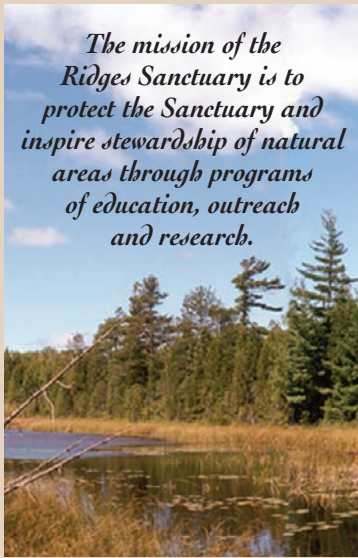




# sanctuary

A Newsletter of The Ridges Sanctuary

Winter 2008/2009



*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 of a trail at Logan Creek, site of Tree Survey featured in this issue.

# From the Rangelight

## Connecting...

When I was about 10 years old I spent a lot of time in southern Wisconsin around Janesville and Fort Atkinson with my grandparents. Every day during the summer, my grandpa and I got up early to go fishing along the Rock River and on Lake Koshkonong. We would then spend the next several hours trying to catch walleye, channel catfish or whatever would come along and nibble at our bait.

These summer experiences at my grandparents' cottage taught me more than just how to fish. In fact, I had to learn how to fish on my own because Grandpa never baited his hook. He would cast his line out in the river with a bobber, weight and a rusty, old hook without any bait. As he said, "He didn't go fishing to catch fish. He went fishing to spend time with his grandson."

My grandpa connected me to nature by just giving me time outside. He gave me time to explore and learn on my own. Those summer experiences fostered my love for the outdoors, and ultimately, gave me the drive to pursue a career in natural resources. Now I have the responsibility, with our members and staff, of taking care of the most biologically diverse landscape in Wisconsin.

The Ridges' founders felt the same responsibility in connecting people to The Ridges. Our founders understood the only way people would help protect the ridges and swales would be through connection and education.

Founder Emma Toft rounded up local Baileys Harbor children and drove them out to The Ridges or Toft Point in her station wagon for a day of exploration. Founder Olivia Traven was called The Ridges' first naturalist. Before there were trails or a Nature Center, people would knock on Olivia's front door and ask if she would give them a tour of

The Ridges. Olivia would throw on her coat and off they'd go. The Ridges became a place for exploring and learning. It became a place for stewardship, a model for others to follow on how to protect biodiversity.

Still today, individuals connect to The Ridges by walking the trails and experience the beautiful designs of nature through the variety of wildflowers, mosses, lichens and trees interwoven together like no other place we know. We continue to protect the diversity of flora and fauna, addressing new challenges every day with the changing environment. But most of all, we will always be out on the trails and in the community teaching others about The Ridges and stewardship. As one person stated, "A major task facing The Ridges is to strengthen its voice: to make its point to enough people so that its message will count. Culture does not pass to new generations without conscious and persistent efforts... mere custodianship of the last

**Culture does not pass to new generations without conscious and persistent efforts...**

few such spots is futility." We will always strive to let our message be heard, for all ages, so others will understand the value of The Ridges and encourage others to act as land stewards.

The *sanctuary* newsletter is one avenue to help us tell our story. Enjoy it, but we hope you will then pass it on to others so they too can begin to connect and help protect The Ridges and biodiversity. It is a story that needs to be told over and over again. *Our voice needs to be loud and clear so everyone can hear it. We hope you will help us tell The Ridges' story.*

Steve Leonard, Executive Director  
[steve@ridgesanctuary.org](mailto:steve@ridgesanctuary.org)

Ridges' founder, Emma Toft



# Quick Notes

## Volunteer Cook Outs

We can't thank our volunteers enough! Without them, The Ridges would have a very difficult time meeting its mission of preservation, education and outreach. To show the many selfless volunteers our gratitude, every second Tuesday and fourth Friday of the summer, the staff hosted a Bar-B-Q lunch at the Marshall cabin. Marc's burgers were a big hit as were the extras brought by the staff. Some of the volunteers even brought 'go-withs' to add to the table – they just don't stop volunteering! We enjoyed them so much we are making it a tradition, so make a date to attend them next summer.

## New 'FUN'draisers

The Ridges' Golf Outing and the Ridges' Flea Market went over so well in their first offering that plans are already in the works to offer Second Annuals of both. The golf outing had 48 participants on a gorgeous August afternoon at Maxwellton Braes Golf Course. The flea market was held in conjunction with Baileys Harbor Autumn Fest and netted a significant amount for the Nature Store and many new visitors who weren't aware of The Ridges.

