

FALL 2021

SANCTUARY

A NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGES

EDUCATION • RESEARCH • PRESERVATION



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DEAR FRIENDS,

I've always associated autumn with being out in nature. The cool air makes me feel like I can ride my bike without breaking a sweat, hunting season is right around the corner, and a drop in the water temperature means fish are biting. All these activities are aided by a colorful backdrop representing a change of the season. For me, fall is the season I feel most connected to the land.

Connecting with the land also means understanding and acknowledging its history. Recently, The Ridges Sanctuary posted a *Land Acknowledgement* on its website. This statement recognizes the peoples who inhabited The Ridges Sanctuary long before white European settlers arrived and forced them from their land.

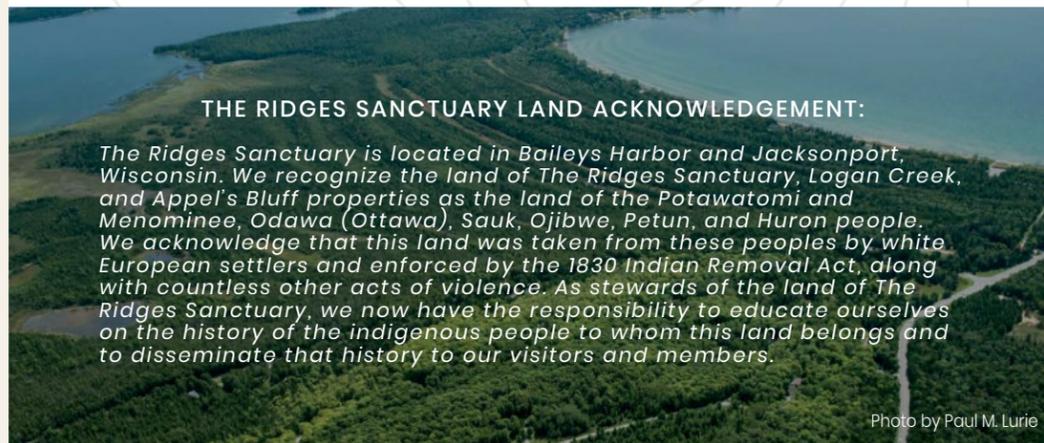
A land acknowledgement is a simple, meaningful way to show respect toward the culture and practices of First Nations which have been lost through forceful eradication and colonization. It provides an accurate and accountable history to better understand a place and its peoples.

We are proud stewards of the Ridges, but also recognize that we can do a better job of telling a complete and accurate story of the land we protect. We often think of the remarkable history of The Ridges Sanctuary as one that began in 1937 when the organization become Wisconsin's first land trust. This history, however, is incomplete. To fully connect with the land, we must understand the complicated history and relationship between the Indigenous Peoples and those who later occupied the land. We also cannot only recognize First Nations in a historical context, for doing so reinforces the harmful erasure of their culture. There are currently 12 American Indian Nations in Wisconsin, each supporting vibrant communities that are so important to Wisconsin's identity.

This fall, we'll be opening our programs and hikes with this acknowledgement. You will also see new interpretive signage that does a better job of telling the complete history of the land we all love. I ask that you do the same, by acknowledging the history of the area's where you live and recreate. It's a simple step that provides the foundation for knowledge and acceptance.

Sincerely,

Andy Gill
Executive Director



THE RIDGES SANCTUARY LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The Ridges Sanctuary is located in Baileys Harbor and Jacksonport, Wisconsin. We recognize the land of The Ridges Sanctuary, Logan Creek, and Appel's Bluff properties as the land of the Potawatomi and Menominee, Odawa (Ottawa), Sauk, Ojibwe, Petun, and Huron people. We acknowledge that this land was taken from these peoples by white European settlers and enforced by the 1830 Indian Removal Act, along with countless other acts of violence. As stewards of the land of The Ridges Sanctuary, we now have the responsibility to educate ourselves on the history of the indigenous people to whom this land belongs and to disseminate that history to our visitors and members.

Photo by Paul M. Lurie

STAFF FEATURE

"I know I'm doing my job well when kids get into their parents' cars and say, 'Guess what we did today!'"

What do you do in your role as an Environmental Interpreter?

My main focus is to create educational opportunities – whether through events or signage – to connect people to our sanctuary. Educational programming is another part of my position. I help with our Dragonfly Nature Preschool program, run summer camps, work with middle school students at Gibraltar, and lead guided hikes. There's never a dull moment!

What do you find to be the most rewarding about your job?

Seeing someone's face light up when they see a monarch butterfly hatch, watch pelicans fly overhead, learn the difference between a Red and a White pine, or notice a rare flower on the side of the trail. I see this most often in the children I work with. I know I'm doing my job well when kids get into their parents' cars and say, "Guess what we did today!"

Do you have any advice to someone considering your career?

Working in the environmental nonprofit industry is difficult and requires sacrifice of personal time and energy. However, it's an incredible opportunity to know that your work is making a positive difference, however small that may be. To anyone who wants to enter the environmental nonprofit industry, I would recommend starting at a small organization like The Ridges.



