

Spring 2018

sanctuary

A Newsletter of The Ridges

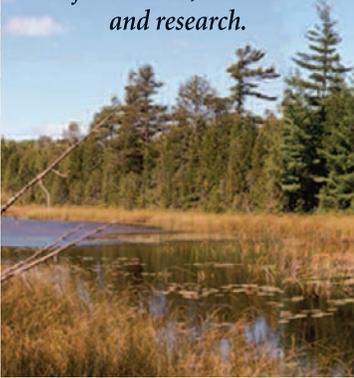


Volunteers •
Inspired
with a sense of ownership.

From the Nature Center

Planning for the Future The Ridges 5-year Strategic Plan

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:
Inez Telfer, Emma Toft and Olivia Traven



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In January 2017, The Ridges Sanctuary board of directors and staff initiated a strategic planning process to develop a 5-year strategic plan. Integral to the process was recognizing The Ridges' greatly expanded footprint, opportunities for new programs, visibility with the opening of the Cook-Albert Fuller Nature Center, exhibits, Hidden Brook Boardwalk, and restoration of our two historic range lights. With these expanded opportunities and increased visibility have come challenges for developing and allocating staff, volunteer, and financial resources.

In creating the plan, the board and staff focused on laying the foundation for future sustainability of The Ridges. Thus, there is considerable emphasis on understanding, quantifying, and growing the human and financial resources required to efficiently and effectively fulfill the mission of The Ridges.

Priorities and goals for the next five years:

Inspire and empower volunteers. The Ridges must create a culture that inspires our volunteers to have a sense of ownership in The Ridges and empowers them to help fulfill our mission.

Enhance the visitor experience. A visit will inspire an affinity for The Ridges, thus encouraging visitors to return and support our mission by becoming members, volunteers, and donors.

Expand and strengthen donor relationships. Create a donor relationship program to increase the financial support essential to meeting the needs of annual, capital, and endowment funds.

Manage The Ridges in accordance with best practices to protect flora, fauna, water quality and significant habitats. The key first step is to create a comprehensive management plan that addresses watershed, flora, and fauna management and maintenance, visitor access, land acquisition, and Ramsar site management.

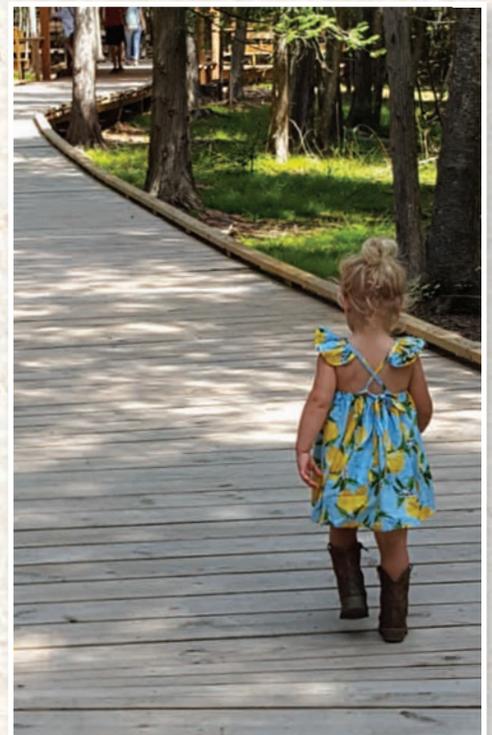
Position The Ridges as a leader in orchid research and restoration. Enhance The Ridges' position as a leader in orchid conservation by advancing the science of conservation of the 26 orchids native to the Sanctuary.

Build capacity to support the mission. Enhanced human resource, financial, and asset management support systems will provide for more efficient operations and ensure compliance with best practices.

This plan sets priorities and achievable goals for the next five years while serving as a guide for the board of directors and staff. In this issue of *The Sanctuary*, we will focus on Volunteerism. We will tell the history of volunteers, their impact on this organization and what the future (starting now) looks like for Ridges volunteers.

