



**2022**  
**THE RIDGES SANCTUARY**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

**PRESERVATION • EDUCATION • RESEARCH**

# TO INSPIRE THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE

# 2022 AUDITED FINANCIALS

## FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE RIDGES FAMILY,

*Connections* has been a common theme throughout the last two years. Connections have built The Ridges to the organization we know and love today. If it weren't for the connection of our founders to the incredible biodiversity found within the ridges and swales, and their connections to a community of change makers, The Ridges Sanctuary as we know it today may not have existed. We are constantly reminded of the challenges those that came before us faced as they fought to protect the ridges and swales and all protected land in Door County. The story of conservation in Door County is one to admire, and we are humbled by the opportunity to continue to tell its story and inspire the next generation of conservationists.

Our founders set out with a purpose to protect the Sanctuary and beyond and *carry on educational and scientific activities that will promote the cause of the conservation and preservation of wild plant and animal life and natural scenery* (Source: 1937 Articles of Incorporation). For nearly nine decades, The Ridges has done just that. We continue to expand our community and connect with individuals, places, and organizations to actively promote positive environmental behaviors through impactful educational experiences, land management and protection, and ecological research.

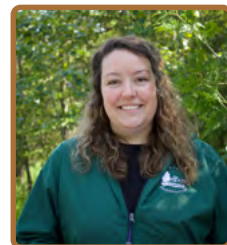
The most important connection we cherish today, is our connection with YOU. Members are the foundation of The Ridges Sanctuary. It is because of your support that 2022 was a spectacular year of growth. We committed to the development of a 20-year vision, purchased the Ridges Inn and Suites, reignited our environmental education programs, invested in research and citizen science, and more! We are thrilled to share the accomplishments and growth of The Ridges Sanctuary in 2022 with you in this report. Alongside our accomplishments, you'll note the significant recommendations from our newly adopted Master Plan that will provide new opportunities to expand on our mission and further engage our community and partners.

As you read this report, we hope you will reflect on one of our favorite questions: What is your nature connection? And more deeply, what is your Ridges connection? We have all come to The Ridges with different backgrounds, interests and passions, but one thing that we all share is a belief in the mission of The Ridges. We are excited to continue to deliver on our mission with your support.

Onward together to inspire the conservation of Nature,



*Dave Zuhlke*  
**DAVE ZUHLKE**  
Board President



*Katie Krouse*  
**KATIE KROUSE**  
Executive Director

### 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dave Zuhlke *President*  
Jeff Lutsey *Vice President*  
Sandy Miller *Secretary*  
Grace Rossman *Treasurer*

### DIRECTORS

Linda Brooks      Jone Kiefer  
Deb Fitzgerald      Mark Martin  
Chuck Germain      Sher Rockway  
Michelle Hefty      Bill Wolff

### STAFF

Katie Krouse  
*Executive Director*  
Andy Gill  
*Assistant Director*

Jim Kinney  
*Accountant*

Wendy Beilfuss  
*Administrative Assistant*

Jeanne Farrell  
*Director of Marketing*

Tony Kiszonas  
*Director of Research*

Sheryl Honig, PhD  
*Environmental Educator*

Jane Morse  
*Environmental Educator & Early Childhood Specialist*

Anna Foster  
*Director of Programming*

Sam Hoffman  
*Land Manager*

Mary Beth Anschutz  
*Visitor Engagement Coordinator*

Jackie Rath  
*Program Coordinator*

Cathy Costelow  
*Visitor Engagement Specialist*

*Cover/Back page photos by:  
Andrew Pirrung*

## REVENUES

Contributions - Undesignated	\$718,798
Contributions - Designated & Endowment	\$405,513
Memberships	\$99,785
Net Special Events	\$53,471
Net Nature Store Sales	\$82,551
Trail Fees, Tours & Guided Hikes	\$97,904
Workshops & Camps	\$57,631
Other Support and Revenue	\$103,997

**TOTAL REVENUES, SUPPORT AND GAINS**      **\$1,619,650**

## EXPENSES

Program Services	\$644,201
Administration	\$291,799
Fundraising & Development	\$104,038

