



SPRING 2026

THE SANCTUARY ISSUE

SANCTUARY

A NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGES

Preservation | Education | Research

THE RIDGES

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Grace Rossman
President

Deb Fitzgerald
Vice President

Chuck Germain
Treasurer

Sher Rockway
Secretary

DIRECTORS

Michelle Hefty

Rick Johnson

Jone Kiefer

Laura Landergott

Bill Lee

Jeff Lutsey

Mark Martin

Ed Miller

Ashley Prange

Deneen Wiske

Bill Wolff

STAFF

Katie Krouse
Executive Director

Andy Gill
Assistant Director

Mary Beth Anschutz
Nature Store Manager

Eliza Banjanac
Director of Growth Initiatives

Wendy Beilfuss
Administrative Assistant

Margaret Brennan
Environmental Educator

Cathy Costello
Visitor Engagement Specialist

Erik Ellison
Marketing Assistant

Jeanne Farrell
Director of Marketing

Anna Foster
Director of Operations

Ana Hinkle
Environmental Educator

Sam Hoffman
Land Manager

Victoria Holderer
Applied Research Ecologist

Libby Humphries
Environmental Educator

Tony Kiszonas
Director of Research

Dan Scheiman, PhD
Visitor Engagement Specialist

Natalie Schnackenberg
WisCorps Environmental Educator

Amy Shook
*Director of Programming
& Interpretive Naturalist*

Jenn Taylor
Accountant

Zane Wulliger
Environmental Educator

DEAR FRIENDS,

The last thirty-six hours have been memorable. Blizzard Elsa – March 2026. She came in with an attitude - one that has been felt by me, my neighbors, and most of Wisconsin. Shoveling snow suddenly feels like an Olympic sport – though as I look out my windows, I can't seem to find evidence that I've shoveled more than two feet of snow in the last day and a half. While I sit here feeling overwhelmed by the work ahead, I find myself more intrigued by the chickadees and red-breasted nuthatches calling to each other in the forest in between 45+ mile an hour wind gusts.

I didn't hear the chickadees yesterday, but today I can see their tiny little bodies bouncing between branches about halfway up in a dense cedar tree situated along my driveway. I wonder what they've been thinking – what warnings they shared as they prepared for this monumental snowstorm. And what about the deer, porcupines, owls and other forest residents? They are certainly more prepared than I am for these conditions. Even still, I doubt I'll be seeing any of them in the yard over the next few days.

As I settle back into working from home, I find myself turning to past newsletters and articles for inspiration while drafting this letter. I could



A moment of trust



After the storm

spend hours reading the entries of Roy Lukes, Paul Regnier, Jens Jensen, and others. Their words often focus on moments in time –experiences that may have been entirely unique or shared by many. What they always have in common is the Sanctuary. Each of them drew deep inspiration from this remarkable place.

I feel that same inspiration more intensely than usual today. There is so much to learn when we just take a moment to listen. In the intense blizzard conditions earlier, while listening to the birds, I was reminded of the preparedness and resilience of the forest – of the Sanctuary. Even today the forest is full of life and quiet lessons waiting to be heard. I am reminded that spring is still around the corner. Before long the swales will be full of water, the chickadees will be singing their spring song near the Nature Center, the red winged blackbirds will be back in their cattail stands along the shores of Lake Michigan, and the robins will greet us in our yards, reminding us of the season ahead.

On the following pages, you'll explore the magnificence of The Ridges Sanctuary – a place that teaches lessons and inspires generations. Much like the chickadees and red-breasted nuthatches calling through the cedar tree outside my window after the storm, the stories ahead reflect nature's preparedness and resilience that persist here in every season.