## Workday October 4

Volunteers came from all over to help spruce up The Ridges on October 4. There were wood chip haulers and spreaders, wood shed painters, garden rakers and plant pullers, and Tamarack and Spruce pullers. It was wonderful to see so many diverse people offering their help to this place celebrated for its biodiversity. At noon, we all enjoyed the best chili in Door County and the best cornbread and brownies! Watch for the spring work day coming up in April/May.

## Greenprinting

The Ridges's board allocated \$1,000 to help implement the Greenprinting project. The Greenprinting mapping program will collect, digitize, and organize data/information regarding natural resources in Door County that have been collected by a wide variety of local, county, regional, and state agencies. The completed project will provide comprehensive, scientific information on which to base decision-making regarding development that may affect natural resources.

## Clark Lake Research

For the past four years, The Clark Lake Advancement Association (CLAA) has worked with UW-Stevens Point professors and graduate students to assess the Clark Lake watershed in

the towns of Jacksonport and Sevastopol. The project was funded by a Wisconsin DNR grant that The Ridges managed for the CLAA. The study identified Logan Creek as a "sensitive area" defined by DNR standards which "...has native vegetation, minimal or no disturbance, offer critical and unique habitat, and is important to maintaining the water quality." This study helps us develop a better understanding of how our Logan Creek property protects one of the most critical habitats of the Clark Lake watershed. To learn more about the study, click on the Clark Lake Watershed Study link on the CLAA homepage at [www.clarklakewi.com](http://www.clarklakewi.com). Thanks to all who made this project a success.

## Phragmites Research Project

UW-Green Bay graduate student Devany Plentovich studied the effects of removing the invasive species Phragmites as the first step to re-establish native vegetation in four study sites around the Green Bay region. The study compared an initial herbicide treatment followed by a secondary treatment of burning or mowing. Her study site at The Ridges was along the shoreline of Moonlight Bay. At The Ridges, fifteen study plots were used to determine the impact of

herbicide application followed by a secondary treatment of mowing to remove the dead stalks that impeded the future growth of native vegetation. The study showed that a secondary treatment helps re-establish native vegetation sooner, but Phragmites was not completely removed from our treatment areas. The future of The Ridges depends on an aggressive management plan which includes constant removal of invasives. If you are interested in reviewing Devany Plentovich's report published in 2008, you can download it on The Ridges website research link.

## Website Makeover

We have recently given The Ridges Sanctuary's website a makeover. Along with a calendar of events and a search box, we have added online forms allowing you to update your address, become a volunteer steward, sign up for electronic subscriptions, and make online donations. Stay tuned for new upcoming forms and content! [www.RidgesSanctuary.org](http://www.RidgesSanctuary.org)

Ridges member Nick Wilson has converted a group of articles from old newspapers with pictures that illustrate some of the cultural history of The Ridges. Click on the History link on the menu bar at [www.RidgesSanctuary.org](http://www.RidgesSanctuary.org)

## Microbial Mystery

Have you ever wondered what lives nestled among the tiny leaves of a moss plant? The moss plant is actually an intricate microbial ecosystem, which sometimes includes the evolutionarily-ancient cyanobacteria. (You may know cyanobacteria by another name – the blue-green algae.) The cyanobacteria may provide their hosts with a nutritional boost: some forms can convert gaseous nitrogen from the air to organic forms of nitrogen. Organic nitrogen is required for plant growth, and for the growth of all other life forms. In some ecosystems, the moss and cyanobacteria act as a "microbial fertilizer factory," bringing nitrogen to the surrounding soils and plants. This unique plant-microbial partnership is the focus of a current study at The Ridges. The research will tell us how frequently the mosses host cyanobacteria, and whether they are an important source of nitrogen in the upland ridge ecosystems. Do moss and cyanobacteria help transform the barren, low-nitrogen beach sands into richer soils that support complex plant communities? Right now, only the moss knows!



Shana Ederer, Graduate student, Botany Dept. at the UW Madison

photo by Marc Demoly

# Logan Creek Tree Survey



## Opportunity knocked or rather rang...

*By Jane Whitney, Ridges Volunteer Steward*



photo contributed

Jane Whitney and Ed Pentecost measure the diameter of a tree within their quadrant.