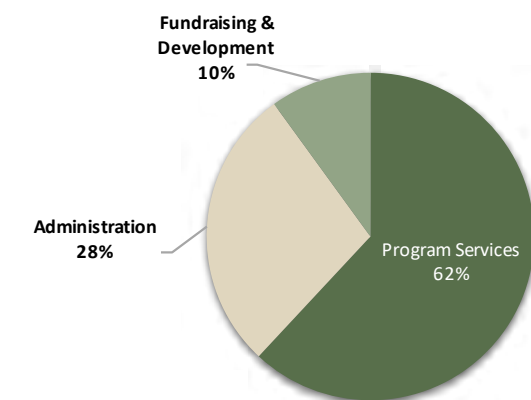
**EXPENSES**      **\$1,040,038**

## CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

Change in Net Assets Before Gains & Losses on Investments	\$579,612
Net Realized & Unrealized Gains on Investment	-\$445,757
Change in Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trust	-\$29,782
Change in Net Assets	\$104,073
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$13,361,195

**NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR**      **\$13,465,268**

### EXPENSES



## ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$1,470,257
Accounts Receivable	\$14,456
Grants Receivable	-
Prepaid Expense	\$11,249
Nature Store Inventory	\$25,201
Land & Fixed Assets - Net of depreciation	\$9,109,067
Cash Restricted for Long Term Purposes	\$599,350
Ridges Endowment Investments	\$3,277,609
Other Assets	\$139,195

**TOTAL ASSETS**      **\$14,646,384**

## LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

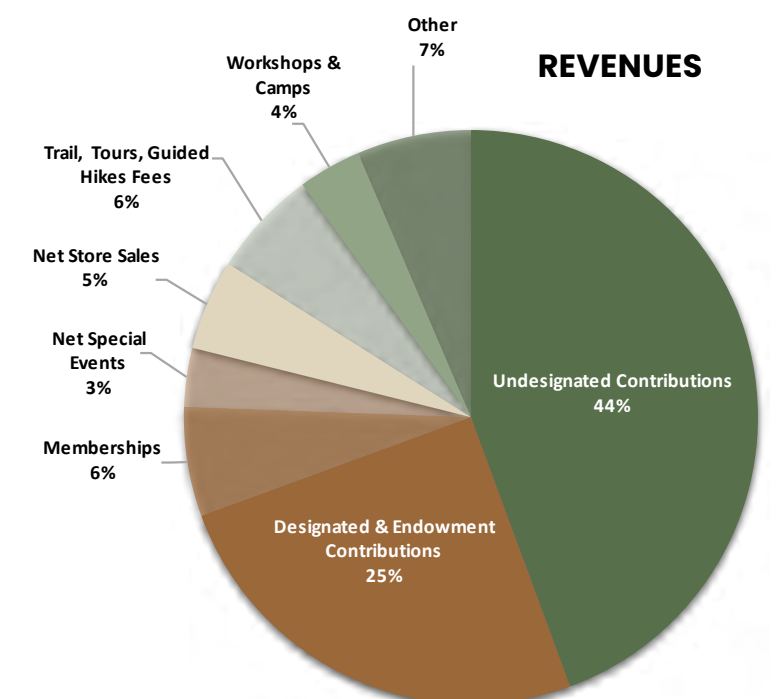
Accrued Expenses, Payroll & Other	\$34,210
Note Payable - Ridges Inn	\$1,146,906

**TOTAL LIABILITIES**      **\$1,181,116**

## NET ASSETS

Accrued Expenses, Payroll & Other	\$34,210
Note Payable - Ridges Inn	\$1,146,906

**TOTAL NET ASSETS**      **\$13,465,268**



# 2022 IMPACT

## ACRES PROTECTED

1,674 Total acres protected  
2.5 Acres added in 2022



## YOUTH EDUCATION

### Forest Days

354 Students engaged each month between Gibraltar and Sevastopol Public Schools



### Education at The Ridge

210 Youth ages walking – 11 years old are engaged at The Ridges Sanctuary

- Backpack Adventure Camp
- Dragonfly Nature Preschool
- Ridges Forest School
- Tiny Trekkers



## FESTIVAL OF NATURE

552 Festival of Nature attendees, participating in 65 Field Trips in collaboration with 11 partners in conservation



## RESEARCH

### Orchid Trekking

6,000 Individual Orchids recorded in 2022  
29 Species Recorded

## WEBSITE

RidgesSanctuary.org reached

47,635 Visitors



## MEMBERSHIP

2,158 Members

5 New Lifetime Members

Members in all 50 States!