Together in the conservation of Nature,

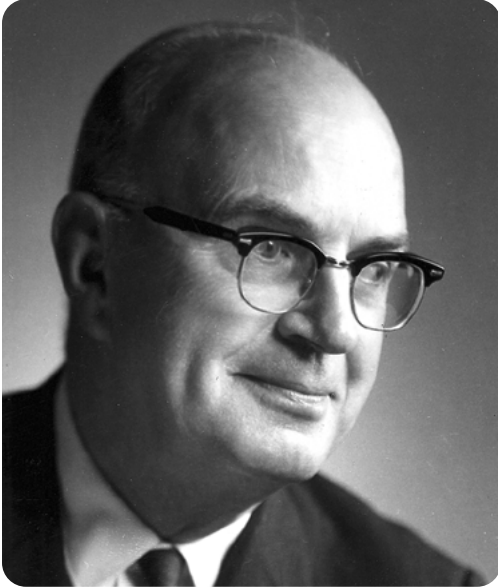


Katie Krouse, Executive Director



A spring thaw

Albert Fuller & the Legacy of Care



Albert Fuller was a catalyst for protecting The Ridges



Inez Telfer, Emma Toft & Olivia Traven clearing the Range Light Trail in the 1950s or 60s

Imagine walking along a rustic trail at The Ridges, a cool breeze is coming off Lake Michigan, and spring flowers are beginning to bloom in the rich, sandy soil beneath your feet. In this quiet moment, you are sharing in the legacy, left to us by botanist Dr. Albert Fuller, the catalyst for the Sanctuary's founding and one of the unsung heroes in Wisconsin conservation history.

In the 1930s, Fuller, Curator of Botany for the Nature Club at the Milwaukee Public Museum, became increasingly captivated by the remarkable biodiversity found in what locals simply called "The Baileys Harbor Bog." Each May and September, he and fellow members of the Museum's Nature Club traveled to The Ridges, which he described as "paradise for a botanist." In 1933, after studying the wild orchids in the area, he published a museum bulletin, "Orchids of Wisconsin." The showy lady's slipper in particular, occupied a special place in his personal wildflower map of Wisconsin. "The most beautiful, living, floral picture that human eyes can see in our woodlands is that of our 'floral queen' holding court fern-covered slope."

"I set up a howl that was heard over of all of Door County." — Albert Fuller

In early 1937, Fuller learned that the county planned to build a trailer park on the original 40-acre tract. Determined to protect the landscape, Fuller launched a campaign to rally local support. The botanist, typically described as reserved and soft-spoken, wrote, "I set up a howl that was heard over of all of Door County." Often accompanied by his friend and fellow conservationist, Jens Jensen, he gave countless presentations to residents of the area, including Emma Toft, Olivia Traven, William Sieker, and George Sieker. At the same time, Fuller sent passionate editorials to the *Door County Advocate*, to urge public action. In a February 1937 letter to the newspaper, he wrote:

"It would be a sacrilege that the people of Door County would always regret if the ridges area at Baileys Harbor were permitted to be made into a camp site, because campers and rare plants are incompatible...Every civic-minded local resident of Door County should urge the County Park Commission to set the 40 acres aside as a permanent wild life sanctuary and leave the trees, shrubs and all other vegetation in their natural condition."

One of Fuller's most influential presentations was made on March 5, 1937, when he gave a 2+ hour illustrated talk, "Preserving the Ridges at Baileys Harbor" at a meeting in Sturgeon Bay sponsored by the Women's Club of Sturgeon Bay. Members of the Door County Park Commission were present as well as a few residents of Baileys Harbor.

Not long after, the Park Commission set aside the area as a wildflower sanctuary, ensuring permanent protection of the land.

THE BIRTH OF SANCTUARY VALUES

Once the land was protected, Fuller and local conservation leaders, including Emma Toft, Olivia Traven, William Sieker, and George Sieker, formed The Ridges Sanctuary. Education, research, and habitat preservation became guiding principles of the mission statement adopted on October 4, 1937:

To acquire by fit, purchase or otherwise, part or all of the real estate in the area in the town of Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin, known at 'The Ridges' or 'The Bog'...

To acquire and hold other pieces of real estate in Wisconsin and elsewhere, and to protect and preserve the native plant and animal found thereon.

To carry on educational and scientific activities which will promote the cause of conservation and preservation..."

LEGACY AS RESPONSIBILITY

What started as a vision now lives through a community. Staff and volunteers work together to manage invasive species, restore native habitats, and maintain the trails and boardwalks that allow visitors to experience this special place responsibly.