It was late last winter, the snow still deep and the afternoons still short, when I received a phone call from Ed Pentecost asking me if I'd like to take part in a tree survey at Logan Creek. I vaguely remembered saying, "Probably when it was a lot warmer, that I'd be glad to help with the survey. But in the cold of late winter, not so much." I pointed out my complete lack of winter tree identification skills – Ed assured me others could do that. I mentioned that I'd never participated in a tree survey before – Ed assured me it didn't matter. I could have raised several other objections but really, what did I have left to say but, "Sure, I'd be glad to help."

Four of us carpoled to Logan Creek on a Tuesday afternoon with appropriate tools: 100' tape measure, one ski pole, compass, clipboard, survey sheets, and most importantly a tape that measures the diameter of trees at breast height (DBH). I was already quite certain what my job would be. At our destination, Ed explained the afternoon's procedures: take a compass reading, go 100 feet, plant the ski pole making it the center of a circle, divide the circle into quadrants, measure the DBH of the nearest tree larger than 1" and the nearest 1" or less sapling in each quadrant, measure the distance to each of the measured trees, identify the species of the tree measured, record on the survey sheets. That makes eight trees measured and eight distances measured in each circle. And our goal was to do this at least 10 times along as straight a line as possible, guided by the compass, through the forest, off the trails. I immediately volunteered to hold one end of the 100' tape – this I could do.

As it turned out, the doing of the survey was easier than the explaining of the survey. We walked through the beech/maple forest without too much stumbling, got better at our jobs, and kept our feet dry. As we descended the old shoreline into hemlock/cedar/mountain maple territory, our trek became tougher, wetter, and considerably less straight. But we kept going and did not turn around until we had stopped 14 times – that's 112 trees/saplings we identified and measured and recorded.

But that's all about the procedures. It doesn't take into account the fun, the joking, the helping each other across ever-widening wet spots, the hope that a really HUGE tree would be the next nearest one, the rapidly emerging rivalry to see who could ID a tree first, and the developing camaraderie among people who hadn't known each other before that day. Nor does it take into account the importance of getting volunteers involved in citizen monitoring efforts and the contributions that we volunteers can make toward scientific research on the Ridges properties.



photo by Julie Scharmer

A trail leading into The Ridges Sanctuary's Logan Creek

So, several hours later, in the waning light of a late afternoon in March, we piled back in the car to drive home to Baileys Harbor. I had had an absolutely wonderful afternoon and, in addition, I was now fairly confident that I could identify a mountain maple even in winter. And I knew that the next time Ed called (in May as it turned out) I would say “Yes” straight up.



photo contributed

Ed Pentecost, Bruce Olson and Jane Whitney at it again measuring trees at Logan Creek.

## Volunteer Profile



photo contributed

While all of our volunteers are our favorites, we have added two more favorites to our list. Jane Whitney and Julie Knox have been actively involved with The Ridges since 2007 after retiring to Door County from careers in education. Jane was an elementary school librarian and Julie was a kindergarten teacher. After their son Caleb moved to Door County with daughter-in-law Kristy and granddaughter Ida, Jane and John started visiting and decided to relocate permanently in 2007. Julie’s family has owned property on Moonlight Bay since 1962 when she first started visiting The Ridges. Retiring here in 2005 just seemed ‘natural.’ Julie and Jane volunteer in all aspects of The Ridges; the Nature Center, children’s programs, weed warriors, Saturday morning bird hikes, office volunteers, the parade, Tree Survey, Ridges Work Day and participated in the first Wisconsin Naturalist Program. Their enthusiasm for The Ridges is infectious and constant. “It’s a great way to meet people, it is close, and it’s my favorite place on Earth.” - Julie Knox

Both Julie and Jane feel and express the specialness of The Ridges and are always sharing that vision with others. “The Ridges needs to become less of a ‘hidden’ jewel.” - Jane Whitney

“How lucky we are to have [The Ridges]. Sometimes it is not appreciated by people because they either don’t ‘see’ the specialness or they haven’t experienced other places that have less biodiversity. We need to preserve this ‘pocket of northern-ness’.” - Jane Whitney

“Get involved. Not because it’s good for The Ridges but because it’s great fun, very satisfying and an extraordinary learning opportunity. Volunteering at a place like The Ridges makes you go out and see the same place many times over and you end up ‘seeing’ so much more.” - Jane Whitney & Julie Knox

For all of our volunteers – It is hard to say “Thank You” enough times for all that you do for The Ridges. Without you, we would just be that “mosquito-infested swamp” in Baileys Harbor.

