges, swales, and of course Hidden Brook. It also weaves through the beautiful flowers the sanctuary is known for, and is fully accessible year-round so all seasons can be on display.

In its first year, the boardwalk has also given those with vision and hearing impairments a level of comfort while walking the sanctuary. With the installment of several observation platforms along the boardwalk, the goal is to install interpretative panels. These panels will feature specific areas and points of interest along the way. However, they will be not only for those who can see and hear, they will be fully interpretable for those with visual and hearing impairments.

As over 55,000 screws were carefully placed into over 2,200 deck boards over the past year, so much more than a boardwalk was created. It has been an opportunity for: a dedicated group of volunteers to work on a project with significant meaning; a young family to experience the sanctuary with the comfort of a stroller; an individual who utilizes a wheelchair to visit The Sanctuary with friends and loved ones; or someone who can no longer see, to feel safe while being guided by a friend. An opportunity has been created for all to visit The Ridges, regardless of ability.



"The many visitors I have greeted are so appreciative of the effort to make our trails accessible to all, no matter their hiking abilities. Their usual comment of 'thank you for giving me the opportunity to walk the trail' brings a smile to my face every time."

BILL WOLFF



Generations

So with all that has been accomplished, it is time to look to the future. We must introduce more people to all The Ridges has to offer, share our mission, and tell our story of impact. As The Ridges enters its 80th year, one can't help to think about all of the impact it has had on so many. The tens of thousands of people who have walked the trails over that last eight decades have seen so much, have been influenced by so many, and have such a great story to tell.

We must also think of the generations of families that have experienced this place. Think of who introduced you to The Ridges; was it your grandparents, your parents? Have you taken your grandchildren to hike the trails? What did they see, what was your first memory, what year was it...what drew you to this place?

What's your story?

How has The Ridges had an impact on your life?

Who have you met on the trail, in a cabin or by the Range Light?

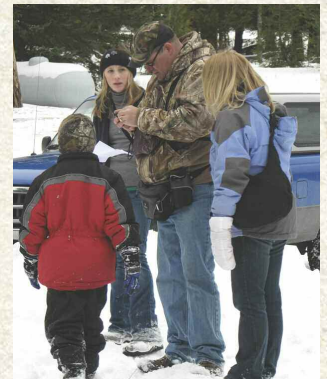
In 2017, we will feature these stories as a tribute to 80 years of The Ridges; the vision, purpose, and how those who founded this wonderful place knew its significance and fought to protect it.

Please share your story with us. You may submit it in the following ways:

Email: drew@ridgessanctuary.org Call: 920.839.2802

Mail: The Ridges, PO Box 152, Baileys Harbor, WI 54202

As founding member Jens Jensen wrote in his 1940 Membership Letter "How true this is in the preserving of what is left primitive America. Far too much of what constitutes our native landscapes has already been thoughtlessly destroyed. Far too much has already been taken by us from those who are to follow. *It is our sacred duty to preserve what is left for unborn generations.*"



The Ridges' Mission

*"To protect the Sanctuary
and inspire stewardship of natural areas
through programs of education, outreach and research."*

EDUCATION

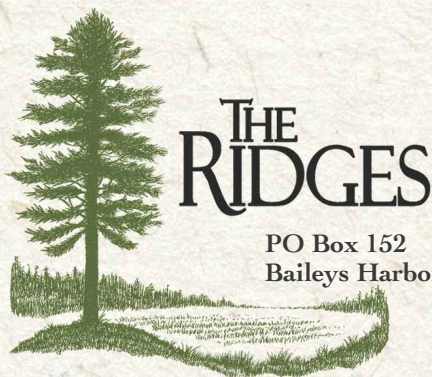


PRESERVATION



RESEARCH





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How Can You Get Involved?

- **Annual Appeal** – Funds sought through the Annual Appeal help offset operational expenses such as staffing, research, and land preservation practices. These funds are critical to The Ridges and we appreciate every dollar contributed. A letter will be mailed further explaining the need in mid-November.

- **Upper Range Light** – Fundraising has begun to restore this Baileys Harbor landmark. We are currently seeking funds for Phase 1; replacement of the roof and renovation of the exterior Light room. Phase 2; A full renovation of the building, will begin once Phase 1 is fully funded and completed. If you wish to make a financial contribution to this project, please contact Drew Richmond, Development Director.



- **Planned Giving** – You may wish to consider the lasting impact of a Planned Gift. If you'd like to know more about including The Ridges in your estate, call us to request a copy of our brochure The Albert Fuller Society: Leaving a Natural Legacy.

- **Endowment** – Funds contributed to The Ridges Endowment ensure long lasting, regular contributions to help offset operational expenses. If you wish to contribute to the endowment, please contact Drew Richmond, Development Director.

- **Volunteer** – Volunteers are the backbone of The Ridges and the core of many of our important programs. Over 200 dedicated individuals assist our staff in a number of different areas. Visit our website or call to find out how you can be a part of the team.

