Interpretive Center & Site Design

The Cook/Albert Fuller Center will honor our sense of place by modeling responsible development that protects the natural and aesthetic qualities we’ve come to admire at The Ridges and throughout Door County. The center will act as our “screen door”, bringing the outdoors in and leading you, our visitor, to the outdoors. It will capture the simple feeling of rustic Door County surrounded by the sounds of birds and light summer breezes.

Through our values, the center will become a beacon for environmental stewardship to inspire others, of all ages, to:

- Protect The Ridges and act as a model to help protect other natural areas throughout the Midwest.
- Serve as a gateway to The Ridges and other natural areas throughout Door County, communicating the interplay of geology, hydrology, ecology and land use.
- Support programming and resource space to allow for expanded year-round educational programs that better serve members, the community and Door County residents and to provide “relevant, meaningful learning experiences for children, adults and families”.
- Create a visible entrance to the Sanctuary, orient visitors to the site and its importance, and place The Ridges story into the greater Door County context. Visitors will enter with curiosity and leave feeling inspired.

Interpretive Center Design Parameters

The building design will use best practices for green architecture and achieve the highest practical LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating possible. The center will be inspirational to home and business owners and will motivate them to employ practical green technologies themselves, critical to sustaining the future of the Door Peninsula.

The Cook/Albert Fuller Center will:
- Serve as an educational model for sustainable development by being as efficient as possible
- Act as an educational model for building in a sensitive environment
- Install practical measures to influence future development

Green technology under consideration for the building is:
- Increase roof, wall, and foundation insulation
- Passive design for harvesting day lighting (i.e. glazing)
- Operable windows and natural ventilation
- Bird protection glass to significantly reduce bird collisions into windows
- Geothermal unit for heating and cooling using energy from the earth
- Radiant floor heating around the interior perimeter of the building
- Eco-screen panel to monitor efficiency and educate visitors

All are pending the final energy model to make the building as efficient and cost effective as possible.

Site Design Parameters:
- Redevelopment of a contaminated site
- Control of stormwater quantity and quality to protect the Sanctuary
- Collection of stormwater for reuse in the building and irrigation of native landscaping
- Use of native landscaping to recreate ridges and swales
- Porous pavement to allow infiltration of stormwater
- Creation of bird habitats and other species
- Use of The Ridges backyard as a model for visitors to create habitats, educational experiences for children and ways to protect water resources in their own backyard