



**The Ridges Sanctuary 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
August 3, 2024**

**Board Members Present:** Jeff Lutsey – President, Sher Rockway – Secretary, Chuck Germain – Treasurer, Deb Fitzgerald, Jone Kiefer, Ed Miller, Bill Wolff, and Dave Zuhke

**Staff Members Present:** Katie Krouse, Andy Gill, MaryBeth Anschutz, Wendy Beilfuss, Jeanne Farrell, Anna Foster, Ana Hinkle, Sam Hoffman, Sheryl Honig, Libby Humphries, Tony Kiszonas, Secelie Panske, Dan Scheiman, Amy Shook and Jenn Taylor

**Seasonal Naturalists Present:** Leah Hamblin, Heidi Williamson, Albert Kennedy

**Members Present:** 74

**The Ridges Sanctuary 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was called to order by The Ridges Sanctuary Board President Jeff Lutsey at 5:07 pm.**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Jeff Lutsey welcomed members to The Ridges Sanctuary 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. He shared three numbers to provide a perspective of The Ridges as it is today:

1. 10,000: A glacier went through the peninsula 10,000 years ago, melted and receded, opening biology, life, microbes, and amoebas to the county.
2. 1,000: The first ridge of The Ridges Sanctuary took form roughly 1,000 years ago. It takes 150 years to form - about the same timeframe as one human generation. Looking at the now 30 ridges and swales of The Ridges from an aerial view, the geological timeframe has made an impact in how he views The Ridges.
3. 87: This is our 87<sup>th</sup> annual meeting. What started as 40 acres now stands at 1,700. We are standing on the shoulders of the people who preserved this land.

Jeff introduced board members, who came forward and shared the experiences that drew them to The Ridges. Jeff shared that three to four years ago, the organization was in a different spot, with issues of management and retention. He highlighted the transitions over the years and thanked former director Andy Gill for his leadership and highlighted the seamless transition to our current leadership structure.

Katie Krouse introduced the staff and summer interns and gave kudos to the Ridges staff for their contributions. Katie also referenced major accomplishments in our mission areas of Education, Preservation and Research that would be shared shortly during the Year in Review.

**Approval of August 5, 2023 Minutes**

Tom Turriff made a motion to approve the August 5, 2023 meeting minutes as distributed. Ed Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Ridges Sanctuary Treasurer Chuck Germain provided an overview of the 2023 financials. Chuck pointed to the 2023 Audited Financials, as well as the 2023 Impact numbers in the Annual Report. He shared that Ridges revenues are over \$2 million and that 75% of revenue came from outright contributions. He noted that the healthy financial position that The Ridges is due to the generosity of donors. To illustrate the impact of donations, Chuck told the story of Paul Preston, a young man from California who left The Ridges as a benefactor in his will. Although Mr. Preston was not previously known to The Ridges, his experience with the Ridges made a lasting impact on him. Chuck highlighted the value of legacy giving and celebrated the state we are in today because of the legacy contributions from our community.

Charlotte Lukes made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Tom Turriff seconded the motion.

## **Election of Board Members**

Jeff introduced this year's slate of Board members:

Michelle Hefty and Grace Rossman were nominated to serve their second 3-year term. Bill Wolff made the motion to approve, and the motion was seconded by George Cobb. The motion was approved unanimously.

Jone Kieffer, Bill Lee, Rick Johnson, and Laura Landergott were nominated to serve their first 3-year term. Sher Rockway made the motion to approve, and Dave Zuhlke seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Year in Review**

*Katie Krouse, Executive Director*

Katie touched on major accomplishments of the past year. She called attention to the new website and branding, the Dwarf Lake Iris Restoration Project, new research initiatives and monitoring tools, including the digital canopy imager, as well as the new 4K educational program. She also highlighted work on the Sandy Swale boardwalk that is being replaced by the Wednesday Crew and the tribute opportunity program this has created.

*Albert Kennedy, WisCorps Conservationist*

Albert comes to The Ridges from Albany, Ohio. He is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in wildlife research and management at West Virginia University. He shared that he has learned more at The Ridges than any degree can offer. His summer project documents small mammal species living at The Ridges and the Family Discovery Trail has resulted in the identification of 33 species of mammals, including two that are a first in the county, four species of special concern, and a long-eared bat, a federally endangered species.

*Dan Scheiman, Visitor Engagement Specialist*

Dan and his wife Samantha have long dreamed of living in Door County. Getting the job at the Ridges was the last piece of the puzzle for them. Before The Ridges, Dan served as Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Arkansas. Dan shared that birds are the bellwethers of climate change. His goal is to train

people to be better birders. He shared his appreciation of citizen scientists for their role in identifying trends in bird populations in Door County.

*Heidi Williamson, Seasonal Naturalist*

Heidi comes to The Ridges from Tulsa, OK. She attends Texas A&M and is majoring in ecology, conservation, and biology. Heidi's summer project involves researching butterfly species and walking surveys. She uses a butterfly trap as a tool in her research and will use the results to develop a field guide to share with the public.

*Leah Hamblin – Seasonal Naturalist/WisCorps Conservationist*

Leah comes from Salt Lake City, Utah and is currently studying anthropology at Southern Utah University. This summer, she has helped with Backpack Adventure Camps, led guided hikes, and assisted with staff research projects. Her summer project at The Ridges involves the study of plants, their history with the land, and how they contribute to the biodiversity of The Ridges. Her work in ethnobotany will be made available to the public on the Ridges website.

*Amy Shook, Naturalist*

Amy comes to Door County from Erie, Pennsylvania. Her background includes a degree in Environmental Sciences from the University of Dubuque, and a master's degree in biology from the University of Louisiana, where she studied snapping turtles. Amy heads up the new Free Friday's program at The Ridges, made possible by 100+ Women Who Care, and looks forward to sharing ways to make the Ridges more accessible to families of all ages.

*Libby Humphries, WisCorps Conservationist/Environmental Educator*

Libby came to The Ridges from Atlanta, Georgia in 2023 as a WisCorps intern, and recently graduated with a degree in environmental sciences. While at the Ridges, she completed a project that involved inventorying and documenting 31 species of bees. Libby will transition to a year-round staff role as an environmental educator in the fall. She is especially excited about The Ridges first public nature-based preschool for The Ridges and thanked everyone for making this possible.

**Other Business**

Susan Crawford asked about the amount of the 100+ Women Who Care Grant. Katie responded that the grant was for \$16,500 total and a \$5,000 matching grant, and thanked Ridges volunteer Penny Niesen for her role in obtaining the grant. Jeff shared a comment with the group on behalf of Ridges member Maureen McGrath, who said she is excited about the young energy at The Ridges.

**The meeting was adjourned by Jeff Lutsey at 6:25pm.**