The Ridges continues to provide education about the importance of preserving sensitive habitats, and the ways exploration can help protect these wild spaces. Through environmental education and community collaboration, the Sanctuary fosters environmental stewardship: an appreciation for and connection to the natural world that inspires the conservation of Nature.

Albert Fuller's "howl" still echoes here. It lives in every protected acre, every blooming wildflower, and every person who chooses to care.

Jeanne Farrell, Director of Marketing

LEAVING A NATURAL LEGACY: THE ALBERT FULLER SOCIETY

Albert Fuller had no way of knowing that his tireless advocacy would spark a grassroots movement to protect the original 40 acres of The Ridges. He probably never imagined that those actions would compound over decades to result in protecting over 1,700 acres of land around Door County. Leaving a legacy may start small but can ultimately have an enormous impact - even transforming landscapes. The Albert Fuller Society, recognizing individuals who have chosen legacy giving to perpetuate their support of The Ridges Sanctuary, is named as an ode to his passion and commitment.

Your love for nature, like Albert Fuller's, can create a ripple effect lasting beyond your lifetime. The sanctuary educates the public, protects natural landmarks and scenic landscapes, and facilitates significant research initiatives essential to the future of the Sanctuary and Door County. By naming The Ridges Sanctuary in your will or estate plans, you help protect this special place and perpetuate its work for generations to come.

Members of the Albert Fuller Society have informed us of their intentions to leave a legacy gift, whether through cash bequests, trusts, retirement accounts, or life insurance. We are grateful for this trust and honored to recognize their commitment. Learn more at www.ridgessanctuary.org/donors. For more information about joining the Albert Fuller Society, contact Eliza Banjanac, Director of Growth Initiatives, at 920-839-2802 ext 107 or eliza@ridgessanctuary.org.

Sanctuary in the Swales

Thanks to the foresight of our forebears, today we are able to enjoy the intricate and awe-inspiring ecological communities found throughout The Ridges Sanctuary. Known for 30 crescent-shaped sandy ridges that reflect the last 1,400-1,500 years of Lake Michigan coastline, The Ridges Sanctuary is home to ecosystems distinct to the Great Lakes. The hydrology of a ridge-swale habitat is complex, creating diverse ecosystems within a relatively “small” space. This supports a robust array of species that are typically not seen in such proximity, resulting in around 500 different plant species; at least 29 species of orchids; 60 species of birds; and 12 threatened or endangered species like the federally endangered Hine’s emerald dragonfly, dwarf lake iris, ram’s-head lady’s slipper, and the northern long-eared bat.

As if that was not special enough, Door County is also home to some of Wisconsin’s southernmost boreal forests, far removed from the majority of Wisconsin’s boreal forests located around Lake Superior. This atypical phenomenon is caused by cooling breezes from Lake Michigan that lower temperatures along the Door peninsula coastline as much as 25 degrees compared to inland temperatures. This cool air settles into lowland areas, like the Mink River Basin, Clark Lake, Kangaroo Lake, and the swales of The Ridges Sanctuary, where the consistently lower summer temperatures allow for certain species to thrive that are typically reserved for northern parts of the state. The Ridges Sanctuary properties stretch from Baileys Harbor to Jacksonport, within which we can observe



Solitude swale covered in a dusting of snow



A spring fed wetland entering Solitude swale beneath a canopy of northern white-cedar

THE DWARF LAKE IRIS & ITS HABITAT

The Ridges Sanctuary is home to many interesting species due to its unique habitat. The dwarf lake iris, *Iris lacustris*, is found within The Ridges Sanctuary but is listed as threatened at both the state and federal levels. Populations are found close to the lake shores of Michigan and Huron, in well-drained soil with a high calcium content. Uncoincidentally, the geological history of Door County created ridges of thin sandy soil that sit above the current water table on top of dolostone bedrock. Dolostone is created when calcium carbonate in limestone combines with magnesium.

Flowering plants, such as the dwarf lake iris, produce seeds, allowing populations to move farther geographically. Seeds can be moved by “The 3 W’s”: wind, water, and wildlife. Seeds of the dwarf lake iris are transported by ants! Ants collect the seed and will harvest the fatty storage for food. The dwarf lake iris can also spread by sending out rhizomes, a much slower form of travel.

