

Spring 2016

sanctuary

A Newsletter of The Ridges

*“Whoever you are ...
the world offers itself to your imagination ...”*

*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

The Hidden Brook Boardwalk

*"Whoever you are ...
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things."*

– Mary Oliver

The inspiration for a universally accessible boardwalk began with Lee Traven.



Lee, the son of Olivia and Fred Traven, was born and raised in Baileys Harbor. He grew up knowing many people who have left their marks on Door County's cultural history, among them Albert Fuller, Jens Jensen and Emma Toft who, along with his mother, were instrumental in founding The Ridges Sanctuary.

Lee was many years into his retirement when we met. In fact, he was preparing for yet another transition in his life – a move from the home in which he had been raised to an apartment at Scandia Village. I was transitioning, too, having just accepted the position of Executive Director here. My wife and I decided to purchase Lee's home, and that was the beginning of a friendship that lasted until Lee's death in 2013.

Although Lee had been actively involved with The Ridges and many other Door County organizations during his retirement years, health issues eventually forced him

to curtail his participation. One thing he was determined to continue was volunteering during the summer months at the seasonal cabin that served as The Ridges Nature Center and Nature Store. Lee was tremendously proud of the store, a feature of the Center that he had worked to establish.

Even as his health diminished, taking his mobility along with it, Lee continued to volunteer at the Nature Center, making his way from the parking lot and along a short stretch of trail with the help of a walker. He later confided in me that one of things he missed the most was the ability to roam through the ridges and swales he had come to know and love as a child.

As plans to build a visitor facility on the former site of the Sandpiper Restaurant moved ahead, it became clear that we would need to connect the new center to the original Sanctuary trail loop. With Lee in mind, we elected to pursue a universally accessible boardwalk that would expand and enrich the visitor experience by removing barriers to access.

Now as we approach our second summer in the Cook-Fuller Center, we remember Lee and take pride in the fact that the Hidden Brook Boardwalk will allow us to share this special wild place with as many people as possible, as often as possible, regardless of age, ability or situation.

Steve Leonard,
Executive Director
steve@ridgessanctuary.org

Designing the Boardwalk:

A Blueprint for Collaboration

As we moved into the design phase of the project, there were two primary objectives for the new boardwalk: 1) to connect the new Center to the 5-mile Sanctuary trail loop; and 2) to provide universal access to visitors of all ages and abilities. Located at the northeast end of the building site, the boardwalk would have to wind through over a quarter mile of critical wetland habitat for native orchids, the dwarf lake iris and the Hine's emerald dragonfly.

Multiple agencies collaborated successfully to develop guidelines for installing a boardwalk in a sensitive environment. Working with the US Fish & Wildlife Department, the US Corps of Engineers, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Town of Baileys Harbor and multiple Door County departments, best management practices were defined to create a model for constructing an experience that protects resources, but also completely immerses the visitor in the surrounding habitat. In particular, key initiatives in the US Fish & Wildlife Recovery Plans for both the Hine's emerald dragonfly and the dwarf lake iris were used as our guide.

To ensure that the boardwalk placement minimized impact without sacrificing connections to key habitats, a



number of surveys were conducted along the trail route. Stantec, environmental consultants based in Green Bay, conducted a wetland delineation survey to determine and flag the boundaries of the area. Enlisting the aid of Ridges volunteers, Stantec botanist Melissa Curran surveyed plant species. Two surveys were conducted specifically on dwarf lake iris: Ridges volunteers measured density along the trail, and the DNR subsequently charted the irises for study plots. Tree species were also surveyed by the DNR. Along the east end of the trail, graduate students from the University of South Dakota plotted

potential Hine's emerald dragonfly habitat. Upon availability of all survey data, the tree canopy was thinned along the proposed boardwalk route and in other key areas to restore dwarf lake iris and orchid habitats. In addition, placement of the boardwalk was reconfigured to avoid both the high populations of dwarf lake iris and the numerous crayfish burrows in which the Hine's emerald larvae live.



The Team

Peil Construction

Certain aspects of the boardwalk construction required equipment and resources that went beyond even our intrepid Wednesday Crew. Enter Peil Construction. Owned by longtime Baileys Harbor resident and Ridges business member Eric Peil, the local company was the logical choice, having already worked successfully with volunteers to complete a prior Ridges project – the full restoration of the Lower Range Light.