Steve Leonard, Executive Director
steve@ridgessanctuary.org

A detailed layout of the Strategic plan can be found on The Ridges website under "Publications".



The Need for Volunteers

Inspire and empower volunteers.

The Ridges must create a culture that inspires our volunteers to have a sense of ownership in The Ridges and empowers them to help fulfill our mission.

(from the 5-year strategic plan)

In 2017, The Ridges had over 100 volunteers assisting with everything from work projects to the front desk. Groups helped with mailing publications and appeal letters, special events, office and administration assistance, Range Light Tours, Guided Hikes and many others. When all calculated, over 5,348 hours of service were given to The Ridges by its volunteers. According to the 2016 Bureau of Labor Statistics data, this is equivalent to over \$129,000 saved for The Ridges!

Since the 1930's, volunteers have been at the core of this organization. In 1935, Albert Fuller, then Curator of Botany at the Milwaukee Public Museum, began spending a great deal of time traveling between Milwaukee and Door County studying the rare flora which flourished on a parcel of land in Baileys Harbor. Fuller, along with fellow conservationist Jens Jensen, began a two-year period of education and advocacy, giving countless presentations to many residents of Baileys Harbor and the surrounding area, including Emma Toft and Olivia Traven. In 1937, these citizens and others formed The Ridges Sanctuary as Wisconsin's first land trust to protect the original 40 acres.

For the next 27 years, The Ridges was 100% managed by volunteers. In 1964, The Ridges hired its first staff member: Roy Lukes. But even then, volunteers helped manage the land, raise funds, and lead programs. As staff were added in the 90's and 2000's, volunteers remained the core of The Ridges as they are today.



Publication mailing



Volunteers at Upper Range Light

So, how do we sustain the ever-growing need for volunteers? A plan needed to be created and the 5-year strategic plan fulfilled this need.

First, we had to establish a program for identifying and recruiting volunteers with a focus on skills and leadership qualities. This past winter, a group of volunteers, lead by Program Director Katie Krouse, gathered to put this program together. The Volunteer Leaders Committee is made up of 9 volunteers who are each taking a lead role in orienting, training, and mentoring volunteers in specific areas of need.

These areas include Front Desk/Greeter, Special Events, Hike Leader, Citizen Science, Range Light Docent, Wednesday Work Crew, Nature Store Support, and Marketing and Development Support. Each area has its own Position Description listing its own Impact, Time Commitment, and Training needs. Much time was spent preparing each document, knowing it will help all who are new and returning to volunteer at The Ridges.

“ I fell in love with *The Ridges* thirty years ago, and decided that's where I wanted to volunteer. I currently work at the front desk, and plan to start leading hikes this summer. ”
– Linda

Volunteers

Volunteer Plan

Inspire

Where can I help?

While the new Volunteer Plan was being developed, a survey was sent to all current and past volunteers. We reached out to over 180 individuals looking for feedback with their overall experience, if they no longer volunteer – why, if they do still volunteer - what would enhance their experience, and what additional interests they have and training needs they require. More than 120 individuals responded, giving us a fantastic response rate.

47% of responses came from past volunteers, while 53% are current volunteers. We got great feedback on why folks no longer volunteered: most people have experienced busier schedules and have multiple commitments throughout the county.

One outcome of the survey was the need for more flexible time commitments. We now have options for daily, weekly, monthly, or as needed volunteers with time commitments spanning from 1 hour to full days. Our hope is to offer multiple options and then clearly communicate these needs with our volunteers.

Along with flexible options and clear communication, volunteers also requested more training in their specific areas. With a variety of opportunities available, the staff and Volunteer Leaders Committee have begun enhancing existing training and creating new trainings for the volunteers.

What are people looking to do at the while volunteering at The Ridges? The charts to the right list some of the more sought after tasks and skills as shown in the bottom chart.

What are people looking for in Volunteer Participation?