## Tree Canopy Survey Results

Ed Pentecost led a group of volunteers to survey the mature trees and saplings (understory tree species) at our Logan Creek property in Jacksonport. Volunteers followed a compass heading along three parallel transect lines and stopped every hundred feet to record tree species. The survey covered the upland forest along Loritz Road and ended in the lowland forest of the Logan Creek floodplain.

	UPLAND Most Common		LOWLAND Most Common		TOTAL FOREST Most Common	
	Mature Trees	Saplings	Mature Trees	Saplings	Mature Trees	Understory
<b>Sugar Maple</b> <i>Acer saccharum</i>	█	█			█	█
<b>Canada Hemlock</b> <i>Tsuga canadensis</i>			█	█	█	█
<b>American Beech</b> <i>Fagus americana</i>	█	█			█	█
<b>Arborvitae</b> <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>			█			█
<b>Yellow Birch</b> <i>Betula alleghaniensis</i>			█			
<b>Mountain Maple</b> <i>Acer spicatum</i>				█		

## The Forests of Logan Creek

The Ridges’ Logan Creek property is rich in diversity and tranquility. It depicts a rare glimpse of what Door County’s original forests might have looked like before the forests were logged off. Because of the lack of disturbance, even prior to The Ridges owning the property, the Logan Creek property is characterized as one of the few mature forests in Door County.

Some characteristics of a mature forest.

- Downed trees open up the canopy for sunlight and create microhabitats on the forest floor.
- Understory tree species are important for regeneration of mature trees.
- Forest floor is rich with wildflowers.
- Snags, or dead standing trees, scatter the forest and support insects and bird species.

# A Recipe for Successful Stewards



## Environmental Stew(ards) Recipe

Begin with a group of 23 enthusiastic adults from all over Door County. Place in an outdoor setting and add field guides, hand lenses and notebooks. Blend in several presentations on local geology, plant communities, wildlife and watersheds. Mix together well, and allow to interact for eight weeks. This recipe yields a group of dedicated volunteers who are engaged in conservation and preservation efforts throughout the county.

This odd recipe describes a brand-new program the Ridges is coordinating called the *Wisconsin Naturalist Program*. Wisconsin Naturalists are individuals who have a love for the outdoors, are interested in learning more about our natural resources, and are willing to serve as volunteer land stewards. These students attend 25 hours of classroom and outdoor learning focused on our local ecosystems. During the program, students “adopt” a natural area to study and apply the ideas they have learned in the classroom. After completing their training, Wisconsin Naturalists are required to attend eight hours of additional training and volunteer 25 hours to local conservation organizations or programs.

The first session of the Wisconsin Naturalist Program in Door County ran from September to November this year with the help of a grant from the Door County Community Foundation’s Environmental Fund. The training sessions will be repeated at least once per year, and advanced training courses will be offered to “graduates” in the future. For more information about the Wisconsin Naturalist Program, contact Karen at the Ridges office, or email [karen@ridgesanctuary.org](mailto:karen@ridgesanctuary.org).



photo by Marc Demoly

Terrie Cooper, Door County Land Trust, led the Wisconsin Naturalist group through the Kellner Fen Preserve near Sturgeon Bay.



Learning about a karst feature at the Land Trust’s Lautenbach Woods near Egg Harbor.

photo by Marc Demoly

## Nature Notes

- \* Near Pickerel Pond, participants in our summer dragonfly workshop were treated to close-up views of Saffron-winged Meadowhawks, Four-spotted Skimmers, 12-spotted Skimmers, a Blue Dasher and a female Hines Emerald.

- \* A late blooming Spring peeper surprised a group of nature hike participants in late August. Spring peepers were also peeping – again – in September.

- \* Migration of “confusing fall warblers” began in late August.

- \* The first week of September was the peak of monarch butterfly migration through Door County. Dozens could be seen moving along the Baileys Harbor shoreline, heading south to Mexico.

- \* The first flock of Dark-eyed Juncos arrived at The Ridges on October 7.

- \* An early November beach walk netted four species of plants still in bloom: Goldenrod, Calico Aster, Dog Mustard and Fringed Gentian.

- \* The Tamarack trees along the swales were in full, golden glory during the first week of November.

- \* Conditions in the Sanctuary are still quite dry going into winter. Solitude Swale had a few puddles, but was mostly a mud-flat by mid-November. Many swales had no standing water at all.

- \* During the WI Naturalist field trip in late October, the group heard a ruffed grouse drumming.

- \* A very reliable source was recording coyotes around North Bay this Fall. About two minutes into the recording there is heard the distinct, lonesome howls of a distant wolf. Only one – no answering howls.