89% Member Retention in 2022 vs 86% Member Retention in 2021



## VOLUNTEERS

7,954 Volunteer Hours

\$252,940 In value

Supporting The Ridges in the following areas: Guided Hikes, Reception Desk, Wednesday Crew, Range Light Docents, Special Events, Research and Citizen Science, Garden Maintenance, Administration



## NUMBER OF VISITORS

30,300 Visitors to the Nature Center



## RANGE LIGHT BOARDWALK

850 Feet of boardwalk replaced entirely by volunteers and staff

Over 1,000 volunteer hours were dedicated to this project, saving The Ridges Sanctuary over \$31,000



## MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Hundreds of hours committed by staff, board, and community members to develop our inspiring 20-year vision



## DONORS

1,187 Donors supported our important mission driven work

### Albert Fuller Society

2 new donors added to the Albert Fuller Society, leaving a natural legacy with the organization



For a complete list of donors, visit: [RidgesSanctuary.org/publications/annual-report/](https://RidgesSanctuary.org/publications/annual-report/)



## GUIDED HIKES

710 Participants  
1,200 Miles Hiked Collectively

# RESEARCH



After an illustrious 40-year career educating students at Southern Door, Tony Kizonas retired. In September, Tony accepted the position of Director of Research, primarily working with ongoing plant restoration projects and a robust Citizen Science program. The transition was greatly assisted through the help of the entire Ridges Sanctuary staff and volunteers, especially Sam Hoffman and Jane Whitney. Not only did Sam and Jane have everything incredibly well organized, they also unfailingly provided and continue to provide help whenever asked as we move forward.

## PARTNERING IN RESEARCH

We are excited about several research collaborations taking place at The Ridges. Texas Tech University researcher Grant Doering reported the discovery of two ant species on property that are the first documented in the state, one of which may be a national first. We continue to expand partnerships with other research groups and have approved four new research permits.

## CITIZEN SCIENCE

Through the strength of volunteers, the Citizen Science program is an exemplar for conservation colleagues to emulate. In addition to WAV Stream Monitoring, Christmas Bird Count, Midwest Crane Count, Sucker Monitoring, among others, a Plant Inventory project was initiated. The team worked on protocol development and survey work, documenting 145 species of plants on a small, parcel of land. This group is currently refining methodology in different plant communities and will continue to tackle the monumental task of completing a Sanctuary Plant Inventory.

Our team of orchid trekkers is on a quest to locate as many orchids as possible that are naturally growing in The Ridges Sanctuary. Thus far, 29 species have been identified, with certain species recorded for the first time in Door County. This tenacious group recorded over 6,000 individual

orchids, representing 21 different species, some of which are listed as either threatened or of special concern.

Currently, we have deployed 16 HOBO monitors dedicated to the Ram's Head Lady's Slipper restoration project. Through grant funding and gracious private donations, these electronic monitors are collecting data on light values, soil temperature, and soil moisture which provide information about abiotic environmental parameters for orchid growth and reproduction. In combination with the specific plant data collected by our dedicated citizen scientist plot monitors, our statistician is crafting a picture of the Ram's Head "sweet spot" that will determine where out planting has the best possible chance of success for this threatened orchid. This methodology will also be employed as we proceed with a Dwarf Lake Iris restoration/translocation project.

Orchid shade houses were established and are maintained by another group of citizen scientists.

These volunteers planted the orchid seedlings and ensure that the plants are watered and the flats weeded throughout the season. The group also sets up the houses in the spring and strikes them in the fall, tucking in the orchids for the winter. The shade houses are important for our vernalization experiments and allow guests to view three species of orchids in one spot, with great photo possibilities.

We look forward to expanding our Citizen Science opportunities, increasing collaborations, and refining our research protocols.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: THE RIDGES SANCTUARY MASTER PLAN

The recent purchase of the Ridges Inn property creates a unique opportunity for a consolidated Research Campus befitting TRS' orchid research program, in addition to providing a permanent base for citizen science and housing the majority

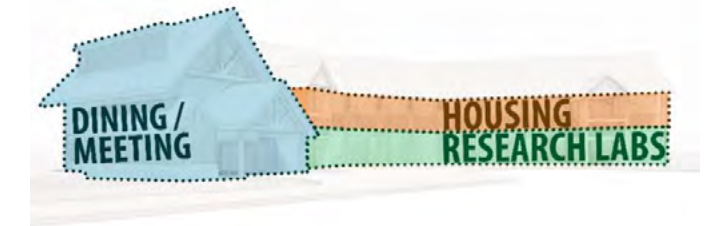
of TRS staff not associated with daily operation of the Nature Center.

## COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH SPACE

The renovated main lodge building includes office, lab, and support space for existing research programs, and the potential for cooperative research-in-residence programs with regional partners and institutions utilizing renovated, on-site lodging.

## CITIZEN SCIENCE

A permanent base for citizen science is established in the remodeled Juniper-Birchwood Cottage, with driveway access to load supplies.



# EDUCATION

The Ridges education team provided impactful programming to children of all ages in 2022. Through educational programs that included Tiny Trekkers, Gibraltar and Sevastopol Forest Days, Ridges Forest School, Field Trips, and other programs, Ridges educators furthered the mission of The Ridges.

## FOREST DAYS

Ridges educators provided monthly Forest Days for students grades 4k-6th at Gibraltar and grades 1 and 2 at Sevastopol starting in the fall of 2022. A total of 26 classes and 354 children participated in forest days each month. Ridges staff took students into the school forest for 90-minute lessons each month, covering topics like the carbon cycle, patterns in nature, the interconnectedness of ecosystems, resource availability, and biodiversity. With the change in seasons, each month brought new opportunities for students to learn and explore.

Educators also implemented GLOBE protocols into 5th and 6th grade Forest Day curriculum in the fall of 2022. GLOBE is a hands-on approach to the scientific method for students to learn more about the ecosystem in which they live. Through protocols sorted into the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, pedosphere categories, Forest Day students collected data in their school forest and uploaded it to the GLOBE database.

## FOREST SCHOOL

In September of 2022, the Ridges introduced Ridges Forest School, a natural science education program designed for Door County homeschool students aged 6-9. This supplemental program served seven families in total, with Ridges educators Jane Morse and Jackie Rath teaching three days each week for 2 ½ hours per class. RFS utilized the Sanctuary and other Ridges properties as their classroom, allowing students to hike through diverse ecosystems, learn to record their observations and questions about the changing nature around them, engage in hands-on investigations with their peers, and make personal connections with the natural world.

## BACKPACK ADVENTURE CAMP

In 2022, The Ridges offered six weeks of the summer Backpack Adventure Camp program. This allowed for 186 spaces for campers in Backpack Adventure Camp, creating 62 additional spaces compared to

2021, and an additional two weeks of programming. Campers explored the Sanctuary, Family Discovery Trail, and beach habitats. At the end of the week, they took home items from their backpacks, including butterfly nets, bug jars, and binoculars to further explore nature in their own backyards.

## BOARDWALK SIGNAGE

The Ridges received a generous grant from the Brookby Foundation for the purpose of creating permanent interpretive signs along Hidden Brook Boardwalk. These signs expand on the Nature Center's indoor exhibits and provide informal learning opportunities to visitors along the boardwalk about the flora, fauna, and history of The Ridges.

## STEWARDSHIP BASED PROGRAMMING

Ridges programs such as Monarch Madness, the Sustainable Citizens Symposium, Ridges Reads, Owl-O-Rama, the Bluebird Workshop, and the Wisconsin Bat Workshop increased awareness and sustainability in 2022. Demand was high for stewardship-based programs. For example, 88

participants signed up for the first meeting of Ridges Reads: Ridges + Regeneration. These programs serve to educate the public and inspire stewardship of the Sanctuary and other natural spaces.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: THE RIDGES SANCTUARY MASTER PLAN

### NORTH CAMPUS

An improved campus setting is created around the Marshall and Kaye cabins with a new flexible classroom and events pavilion, by reconfiguring the existing parking and relocating the workshop to the east end of the parking lots. The new pavilion provides classroom space, storage, and year-round toilets, with the ability to flex in warmer seasons to accommodate larger groups complementing offerings at the Nature Center. The historic cabins will remain, and will be repaired with minor upgrades to lighting and windows. Accessible trail connections link to the Family Discovery Trail, the Upper Range Light and the Finell property.

### FAMILY DISCOVERY STATION

Changes in the configuration of the Family Discovery Trail will make youth camps more successful and safer. By locating a seasonal educational pavilion, coupled with toilets, storage, drop-off and parking area, the station functions independently without the need to constantly cross Highway 57 for basic operational needs.