Anna Foster
Environmental Interpreter

Want to read more?

Read the full article by visiting the Ridges Outpost Blog!

Our new blog highlights nature at the Ridges, profiles staff and volunteers, and provides stories on how we further our mission of education, research and land preservation. Go to https://www.ridgessanctuary.org/ridges_outpost/



WELCOME!

The Ridges is excited to welcome Jane Morse, Environmental Educator and Early Childhood Specialist. Jane is the Preschool Teacher for the Dragonfly Nature Preschool. When she's not at work Jane enjoys gardening, biking, hiking, and relaxing with her husband and three cats. Jane also loves to share her knowledge of nature with her two active grandsons at her home on Lake Winslow.

THE GOLDEN GLORY OF TAMARACK TREES

TAMARACK

[TAM-UH-RAK]

You may not think of The Ridges' boreal forest as a destination for viewing fall color. The sandy ridges are home to conifers like hemlock, spruce, balsam fir, and cedar. These conifers are evergreen and don't explode with color in the fall. But there is one conifer that puts on a brilliant show at the end of every October – the tamarack tree!

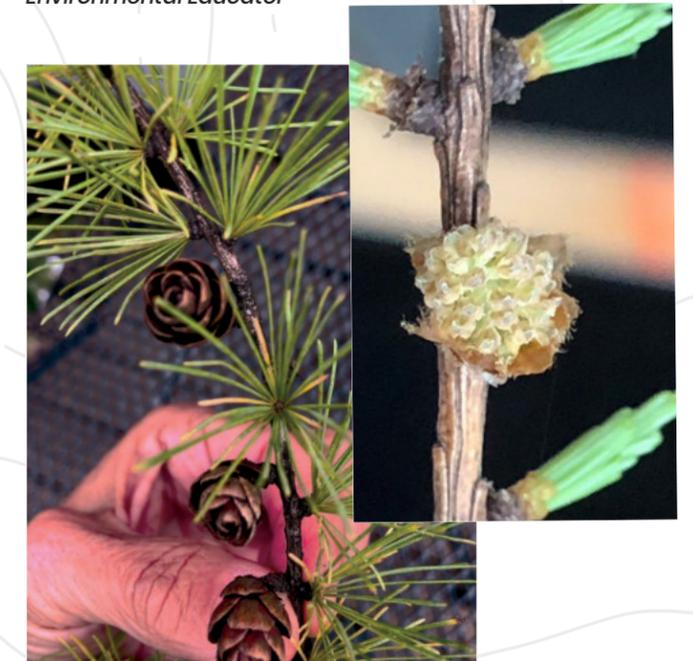
Our tamarack tree (*Larix laricina*), also known as Eastern Larch or Hackmatack, is the only deciduous conifer in Wisconsin. It is native to our area and thrives in the harsh boreal forest where the soil is cold, acidic, and poorly drained. The tamarack tree is a pioneer tree (first tree to grow) in bog-like areas, so look for them at the edge of swales. Because tamarack needle clusters are spaced relatively far apart, the tree creates light shade, and supports a habitat of dense undergrowth that includes plants you see at The Ridges, like Labrador Tea, Sedges, and False Solomon Seal. In Wisconsin, most of our tamarack population is second growth, because in the early 1900s there was a severe outbreak of the pest Larch Sawfly, which defoliated huge swaths of tamarack.

During fall, the swales are aglow with tamaracks. These deciduous conifers are about to lose their needles all at once! This is an unusual thing for a conifer to do. Conifers produce needle-like leaves, and in a harsh environment like The Ridges, they must do so efficiently. Most conifer needles stay on the tree for several years, so on any given year, only a small portion of needles turn yellow and fall. Then in the spring, the conifer only has to replace some of its leaves. The tamarack, on the other hand, loses all of its needles every fall. Perhaps it can afford to produce an entirely new crop of leaves each spring because tamarack needles are short and widely spaced.

Tamaracks love our swales because of the cool, moist, acidic, soil. There the tamarack tree produces beautiful small clusters of needles, placed along branches in such a way that each cluster basks in sunlight. Each tamarack needle is a powerhouse of photosynthesis, providing the tree with energy for growth.

The best viewing of the spectacular tamarack may be on Range Light Boardwalk or on Sandy Swale. Come join our Sanctuary Guided Hike, cross the wide Sandy Swale, and celebrate the bright golden tamarack needles. Search the forest floor for the soft golden needles and let them sift through your fingers. When the needles are all on the ground, the trees will look knobby and barren until spring when tiny clusters of neon green needles burst forth again, ready to work for the summer!

by **Sheryl Honig**
Environmental Educator



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Building Connections with Nature and Inspiring Future Stewardship through Children's Education

The Ridges is committed to increasing the appreciation for our rich natural landscape and to foster connections with the natural world. Nature education increases self-esteem and resilience, promotes creativity, concentration, cognitive development, and self-awareness.