The Ridges Sanctuary is researching how different environmental factors affect dwarf lake iris reproduction and growth. The Research Team

how pockets of boreal forests meet northern temperate mesic forests, creating a mosaic of habitats that support abundant biodiversity.

The Ridges Sanctuary is lucky to protect incredible natural communities like boreal forest, boreal rich fen, wet or wet-mesic conifer swamps, Great Lakes beach, Great Lakes ridge and swale, northern hardwood swamps, and northern mesic forest. The Ridges Sanctuary was designated as a State Natural Area in 1953, further cementing the permanent preservation of these incredible landscapes. In addition, The Ridges Sanctuary is part of the Door Peninsula Coastal Wetlands, an internationally recognized wetland of importance through the Ramsar designation. The Door Peninsula Coastal Wetlands was approved in 2015 and recognizes the ecological significance of Door County's wetland communities for supporting ecological biodiversity, migratory fish and bird species, federally endangered species, and so much more. This designation reflects a significant contribution and collaboration among many Door County organizations, like The Nature Conservancy, the Door County Land Trust, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Wisconsin DNR, and the Door County municipality, for coming together to support this designation. Door County is so fortunate to have many amazing organizations on the Peninsula who have missions to protect the natural heritage of Door County's ecosystems.

Victoria Holderer, Applied Research Ecologist

has set up environmental monitoring stations next to patches of dwarf lake iris. Exposure to the correct form of light increases the plant's rate of photosynthesis. With more efficient photosynthesis, the plant will have more energy to spend on reproduction and growth. The data collected from these stations will help to determine what environmental parameters the dwarf lake iris survives and thrives in.

Natalie Schnackenberg,
WisCorps Environmental Educator



An understory as lush as its over-story: A stand of interrupted clubmoss beneath a stand of balsam fir and northern white-cedar



Dwarf lake iris, Kimberly Mackowski

Wildlife as Indicators

The proverbial “canary in a coal mine” is based on using canaries to warn miners of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide. Birds are more sensitive to air pollutants than humans because their breathing rate is faster, and their pulmonary system is more efficient at gas exchange. So, sadly, a canary’s death was an early warning signal to the miners. Rachel Carson popularized the notion of birds as indicators of pollutants, particularly the pesticide DDT, in her 1962 book *Silent Spring*. Birds of prey like bald eagles are especially vulnerable to persistent chemicals because these toxins biomagnify with each step up the food chain, meaning the concentration consumed is highest at the top. Not incidentally, we humans are at the top too. Banning DDT helped raptors recover. However, birds continue to warn us about new threats like neonicotinoid insecticides.

More recently, birds have been used as indicators of climate change. Many species have already shifted their ranges northward in response to warmer winters, though models predict that overall ranges will actually shrink as there is only so far north that species, and the habitats they depend on, can shift. This is especially true for the northernmost species, namely boreal forest and tundra birds. Some have changed the timing of annual events like migration and nesting. While it may sound like a good thing for species to adapt this way, they may be at a disadvantage if, for example, the insects they need to feed their young haven’t similarly adapted and thus aren’t available when birds need them the most.

Like birds, bats provide important ecological services including pest control and pollination. And like birds, bats are highly sensitive to environmental threats such as pesticides and climate change. The diversity of bats can tell us about the health of our forests and wetlands. The Ridges is home to seven species of bats, including the federally endangered northern long-eared bat. This species is rarely recorded in Wisconsin, indicating to us that The Ridges is indeed a healthy place to live.

The northern flying squirrel is a species of special concern in Wisconsin. They require wet, coniferous forests with standing dead trees, lots of decaying woody debris, and fungus abundance, which is exactly what The Ridges



Northern long-eared bat, Cynthia Bridge



Northern flying squirrel, Larry Masters

protects. Because they spread the spores of subterranean fungi through their feces, and orchids have a symbiotic relationship with fungi, it is possible that this species benefits orchids. One threat is competition with the southern flying squirrel. The southern flying squirrel is moving northwards as warming conditions allow oaks to spread north. Over time we may see a shift in squirrel populations if northern coniferous trees are replaced by more southern deciduous trees. Door County's boreal forest and its flying squirrels are stuck on a peninsula, so they cannot escape further north.