# PRESERVATION



Significant accomplishments in preservation of the Ridges were achieved in 2022. With the replacement of the Range Light Boardwalk, over 60 volunteers dedicated over 1,000 hours to rebuild 850 feet of the boardwalk that connects the Upper and Lower Range Lights. This project was made possible through a generous posthumous donation from the Farrell family. The new boardwalk, one of the most visited parts of the Sanctuary, was widened to 6 feet with additional toe rails, and provides greater accessibility to visitors of all ages and abilities. On the heels of this project, The Ridges saw its volunteer impact grow in existing groups, such as our maintenance-focused Wednesday Crew and Garden Crew, and the formation of new volunteer working groups, including the revival of the Barbary Pirates that help with controlling invasive species in the Sanctuary.

Invasive species is another area of focus in preservation and land management and remains the second largest threat to biodiversity behind habitat loss. Priority management activities included the start of a property wide inventory and ongoing treatment of targeted species. Land acquisition in 2022 included a waterfront property on Ridges Road and The Ridges Inn property off of

Hwy 57, a total of 3 acres of important stream and lakeshore habitat that have been incorporated into The Ridges Sanctuary State Natural Area.

Looking ahead, the most exciting recent development in rare plant conservation is the implementation of The Ridges Dwarf Lake Iris (*Iris lacustris*) Restoration project. Conceived from master plan discussions, grant funding for a project to research, promote and restore Dwarf Lake Iris and its habitat within the Sanctuary has been awarded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services' Coastal Program. This project will aim to learn more about this small iris species and its preferred habitat by monitoring and collecting data on current populations to help inform long-term management and restoration efforts. The result will be habitat manipulation through significant tree clearing and canopy thinning to mimic historic disturbance regimes, creating more favorable conditions, particularly in terms of light availability. An overarching goal of the project is to introduce Dwarf Lake Iris to other areas of the Sanctuary that have potentially ideal conditions for the plant.

