

83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of The Ridges Sanctuary  
Held via Webinar  
August 6, 2020

Board Members Present: Tony Fiorato – President, Linda Brooks – Vice President, Sandy Miller – Secretary, Cindy Wolter – Treasurer, Cynthia Crock, Rob Davis, Chuck Dull, Vicki Medland, Jane Whitney, David Zuhlke and Grace Rossman

Staff Members Present: Drew Richmond, Katie Krouse, Matt Peter, Tony Kizonas, Sheryl Honig, Anna Foster, Lori Kemmler, and Lauri Smith

Members Present: 21

### **Call to Order – Tony Fiorato**

The Ridges Sanctuary 2020 Annual Meeting was called to order at approximately 3 pm by Tony Fiorato, President. Tony welcomed all members to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting and thanked members for their support. Tony explained the Webinar protocol for voting and questions. Tony thanked the strong core of numerous volunteers at The Ridges, especially during this challenging year. Tony also thanked our strong and capable board members for the extra effort they've put in during the Executive Director vacancy. Tony introduced the staff and responsibilities of each. Summer interns were also recognized.

### **Approval of August 3, 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes**

Cynthia Crock made a motion to approve the August 3, 2019 meeting minutes as distributed; Rob Davis seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

### **Recognition of Retiring Board**

Tony recognized outgoing Board members Vicki Medland and Jane Whitney for their years of service. Tony recognized Vicki as one of the longest serving board members and thanked Vicki and Jane for their contributions and service to The Ridges Sanctuary.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Cindy Wolter presented the 2019 audited financials and thanked members for their financial support. She then reviewed The Ridges current financial status. The COVID pandemic caused major issues to be overcome in early 2020, including lost revenue due to the closing the Center, and the cancellation of the Festival of Nature and other scheduled programs and events. It was anticipated there would be a reduced level of donations, but donor response has been strong and greater than anticipated. Year-end cash projections suggest operations will be sustained through 2020, and with cautious optimism, cover the first quarter of 2021.

### **Election of New Board Members**

Andy Gill and Jeff Lutsey were nominated to fill two vacancies on the Board. Linda Brooks and Sandy Miller are standing for a second 3-year term. There were no additional nominations from the floor. Mark Jenkins made a motion to close the nominations; Cynthia Crock seconded and

the motion carried with all in favor. The four individuals were voted on separately and each was elected unanimously.

### **Year in Review**

Katie Krouse – Programming was modified during COVID and a 3-phase re-establishment plan for operations was developed for the safety of staff, volunteers, and visitors. Staff has recently moved into Phase 2 with the Front Desk and Store opening. Nature exhibits have been set up on the boardwalk and guided hikes started again in early July.

Sheryl Honig – After a strong start with Northern Door Peninsula Preschool, Camp, Forest Days, and Nature Play, the educators modified programs using videos to keep children connected to Nature.

Lori Kemmler – On-line storytelling and Tiny Trekkers started in early June with reduced participants for safety reasons. Dragonfly Nature Play was held on-line and included nature activities and craft ideas. Summer camp was altered to offer three 2-week sessions with reduced numbers of children.

Anna Foster – At Home in Nature programs were offered on-line to keep children and families connected with The Ridges. Photos, videos and activity suggestions were posted on Facebook to encourage families to get out in Nature. Interns helped run camps and planned August Youth Programs, as well as helped at the Front Desk.

Matt Peter – New sections of trails, a permanent dock for water access and interpretive signs were installed at Logan Creek after 7.6 additional acres were acquired. A grant for monitoring habitat was received for the Orchid Restoration project. Summer Intern Ben Epley assisted with Land Management activities through a program offered by St. Olaf College.

Tony commended The Ridges staff for doing a tremendous job during these challenging times of the COVID pandemic and leadership transition, and thanked them for their efforts.

### **Recognition of Steve Leonard**

Tony Fiorato recognized Steve Leonard for his 14 years as Executive Director as he leaves to pursue a Master's Degree in Public Health. Steve's accomplishments include construction of the Cook Fuller Center and Hidden Brook Boardwalk, the expansion of education programs and much more. Tony thanked Steve and wished him much success on behalf of the Board.

Steve Leonard thanked the staff for their dedication and continued momentum. He also thanked the volunteers and past and present board members, saying what a great experience he had during his time at The Ridges. Steve recognized those volunteers and members that have passed on and the contributions each of them made to The Ridges. He appreciates the dedication and spirit of all involved to make The Ridges a "place of possibility" as envisioned by Chester Cook.

Linda Brooks presented Steve with gifts from the Board including a Picture Memory Book and a bench memorializing the Hidden Brook Boardwalk and Range Lights. Linda thanked Steve on behalf of the Board and expressed appreciation for everything Steve has done for The Ridges.

### **Open Mic**

Sandy and Ed Miller thanked Steve and acknowledged their appreciation of Steve's confidence in their overseeing the restoration the Baileys Harbor Range Lights. They also thanked all the volunteers who have worked on the restoration project. Ed said Covid-19 affected the Range Light tours, but the Door County Trolley continues to visit.

### **Adjournment**

Tony thanked Drew, Katie and other staff for getting the Annual Meeting set up virtually. Tony also thanked all of the members for attending the on-line meeting and for their continued support of The Ridges.

Jane Whitney made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Rob Davis seconded and the meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Minutes written by Lauri Smith

Finalized September 27, 2020 by Sandy Miller, Board Secretary