DRAGONFLY NATURE PRESCHOOL

Nature is at the heart of Ridges Children's curriculum. We plan experiences that support children's interests and developmental needs. We read stories, take hikes, plan investigations, and play in forests, meadows, and streams. Through nature education, children develop the skills they need to make a successful transition to kindergarten while forming lasting connections to nature.

Our Learning Environment: We are a licensed preschool, offering morning programming for nine months each school year. Dragonfly Nature Preschool meets at The Ridges Sanctuary where we utilize classroom space in antique cabins and in the Nature Center itself. We spend almost all of our time outdoors, hiking and playing in the boreal forest, sand dunes, meadow, stream, garden, and pine grove. Our teachers are professionally trained in either environmental education or early childhood education, and they have experience in both areas. We offer a ratio of fifteen or fewer children to two teachers. This training and ratio exceed requirements of the National Association of the Education of Young Children. Programs are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-11:30am. Registration is open for the 2nd semester, January 26-May 25; capacity is 12 children, ages 3-6. Cost is \$850 for 17 weeks. To learn more, go to www.ridgessanctuary.org.

GIBRALTAR FOREST DAYS

Nature is calming and health-giving. It is complexity and diversity support learning and creativity. Playing in nature supports motor skills. The Ridges collaboration with the Gibraltar School District and the Friends of Gibraltar creates local opportunities for children in grades K-6 to connect with nature and increase their knowledge and appreciation of the natural world. Our educators develop new learning experiences for students throughout the school year by monthly visits to the forest, hikes, sit spots, nature lessons, journaling, and free exploration. Once monthly for every class grade K-6. 17 classes total.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

The Ridges partners with Northern Door Children's Center and Peninsula Preschool to provide nature play programming.

Northern Door Children's Center programs are held every Monday for six weeks in the fall. The program accepts 21 students and has been subsidized by a generous donor.

Peninsula Preschool programs are offered every Wednesday throughout the school year. The program accepts eight students.

FEATURED EVENTS

NOVEMBER



NO SANCTUARY GUIDED HIKES IN NOVEMBER CALL FOR SPECIAL REQUEST HIKES

RUSTIC TRAILS CLOSED NOVEMBER 20 – NOVEMBER 28, 2021.

Hidden Brook Boardwalk will remain open. | Hike at your own risk. | Blaze orange clothing is mandatory.

DECEMBER

WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP

DEC

03 04
Friday Saturday

Workshop Times

10:00-11:30 12:00-1:30 2:00-3:30

Come to The Ridges Sanctuary to create your perfect holiday wreath! We will provide the frames, wire, greens and decorative goodies for you to create your wreath or swag. There is a \$20 fee, which includes materials for 1 wreath. Additional wreaths and swags are \$10 each. Pre-Registration will be required so we can ensure we have enough frames for everyone.

Capacity = 20 people per session

NATURAL CHRISTMAS

DEC

11 3-6
Saturday pm

Spend a few hours this holiday season surrounded by the natural beauty of The Ridges Sanctuary. Stroll down the softly lit Hidden Brook Boardwalk and join us in our beautifully decorated Kaye Cabin while listening to holiday music. This program offers a wreath making workshop, holiday crafts, and a campfire. Guided hikes and Range Light tours are available throughout the event. Delicious cookies and warm cider and hot chocolate will be available at the decorated Cook-Albert Fuller Nature Center.

Visit our website for more information regarding this event. Maps and parking instructions will be available as we get closer to December.

Admission to Natural Christmas is free. Wreath making is \$20, which includes materials for 1 wreath. Additional wreaths and swags are \$10 each.



*Masks will be required for all indoor activities during Natural Christmas.

HOLIDAY LUMINARY WALKS

DEC

26-30
Sunday- Thursday

\$5 Trail Fee Applies
Join us to walk the softly lit boardwalk and enjoy the peaceful evening surroundings. The Hidden Brook Boardwalk will remain open until 7PM with luminaria lighting the trails from 5-7PM.

To register for programs and for more information visit www.RidgesSanctuary.org



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DONATE

The Ridges Sanctuary relies on the generosity of our supporters to protect our lands, advance research initiatives, expand adult and youth education, and to build capacity to support the growth of the organization. Ways to donate include: Undesignated contributions to offset operational expenses; Designated contributions for specific initiatives; and Endowment funds to ensure contributions are available in perpetuity. In addition, Planned Giving can be one of the best ways for an individual or family to leave their legacy. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift today.

JOIN

Join over 1,500 individual, family and business members and enjoy the best of everything The Ridges has to offer. Membership includes free, year-round admission to all Ridges trails, program guides and newsletters, discounts on Nature Store items, and member rates for our programs and events.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are the backbone of The Ridges and the core of many of our important programs. Over 200 dedicated individuals share their time and talents in a variety of ways. From trail maintenance, assisting in the Nature Store, and leading/assisting with hikes, to serving as a lighthouse docent, helping with citizen science programs and carpentry projects -- there are numerous opportunities to contribute. No prior experience is needed in any category. Visit our website or call to find out how you can be a part of the team.

FOR MORE INFO:

www.RidgesSanctuary.org
(920) 839-2802