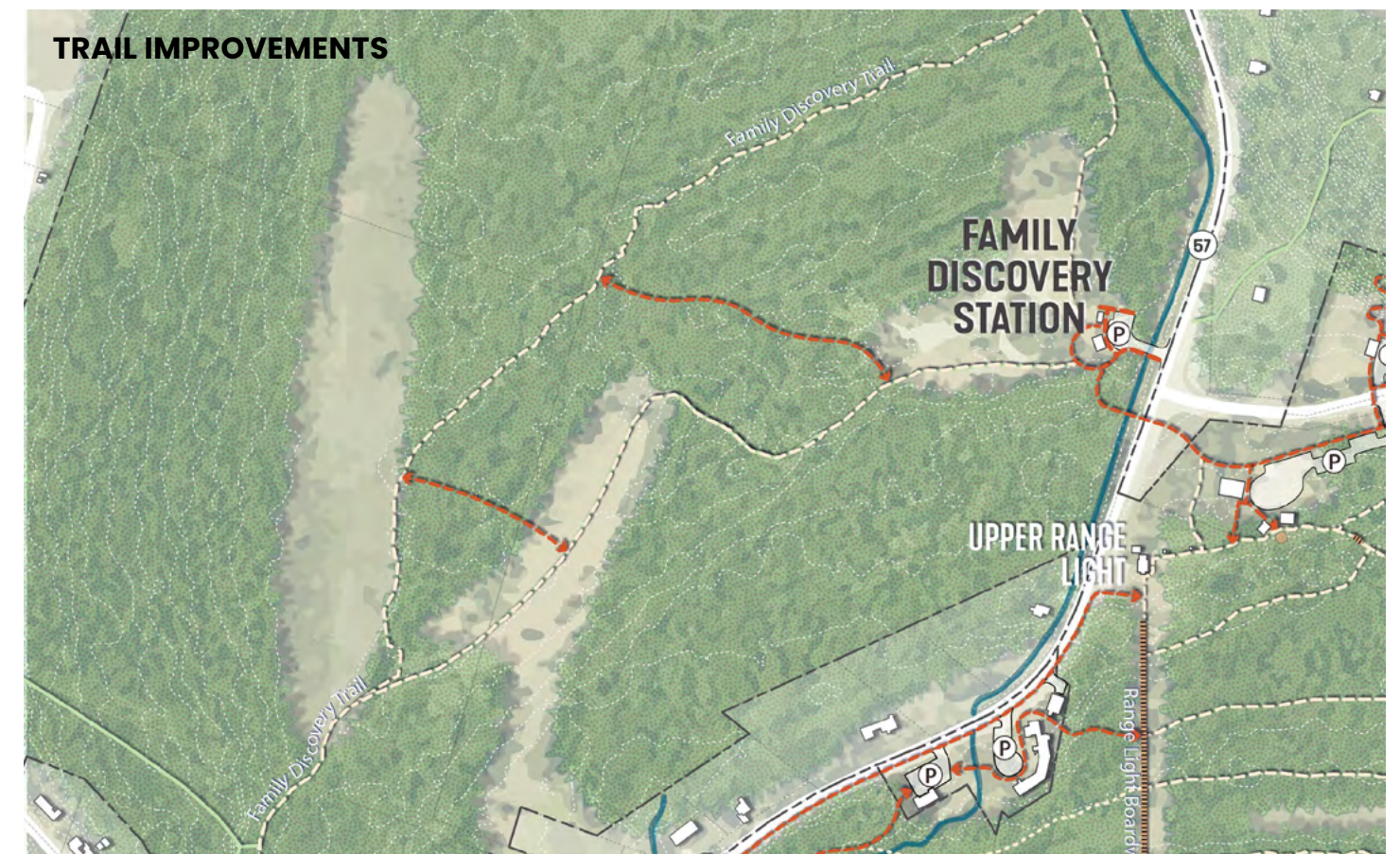
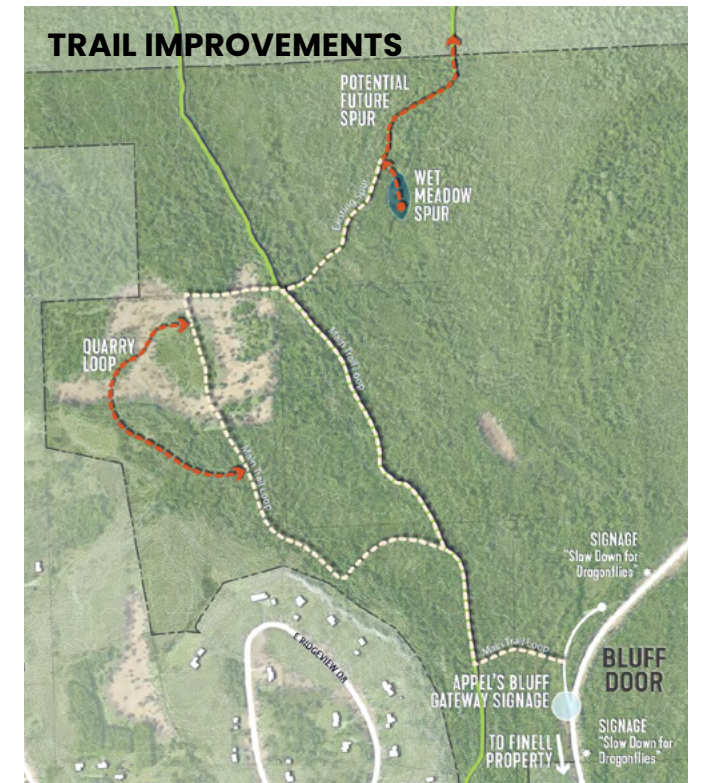


## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: THE RIDGES SANCTUARY MASTER PLAN

### PRESERVATION

As part of the master planning process, a Land Management Plan was developed to formally establish TRS policies for land management and acquisition. To preserve and improve the Sanctuary's natural resources, the plan establishes practical strategies which are expected to adapt over time in response to new opportunities or threats, including the following topics:

- State Natural Area Management Plan
- Land Management Zones
- Survey and Monitoring Protocols
- Research and Citizen Science
- Vegetation Management
- Trail and Maintenance Access
- Land Acquisition Strategy