# Kids' Activity Page

## Young Naturalists Can Make Their Own Tree Diary

**Trees are awesome!** They give life to humans, wildlife, birds, and plants in many ways. A great way to get to know a tree is to keep a tree diary for a year. Write down all the interesting things you notice about your favorite tree. As you discover interesting things about your tree, let The Ridges know what you've seen or found out.

### A Tree Diary

Starting a tree diary doesn't take much time or equipment. Start with a tree that looks interesting or is easy to see, visit, or describe. Equipment is a spiral notebook (See our website, [www.ridges-sanctuary.org/kids.htm](http://www.ridges-sanctuary.org/kids.htm) for "Green" notebook instructions.) that has at least a few pages left and a pencil (or a pen – but note that pen will run if it gets wet). Decorate the notebook cover if you wish and keep it in a special place. Whenever you get a chance – write down the date in your notebook and then check out your tree and describe how it looks – what the weather is like – any signs of wildlife about the tree (or IN it). It's a good idea to have a set time or date to write your observations, like every Saturday morning or on the 1st and 15th of the month. You can also write down any facts you may have found out about the tree. Keep this up for a year and have fun reading your tree's diary. If you send a copy to The Ridges, we will post it on a special kids' webpage. A tree diary can be done by kids of any age who are interested in nature. Parents can write down the 'stories' dictated by younger children.

### Finding Tree Facts

Parents are usually the best place to start when trying to find out tree facts, especially if the tree is in your yard. After you find out all they know about your tree, start looking to the experts or 'naturally' smart people – like your science teacher at school. Usually there's one teacher who has lots of nature stuff in his/her classroom – that's the one to ask. People at nature centers, the county agriculturist, and the middle school and high school science teachers are always willing to help out. The internet is another great place to find out about your tree. There are even online keys to help you identify your tree and its special traits.

The Arbor Day Foundation web site is excellent.  
[www.arborday.org/trees/whattree/](http://www.arborday.org/trees/whattree/)

The LEAF site is also a good website to visit.  
[www.uwsp.edu/cnr/leaf/Treekey/tkframe.htm](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/leaf/Treekey/tkframe.htm)

Or, if you need more help contact Karen, Carol or Steve at The Ridges: (920) 839-2802 or email us at: [info@ridgesanctuary.org](mailto:info@ridgesanctuary.org).



A bark rubbing can be added to your tree diary using a crayon and a piece of plain paper.



Jenny takes notes on her 'adopted' tree.

photos by Steve Leonard

## What to Put in A Tree Diary

- A name for your tree – "Martha Maple", "SpongeBob Spruce", "Billy Birch", etc.
- A drawing of a leaf or needles
- A "rubbing" of the bark
- How does it look in the snow?
- Do any animals use it?
- What's special about its bark, shape, or height?
- Why do you like this tree?
- If it's evergreen, do the needles change greens when it gets cold?
- How do you think your tree came to be where it is?
- Is it colder or warmer than the air in winter?
- Is it cooler or warmer under your tree in summer than in the shade of a building?
- Anything interesting that you notice about your tree.



# THE RIDGES SANCTUARY

*Preservation, education and research since 1937*

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## *A Legacy for the Future*

*You can provide for yourself and for places you cherish when you make a **Planned Gift to The Ridges Sanctuary.***

By leaving a planned gift to The Ridges, you can provide for your own needs while helping sustain the Sanctuary. Whether you leave a legacy of treasured land, an ongoing children's program, a funded research project, or a gift for the "greatest needs" of The Ridges, your bequest ensures that your love of nature and the Sanctuary will live on. You may give through:

- Wills
- Life Insurance
- Trusts
- IRAs or other Retirement Accounts
- Marketable securities or financial assets

For more information call The Ridges at 920.839.2802

### **Become a Member of The Ridges Sanctuary!**

The Ridges Sanctuary (over 1,600 acres) in Baileys Harbor is a jewel of biodiversity and beauty on the Door Peninsula. The alternating ridges and swales protect more than 25 species of native orchids, over a dozen rare and endangered plants, and a pocket of boreal forest. The Logan Creek property boasts one of the few old-growth forests in Door County. The Ridges depends on memberships and contributions to fund its mission and on volunteers to help with monitoring and programs. You can help to conserve The Ridges' diversity and beauty by becoming a member, donating funds to purchase land, or volunteering to help with our programs. Call The Ridges for more information: 920.839.2802