The Ridges Wednesday Crew

Ridges volunteers have been maintaining the Sanctuary since the late 1930s - clearing trails, constructing bridges and boardwalks and tending to general upkeep and repair of the facilities. In the mid-90s, this hardy band of folks organized as the Wednesday Crew, a name derived from the fact that their group meets weekly on Wednesdays to tackle all the projects necessary to keep Ridges properties in tip-top shape. Or at least that was their custom prior to 2015 BB – Before Boardwalk!

Since they began construction last fall, Wednesday Crew volunteers have logged over 1,200 hours, working in all kinds of weather, on weekdays and weekends, with as many volunteers as 30 and as few as 10.

How to Build a

The Plan

With the team in place, a plan was developed that not only made the best use of everyone's time and skills, but was also cost effective.

It was determined that the Wednesday Crew volunteers would concentrate on: 1) assembling the 7' x 8' frames; cutting the decking lumber to size; 3) transporting all material to Hidden Brook; and, 4) staging it along the boardwalk route for installation. As the next step, the Crew began installing frames, beginning from the Range Light boardwalk end and working toward the Nature Center. As some Crew members worked on framing, others came behind them to set and install the decking.

While the Wednesday Crew concentrated on the main trunk of the boardwalk, Eric Peil and his crew installed footings and frames in the sections that pass through the swale, as well as along the stretch of the boardwalk where grading was required.

Throughout the construction period, this thoughtful division of labor along with the staging of material along the boardwalk route proved critical to the project's rapid progression.

September 16 –

Lumber stockpiles at the workshop as the boardwalk project begins.

October –

- Using a jig built by Jim Jauquet, volunteers were able to assemble a 7' x 8' frame in 4 – 5 minutes. Volunteers built over 200 of these frames as well as 20 5' x 8' frames.

- Loading deck boards and frames for staging along the route with help from Jim Jauquet's skidsteer.

- The stage is set!

- Construction begins at the northeast end.



Boardwalk in Pictures

November –

- As staging and decking continue, the boardwalk begins to take shape



December –

- Eric Peil and crew take the boardwalk through the swale.



January / February –

- Neither wind nor rain nor sleet ...



...the end is in sight!



March 3 –

- The end is in sight.
Framing nears the south end.

March 29 –

- The boardwalk reaches the Nature Center!



Hidden Brook Boardwalk by the Numbers

LENGTH	1,800 feet
WIDTH	8 feet
LUMBER	94,572 board ft
SCREWS	50,000
DECK BOARDS	2,051
ANGLE BOARDS	492
HOURS*	1,200+
	*Volunteer
VALUE	<i>Priceless!</i>

Congratulations!

Ridges staff hosts a luncheon to thank everyone for a job well done!



Marsha Ernst Krueger: *A Gift & A Legacy*

Marsha and Dick Krueger of Mequon, Wisconsin have devoted decades to the process of transforming their suburban yard from a conventionally landscaped lawn to a lush native prairie garden. Their meticulous efforts and stunning results have been documented in numerous publications, from *The Natural Habitat Garden* (Ken Druse, 1994) to the more recent *Prairie-Style Gardens* (Lynn M. Steiner, 2010). In 2002, their garden graced the cover of *Gardening With Prairie Plants* by Sally Wasowski (pictured at left). The

Kruegers are members of The Wild Ones, a national organization that promotes the use of native plants in landscaping.

Marsha and Dick have visited The Ridges many times over the years and have always had an appreciation for the work we do. Given Marsha's interest in native plants and her personal restoration endeavor, it seemed only natural to point her in the direction of the orchid restoration project at

The Ridges when she spoke to

Executive Director Steve Leonard about her desire to make a significant gift. However, when they sat down to talk, Steve discovered that Marsha's interests had taken a different turn. While dealing with a recent illness, Marsha found that accessibility to the natural areas she loved was a prevalent and disconcerting reality. When Steve explained that work on a universally accessible boardwalk was underway at The Ridges, there was an immediate connection. When he described how the boardwalk meanders through ridges and swales, alongside the orchid restoration plots, Hine's emerald dragonfly habitat and over Hidden Brook, the project resonated with both Marsha's love of nature and