Even more so than birds and bats, insects are closely tied to plants. Specialization is the rule for insects, with most herbivorous species able to eat only one or a limited number of plants; think monarch caterpillars and milkweeds. So, if a plant is range-restricted or declining, so too are the insects that depend on it. The globally imperiled Lake Huron locust specializes on plants that live on undisturbed sand dunes, such as the federally endangered Pitcher's thistle. Both species are restricted to the Great Lakes where they are threatened by shoreline development and invasive species. The Ridges contains both species on the beaches we protect.

Insects are the target of insecticides, from large-scale agricultural spraying for crop pests, to localized backyard spraying for mosquitoes. This kills beneficial insects too. The yellow-banded bumble bee is one pollinator The Ridges harbors that has declined and is of conservation concern. Our most well-known insect is the federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly. This dragonfly's largest population is in the Sanctuary and surrounding wetlands. Dragonflies are "canaries" because their dual aquatic/terrestrial life cycle exposes them to both water and air pollution, as well as wetland loss and drying conditions caused by climate change. Ridges staff and partners continue to monitor the population along with water quality.

Overall, our ongoing suite of monitoring programs are how we'll see the warning signs from the various canaries.

Dan Scheiman, Visitor Engagement Specialist



Yellow-banded bumblebee

HINE'S EMERALD DRAGONFLY: WHY IT MATTERS

Water quality research continues across the dragonfly's breeding habitat, including stream monitoring through the Water Action Volunteer program. Protecting the surrounding watershed is critical—conservation efforts across key sites like Appel's Bluff, Three Springs, Kellner Fen, and the Mink River Estuary all help safeguard the conditions this species depends on.

Because of its long aquatic larval stage, the Hine's emerald is especially vulnerable to groundwater contamination. At the same time, increased pesticide use is putting pressure on the insects it relies on for food as an adult.

While the Door County population remains relatively strong, its future depends on continued monitoring, land protection, and community awareness.

How We Are Learning About This Place

It is reasonable to assume that the original folks spending time hanging around the land that is now called The Ridges Sanctuary had a pretty good idea about the flora and fauna of the area. Indigenous predecessors truly depended on this knowledge for their existence. In all likelihood, survival was dependent upon these “inventories” and life lists had a whole different meaning in those days.

Legend has it that Captain Bailey provided Alanson Sweet with enough of a plant inventory and geologic survey of this area that led Mr. Sweet to purchase land and name a harbor. It is ironic that many of these inventoried plants and rocks found homes in other parts of the country in different forms, but paradigms shift.

With a different focus than these earlier examples and in continuing the work of The Ridges Sanctuary legends such as Roy Lukes, George Sieker, Albert Fuller, and others, the current focus of the research team is on learning more about the flora and fauna from the perspective of preservation and protection rather than existence and economics. At present, gaining knowledge about the critters of The Ridges includes numerous endeavors. The Ridges Sanctuary is blessed with incredible citizen scientists and the good fortune to collaborate with research partners striving to identify those organisms that are under the stewardship of the sanctuary and how these organisms are responding to environmental changes. For example, an entomologist from Turkey has discovered that there is an ant species found in Door County, including The Ridges, with no other known extant populations in the United States. Recently, a team from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay documented “golf-club moss” for the first time in the state of Wisconsin. Utilizing the efforts of moth, butterfly, dragonfly, and damselfly experts, state and county firsts are recorded on a regular basis. Not to be outdone, citizen scientist orchid trekkers have identified many orchids at The Ridges, two of which established the presence of these orchids in Door County. A southern bog lemming was recorded as a county first as part of an intern’s small mammal survey. Acoustic monitoring has detected the federally endangered northern long-eared bat as a resident of The Ridges. These efforts, and many others, are reinforcing the idea that The Ridges Sanctuary is an incredibly biodiverse area.



