



**The Ridges Sanctuary 88th Annual Meeting
Meeting Minutes
August 2, 2025**

Board Members Present: Jeff Lutsey – President, Grace Rossman – Vice President, Sher Rockway – Secretary, Chuck Germain – Treasurer, Deb Fitzgerald, Jone Kiefer, Laura Landergott, Ed Miller, Ashley Prange, and Bill Wolff

Staff Members Present: Katie Krouse, MaryBeth Anschutz, Eliza Banjanac, Wendy Beilfuss, Erik Ellison, Jeanne Farrell, Anna Foster, Andy Gill, Ana Hinkle, Sam Hoffman, Victoria Holderer, Libby Humphries, Tony Kizonas, Dan Scheiman, Amy Shook, Jenn Taylor, and Zane Williger

Summer Team Members Present: Annika Buhr, Wyatt Isakson, Julia Maynard, Sofia Santana, Beckham Sonnabend

Members Present: 74

The Ridges Sanctuary 87th Annual Meeting was called to order by The Ridges Sanctuary Board President Jeff Lutsey at 5:06 pm.

Welcome and Introductions

Jeff Lutsey welcomed members to The Ridges Sanctuary 88th Annual Meeting.

Jeff introduced the board members. Board members shared their special moments at The Ridges.

Approval of August 3, 2024 Minutes

Cynthia Crock made a motion to approve the August 3, 2024 meeting minutes as distributed. Tom Turiff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Chuck Germain presented the 2024 financials report, referencing the audited financials in the Annual Report:

- Revenue totaled \$2,010,484, including \$886,753 from designated and endowment funds. A boost came from land purchases funded by Knowles-Nelson grants, reducing cash outlay. He highlighted a \$15,000 grant from 100+ Women Who Care of Door County that supported Free Fridays in 2024–25, bringing over 4,000 visitors in two years—especially impactful, as Friday is the top day for new memberships.
- Program expenses rose while administrative costs fell.
- Assets increased by \$1M over 2023.

Chuck concluded that The Ridges is in a strong financial position to begin Phase Zero of the master plan and thanked Jim Kinney and Jenn Taylor for their support.

Charlotte Lukes made a motion to accept Treasurer's Report and Stephen Gauger seconded the motion.

Election of Board Members

Jeff began by thanking Dave Zulke for his time of service on the board, his time, energy, and mentorship.

Jeff introduced this year's slate of Board members: Deb Fitzgerald, Chuck Germain, Sher Rockway and Bill Wolff were nominated to serve their second 3-year term. Todd Rockway made the motion to approve, and the motion was seconded by Susan Crawford. The motion was approved unanimously.

Deneen Wiske was nominated to serve her first 3-year term. She gave a brief intro on her background on what brought her to Door County. Maureen McGrath made the motion to approve, and Samantha Scheiman seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

Year in Review

Katie introduced the staff and the teams they are on. She called attention to our program efforts: Free Fridays that has taken away barriers to entry, Penny Niesen's amazing story to 100+ Women Who Care that helped to secure funding for Free Fridays; and the expansion of Lake Lessons, staff hikes, and stewardship workshops.

Ana Hinkle, Environmental Educator

Now finishing her first full year for Forest School with the help from her amazing volunteer Kathy Riederer, the goal of Forest School is to help the students become forest stewards through investigations. Last year, students performed in a play, participated in an Earth Day art show, and worked on research projects. Elizabeth Davis, a forest school student now in her 5th year, was joined on stage with her parents. Her father Chris and mom Jennifer expressed their appreciation for the curriculum and format of the program. Elizabeth added that she loves all of it because it is mostly outdoors.

Annika Buhr

Annika comes to The Ridges from Denver and goes to school in Fort Collins. She came to the Ridges because of administration changes and talked about her experience with the front desk, leading guided hikes, summer camp and the 4th of July parade. She leaves The Ridges with an understanding of where she wants to go with her career and said that the opportunities set her up for success. Summer project: decomposing stumps of downed trees (nurse logs); and the species that inhabit them.

Wyatt Isakson

Wyatt is a Wiscorps intern from Burnsville, MN. He is grateful to The Ridges for sticking by him and getting him here. He has worked on invasive species removal, helped the work crews, performed bat surveys, trail camera, and relocated bluebird boxes. Summer project: A survey of breeding birds at the Ridges.

Julia Maynard

Julia is a Wiscorps intern from Winona, MN. She came to The Ridges when Americorps funds were cut, and an advocacy opportunity opened up. She focuses her time on The Ridges helping with summer camp and Free Fridays, and leading guided hikes. Summer project: a field guide to take on the trails for those who don't have scientific backgrounds.

Sofia Santana

Sofia is from Portugal and comes to The Ridges through an internship from Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, IL. She is working with The Ridges research team on the Boreal Climate Survivability Project. Summer project: Studying the growth of orchids in correlation to climate change.

Beckham Sonnabend

Beckham is from Lake Forest, IL, also comes to The Ridges through a Lake Forest College internship. He works with Tony on Ridges research projects. His work at The Ridges has helped him discover what he is passionate about and his future career direction. Summer project: research on carnivorous plants, specifically pitcher plants.

Boreal Climate Survivability Project presentation by Jeff Lutsey and Victoria Holderer

Jeff Lutsey shared that the project is an extension of the Climate Change Coalition of Door County's Big Plant, which has a goal to plant 10,000 trees in five years. The Boreal Project adds science to their tree planting; Jeff thanked the volunteers who have made it possible, including the students.

Research Associate Victoria Holderer reported that 114 volunteers spent 750 hours planting 2,232 trees in April. Five plots have been established and flagged over five major planting days. The project was helped by Ecology Club students and Rotary Club members. They are now in the plant inventory and monitoring phase, and trees will be watched over the years for changes. They are also conducting orchid, weather, bat, bird, and amphibian monitoring. She thanked the Wednesday crew for their help in building a weather station, as well as all of the volunteers, Ridges members and staff who have been involved in the project.

With the meeting nearing a close, Katie pointed to the master plan update in the annual report for more information.

Other Business

Susan Crawford thanked Katie for all that she does for The Ridges.

The meeting was adjourned by Jeff Lutsey at 6:47 pm.