- Assist in Mailings
- Assisting with Events
- Greeting Visitors
- Leading or Assisting with Hikes
- Trail Maintenance
- Assisting with Nature Store
- Maintenance of Buildings
- Grounds Maintenance
- Lighthouse Restoration
- Lighthouse Docent
- Citizen Science

Specific Skills in Volunteer Participation

- Painting
- Handyman
- Carpentry
- Teaching
- Construction
- Chainsaw Operation
- Computer (Microsoft Office)
- Restoration Work
- Presenting Programs
- Data/Statistics Compilation



continued on next page

So now what?

Empower

We have a strategic goal, we have put together a plan, and we have a staff and volunteer committee focused on orienting, training, and mentoring volunteers. Once a volunteer arrives, is trained, and is ready for the task at hand, we need to stick by them.

The peer-mentoring component of the plan is perhaps the most important piece. Once a volunteer is in place and trained, they will have a peer-mentor dedicated to their success. Our goal is to not only help build relationships but to also make their time exceed their expectations.

With all of this in place, we hope to achieve our goals of inspiring and empowering volunteers. The Ridges must create a culture that inspires our volunteers to have a sense of ownership in The Ridges and empowers them to help fulfill our mission.

With the information from the survey, combined with the Volunteer Leaders Committee and the Position Descriptions, we feel we are poised for a very successful Volunteer Program over the next five years and beyond.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at The Ridges, please visit our website at www.ridgessanctuary.org and click on the “Join” button, then “Volunteer” to see the opportunities. If you have specific questions, please email Katie Krouse at katie@ridgessanctuary.org or call at 920.839.2802.

“*To lead a bird walk or nature hike is a wonderful experience for me and hopefully helps others enjoy and gain an understanding of the essence of The Ridges and nature. If I can impart an appreciation for the resource (nature) we have available and the need to help protect it for future generations, that makes the effort worthwhile. To watch a young child experience an Ant Lion on Sandy Trail or watch 2 Bald Eagles “play” in the sky....that says it all!*”

– George



Legacy

On April 14th Roy and Charlotte Lukes were inducted in the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame. Overall, there were four new leaders who were honored and who have contributed much to Wisconsin's Conservation Legacy.

The article below is from the office Press Release from the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame.

Roy (1929 – 2016) and Charlotte (1944 –) Lukes

Door County naturalists, Roy and Charlotte Lukes, spent their lifetimes protecting the natural beauty of the peninsula and sharing its magic through their teachings, writings, and personal charm. As “Partners in Nature” they built The Ridges Sanctuary into a center for conservation education, research, and advocacy. They educated and inspired citizens of Door County and the State through their many research efforts, lectures and nature walks, books and newspaper columns.

They also fought for Wisconsin conservation policy and funding for the protection of Door County’s natural areas and wetlands such as Toft Point Wilderness, Newport State Park, Whitefish Dunes, Mink River Estuary, and Moonlight Bay. The region is now recognized as a Ramsar Treaty “Wetland of International Importance.”

As leaders in the field of conservation and environmental education, Roy and Charlotte taught classes and led hikes at The Ridges Sanctuary, the Clearing in Ellison Bay, Lawrence University, and other venues. As a renowned nature writer, naturalist, photographer, teacher and newspaper columnist, Roy inspired millions. His numerous newspaper articles and five books on nature, including *Once Around the Sun: A Door County Journal*, capture the seasonal joys of time spent outdoors. He was renowned for his gentle smile, encyclopedic knowledge, and his story-telling ability, which could enthrall both children and adults.

Charlotte, too, excelled as a naturalist, teacher and writer. In addition to her scientific work and publications on the Mushrooms of Door County, she continues to teach classes, present



programs, and lead nature hikes throughout the region. Spanning five decades, Roy and Charlotte wrote over 3,000 newspaper columns for local papers.