Albert Kennedy, summer conservation associate, conducts a small mammal survey



Orchid trekkers Julie Knox & David Barnes document the size of a newly recorded orchid population

Following in the footsteps of botanical icons, Citizen Science plant inventory teams are diligently identifying and recording hundreds of plant species and their relative abundance found at The Ridges. These surveys provide important information for the present, allow descendants to track possible changes going forward, and give a comparison with documented work from a century ago. A phenology team is also recording baseline data for integrative institutionalized use.

Knowing the biotic composition of The Ridges Sanctuary is critical for decision making processes going into the future. As the boreal forest is under increasing pressure, the knowledge that is gained through Citizen Science and collaborative projects provides the data that is necessary for informed decisions and resource allocation in protecting and preserving The Ridges Sanctuary in these challenging times.

Tony Kizonas, Director of Research

GET INVOLVED IN CITIZEN SCIENCE

Whether drawn by a passion for a specific issue or the camaraderie of working alongside others, citizen scientists make a meaningful impact. Volunteers can share the Sanctuary with visitors at the front desk in the Nature Center, or head out in the field. There are many ways to engage in real-world research that informs conservation decisions.

Opportunities

- Bald Eagle Nest Watch
- Sucker Monitoring
- Dwarf Lake Iris Research
- Orchid Restoration
- Plant Inventory
- Crane And Christmas Bird Counts
- Water Action Volunteers Stream Monitoring
- Monarch Watch
- Budburst Phenology
- Boreal Climate & Sustainability (BCS) Project



Visit ridgessanctuary.org or scan the QR code to learn how you can contribute!



BCS Project volunteers conduct a baseline inventory of plant species at the Family Discovery Trail research plot

Invasive Species & Threats: What You Need to Know



Phragmites



Glossy buckthorn, Wisconsin DNR

The Ridges is a cherished natural area, home to diverse native plants and wildlife that have thrived here for centuries. However, this delicate ecosystem faces ongoing challenges from invasive species—non-native plants and animals that disrupt ecological balance, threaten native flora and fauna, and alter habitats in ways that can be difficult to reverse.

HOW DO INVASIVES IMPACT NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA?

Invasive species often form dense monocultures that can outcompete native plants for sunlight, water, and nutrients, leading to declines in native plant populations. This loss cascades through the ecosystem—native insects lose their food plants, birds lose nesting sites, and mammals lose shelter and forage. Over time, invasive species can transform the landscape, reducing the ecological richness that makes The Ridges special.

Several invasive species have taken hold in The Ridges, each posing unique threats. These are some species where management has been prioritized in the Sanctuary:

- **Non-native Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*):** This aggressive reed dominates wetland areas and shorelines, forming dense stands that crowd out native plants. It alters water flow and reduces habitat quality for amphibians, birds, and insects that depend on diverse wetland vegetation.
- **Glossy Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*):** An aggressive, fast-growing shrub that forms dense thickets, glossy buckthorn shades native understory plants and changes soil chemistry. This makes it harder for native trees and shrubs to regenerate, disrupting forest and wetland ecosystems.
- **European Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*):** This invasive thistle spreads rapidly in wet meadows and marshes, outcompeting native plants with its dense growth and spiny leaves. Its dominance reduces food and habitat for native pollinators and wildlife.
- **Narrowleaf Cattail (*Typha angustifolia*):** Unlike the native broadleaf cattail, narrowleaf cattail spreads aggressively, often hybridizing with native species. It forms dense stands that reduce plant diversity and alter wetland hydrology, impacting habitat quality.

CURRENT MITIGATION EFFORTS

The Ridges stewardship team and dedicated volunteers are actively engaged in controlling invasive species through a combination of manual removal, targeted herbicide applications, and habitat restoration. Hand-pulling invasive plants like European marsh thistle and cutting back narrow leaf cattail help reduce seed spread and slow their advance. Herbicides are carefully applied to target dense patches of non-native phragmites and used on the



European marsh thistle, Steve Garske



Narrowleaf cattail, Robert Frekmann

stumps of buckthorn that have been cut to minimize possible damage to native plants. Regular monitoring and early detection efforts allow the team to respond quickly to new invasions before they become widespread. Additionally, restoration plantings of native species can help reestablish healthy, diverse habitats that can better resist invasive species over time.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Protecting native biodiversity against the negative effects of invasive species requires a community effort. Here's how you can make a difference:

- **Stay Informed:** Learn to identify common invasive species so you can recognize them wherever you go.
- **Report Sightings:** If you spot invasive plants or insects, report them to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources or a local conservation group. Early reporting helps target control efforts.
- **Volunteer:** Join invasive species removal days or native planting events. Hands-on removal work is one of the most effective ways to protect The Ridges' ecosystems. Check out our event calendar for Ridges invasive species volunteer workdays.
- **Practice Clean Hiking:** Avoid transporting seeds by cleaning boots and gear after visiting other natural areas. Utilize boot brush stations where available.

By understanding the threats invasive species pose and actively supporting mitigation efforts, we can help preserve natural areas and their unique biodiversity for future generations.

Sam Hoffman, Land Manager

BARBERRY PIRATES WORKDAY

Tuesday, May 19, 9 am-noon

Come help with invasive species projects at The Ridges! Work will involve pulling and bagging invasive plants. Wear appropriate footwear, long sleeves, and gloves. Meets at the Cook-Albert Fuller Nature Center.

For more information, contact Ridges Land Manager, Sam Hoffman at sam@ridgessanctuary.org or call (920) 839-2802, ext. 108.

Be Part of Protecting The Ridges

The Ridges Sanctuary thrives because of the people who care about protecting its rare ecosystems and sharing the wonder of nature with others. Whether you give, volunteer, or become a member, your support helps preserve this extraordinary place for generations to come.

DONATE

Your generosity helps protect Sanctuary lands, advance scientific research, expand adult and youth education, and build capacity for growth.



Support The Ridges through:

- Undesignated donations to offset operational expenses
- Designated contributions for specific initiatives
- Endowment funds to ensure contributions are available in perpetuity
- Planned giving to create a lasting legacy

Your gift is tax-deductible* and directly supports the future of The Ridges.

VOLUNTEER

More than 200 devoted volunteers dedicate their time and talents to create meaningful experiences for visitors while helping care for the Sanctuary's unique landscapes.



Volunteer opportunities include:

- Front desk support
- Wednesday work crew
- Guided hike leaders
- Range Light docents
- Citizen science programs
- Pollinator gardening and habitat restoration

No experience is necessary in any of the categories.

JOIN

Membership is one of the most meaningful ways to support The Ridges while enjoying its trails and programs throughout the year.



Member benefits include:

- Free year-round admission to all Ridges trails
- Program guides and newsletters
- Discounts in the Nature Store
- Member pricing for programs and events

By becoming a member, you help ensure The Ridges' future remains bright, protected, and preserved for future generations.

Your membership is tax-deductible* and directly supports the future of The Ridges.

GET INVOLVED TODAY

Visit our website or contact us to donate, volunteer, or become a member and help sustain the natural beauty and ecological importance of The Ridges Sanctuary.

**Did you know that tax law changed this year? In 2026, more donors may receive tax benefits for charitable giving, including cash gifts up to \$1,000 (or \$2,000 for couples filing jointly) for those who take the standard deduction. Tax benefits may vary; please consult a tax advisor with questions for your specific situation.*



BCS Project volunteers

Become a Business Member

Becoming a Partner in Nature strengthens your business's connection to nature through shared visibility, exclusive access, and meaningful experiences that support both your brand and one of the Midwest's most biologically diverse ecosystems.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