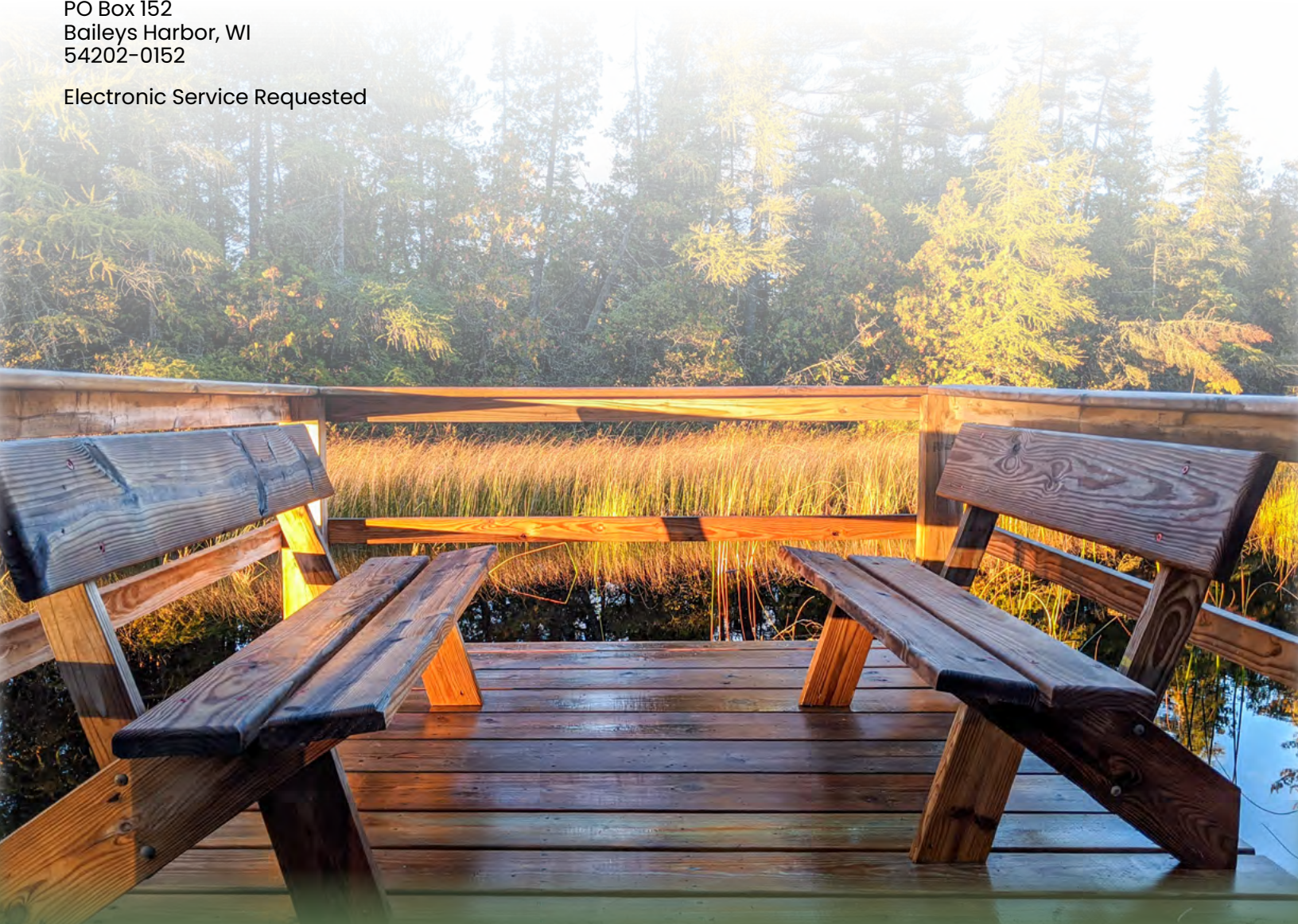




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## MISSION

Today, the mission of The Ridges is to promote positive environmental behaviors through impactful educational experiences, land management and protection, and ecological research. Every day, the staff, members, volunteers and visitors ensure the mission is incorporated in all we do.

## MAKING A LASTING IMPACT

Did you know that you can leave a natural legacy with The Ridges Sanctuary through planned giving? A planned gift is a powerful way to create lasting benefit for The Ridges and ensure that your commitment to environmental stewardship will endure. To learn more about joining The Albert Fuller Society and in what ways you can give a planned gift, please contact us at 920-839-2802. We will be available to help determine the right giving option to meet your charitable goals.

It is because of your support today and your consideration of a planned gift for tomorrow that The Ridges Sanctuary continues to thrive. We value your commitment and look forward to honoring the legacy of The Ridges Sanctuary together.