Roy and Charlotte saw scientific research and the study of the natural world as a cornerstone to their work in conservation related education, policy and public leadership. Roy led much of the research effort at The Ridges focusing on its flora and fauna. He was an expert on the area’s orchids and birdlife. Charlotte’s research on the mushrooms of Door County, including the identification of over 600 species, has contributed to newspaper articles, publications, and the UW-Green Bay Center for Biodiversity. They also promoted “citizen science” by getting volunteers involved in projects such as Audubon Bird Count and WSO’s Wisconsin Bird Atlas.

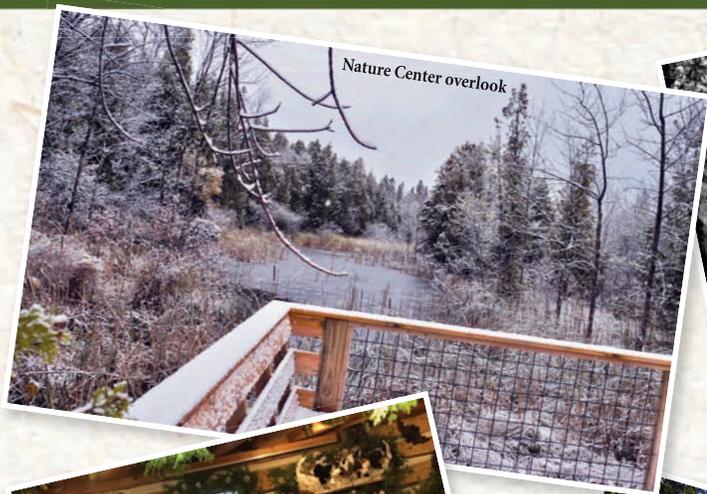
In recognition of their lifelong collaboration, the couple received nearly thirty awards from numerous educational, literary, civic and environmental organizations. They jointly received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Gathering Waters Conservancy, multiple awards from the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology, the Nature Conservancy, and UW-Green Bay Center for Biodiversity.

Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame is a cooperative venture of 31 state-wide conservation organizations. WCHF depends on the generous support of member organizations, affiliate members, grants and donations. For membership information visit www.wchf.org.

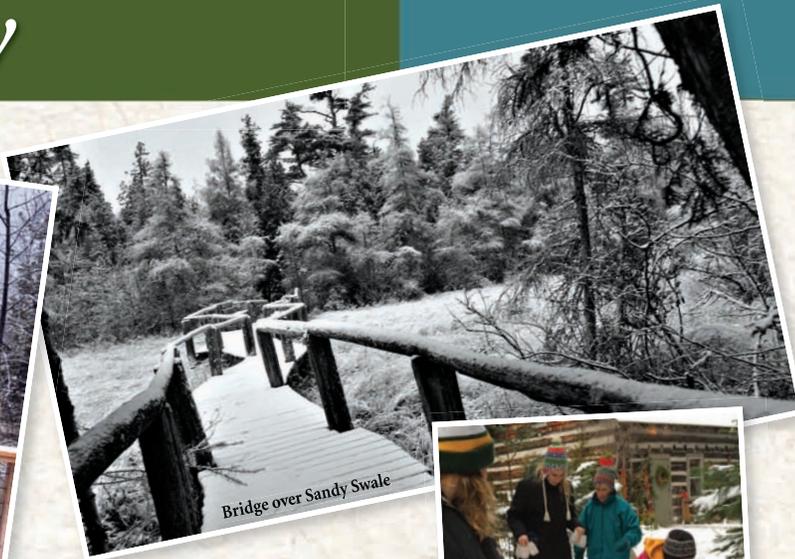
From NEWS RELEASE (1) Feb 1, 2018
Joe Passineau, WCHF President