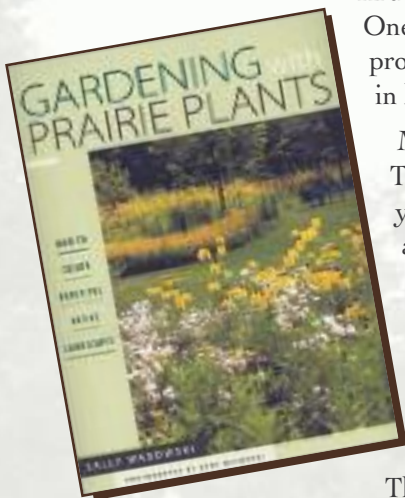
her desire to improve accessibility for those with either permanent or temporary physical restrictions.

In December 2015, Marsha made a \$100,000 gift in support of the Hidden Brook Boardwalk.

Her support for this project will fund three overlooks, a series of bump outs with bench seating, a covered bridge and, potentially, the first phase of interpretive signage along the boardwalk – features that will enable individuals of all ages and abilities to comfortably and safely explore the significant restoration effort that is taking place along the ridges and swales it traverses.

Marsha's gift to The Ridges will fund a project that reflects not only her personal passion for nature, but also her strong desire to make a difference for the future. Her support for the Hidden Brook Boardwalk creates a lasting benefit for The Ridges and its visitors and ensures that the environmental stewardship she has exemplified throughout her life will endure.

If Marsha's story has inspired you, see "How You Can Get Involved" on page 8 to learn how you can support an upcoming project at The Ridges.

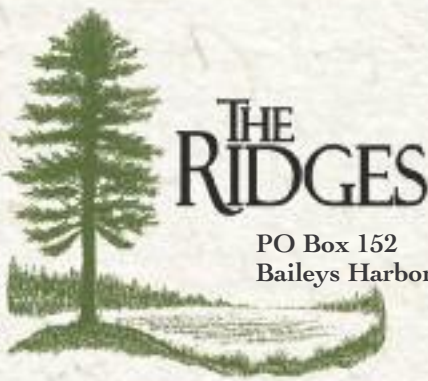


What Lies Ahead

As this issue of *Sanctuary* goes to print, Peil Construction is working on the series of boardwalk enhancements made possible by Marsha Ernst Krueger's generous support. These features include construction of a deck at the trail-head, a covered bridge over Hidden Brook, two covered overlooks in the swale adjacent to the boardwalk and 13 bump outs with benches.

In addition, Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters, UW-Stevens Point, has identified key educational waysides along the

boardwalk and incorporated them as part of The Ridges Interpretive Master Plan. The conceptual exhibits contained in the plan will be used as a basis for designing interpretive panels that will explain the ongoing research projects taking place along the route – orchid restoration, water quality studies, Hine's emerald and flying squirrel habitats – along with presenting ecological concepts and background on The Ridges' rich cultural history. The result will be an enriching, meaningful and universally accessible learning experience for all visitors.



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Experience, Explore...

Exhale.

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How You Can Get Involved

Like many nonprofit organizations, The Ridges depends on the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers like the Wednesday Crew to staff important projects like the Hidden Brook Boardwalk and bring them to fruition. We also rely on donors like Marsha Ernst Krueger for the financial support needed to sustain initiatives that advance our mission and are critical for future growth.

The Hidden Brook Boardwalk is well on its way to completion, but there are still many ways for you to become involved including:



- **The Orchid Restoration Project** – This citizen scientist based project has captured the attention of the Smithsonian's North American Orchid Conservation Center. As it expands, volunteers are needed to plant and monitor key orchid species and,

going forward, to maintain a future shadehouse. Your financial support will help supplement grant funding and offset operating expenses.

- **The Upper Range Light Restoration** – Plans are underway for a full restoration of of this iconic lighthouse. This summer, the Upper Range Light will be open to the public for tours from Friday through



Monday each week. Volunteers will be needed to staff the lighthouse and provide information to visitors. Fundraising efforts also will begin this summer, and we've already identified some

critical needs and expense.

- You may also 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*.