A2Z The Agency
Anchored Roots Vineyard & Winery
Anschutz Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
Bacon CPA LLC
Baileys Harbor Community Association
Baileys Harbor Fish Company
Baileys Harbor Yacht Club Resort
Baileys on the Rocks Cottages
Bay Point Inn
Beachfront Inn
Blacksmith Inn on the Shore
Bridenhagen Tree & Landscape
Brown, Martin & Associates
Cappaert Contemporary Gallery
Cedar Beach House
Chives Restaurant
Coyote Roadhouse
Cultured
Dentistry By Design
Details Hair Innovations
Door County Eye Associates
Door County Ice Cream Factory
Door County Library
Door County Medical Center
Eland Electric Corporation
Harbor Fish Market & Grille
Harbor Market Grocery
Hill Street
Innovative Printing
Kindgoods
Lake Fire Winery
Main Street Market
Maxwell's House
Maxwelton Braes Golf Course
Maxwelton Braes Lodge
Meissner Landscape, Inc.
Nicolet National Bank
Orchards Golf Course
Peninsula State Park Golf Course
Piggly Wiggly
Pinkert Law Firm LLP
Quantum Technologies
Rotary Club of Door County North
Shoreline Boat Tours
Sister Bay Bowl
Sway Brewing + Blending
The Rushes
The Thirsty Cow Taphouse
Thyme Restaurant & Catering
Timothy D. Tishler, DDS, LTD.
TulsiJuniper Apothecary
Wessels & Liebau LLC
White Gull Inn
Whole Growth Partners



We are now offering three enhanced business membership levels, each catering to different engagement and marketing needs. Benefits differ according to tier. For more information, visit our membership page or contact Eliza Banjanac, Director of Growth Initiatives, at eliza@ridgessanctuary.org or by calling 920-839-2802 ext. 107.



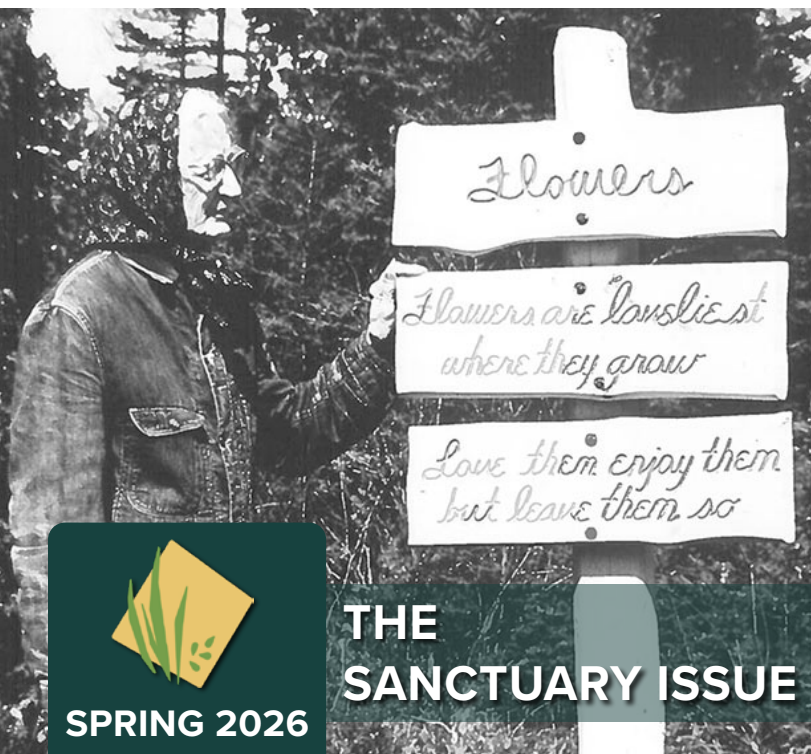
THE RIDGES

The Ridges Sanctuary

PO Box 152
8166 Hwy 57
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202-0152
(920) 839-2802 RidgesSanctuary.org

Electronic Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BAILEYS HARBOR, WI
PERMIT NO.1



Emma Toft, Roy Lukes

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.ridgessanctuary.org
or call: (920) 839-2802

Protecting What Blooms

Emma Toft believed deeply in protecting the wildflowers of Baileys Harbor.

As a sanctuary that was protected in 1937 to preserve the largest number of varieties of flowers, plants, and trees in Baileys Harbor, it is incredibly important to listen to Emma and lead by example.

Flowers like showy lady's slippers, a species of special concern in Wisconsin, rely on every single plant for their population success due to their susceptibility to deer browse and other external threats. For this reason, picking wildflowers on lands not personally owned, including The Ridges Sanctuary, is prohibited.

Together, we can ensure these remarkable plants continue to thrive for generations to come.

Preservation | Education | Research