Legacy

Winter in Review



Nature Center overlook



Bridge over Sandy Swale



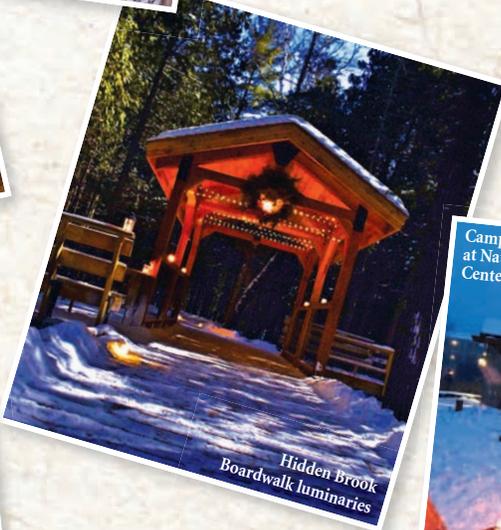
Natural Christmas



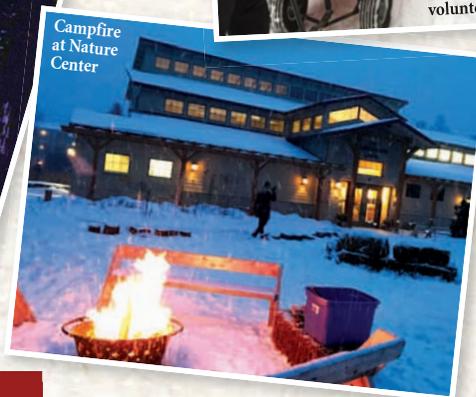
Natural Christmas volunteers



Nature pre-school



Hidden Brook Boardwalk luminaries

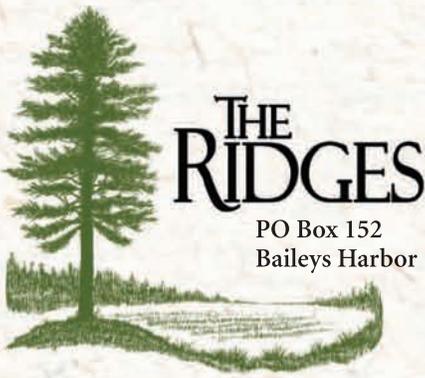


Campfire at Nature Center

Important Dates

- May 1, Daily Guided Hikes Begin
- May 24 – 27, Festival of Nature
- May 26, Family Discovery Trail opens
- May 28, Range Lights Tours open for the season
- June 9, Nature Play Day
- July 5 – 7, 2nd Annual Family Camp
- July 9 – August 3, Backpack Adventure Camp 2018
- July 12, Lake Lessons Series begins
- August 4, Annual Meeting
- August 25, Monarch Madness
- August 26, Volunteer Appreciation Event

Visit www.RidgesSanctuary.org or the latest issue of the Ridges Lites Program Guide for a detailed list of all upcoming programs



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How Can You Get Involved?

DONATE

• **Orchid Restoration Project** – This is the largest orchid restoration project in the history of The Ridges. We have documented 16 of the 26 orchids originally found on our property; we need your support to conduct our research and to save the Ram's Head orchid.

• **Upper Range Light** – Fundraising has begun to restore this Baileys Harbor landmark. We have completed Phase 1: replacement of the roof and renovation of the exterior Light room. Phase 2: A full renovation of the building needs your help to begin.

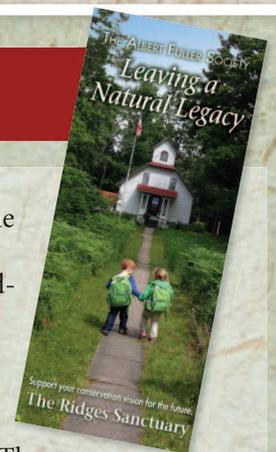


• **Planned Giving** – Please consider the lasting impact of a Planned Gift. If you'd like to know more about including The Ridges in your estate, call us to request a copy of our brochure The Albert Fuller Society: Leaving a Natural Legacy.

• **Endowment** – Funds contributed to The Ridges Endowment ensure long lasting, regular contributions to help offset operational expenses.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are the backbone of The Ridges and the core of many of our important programs. Over 100 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.



www.RidgesSanctuary.org • 920.839.2802