Buses pull up, students file off and head into school. However, this is not your normal school day – it is Saturday. This spring, Wolf Ridge has had the exciting opportunity to partner with the Minneapolis School District in their Saturday School to provide support for students who are, almost, but not quite there, with their science skills.

Saturday School is an outcome of the Shift initiative adopted by the Minneapolis School District last May. The goals of Shift are to provide learning experiences that encourage student growth and support. The Saturday School program was designed to provide mid-year support for students that may not be preforming up to standard. Funding for the program came from integration funds.

Part of the change includes reaching out to partners to help achieve success in education. Sara Etzel, the STEM Coordinator for the Minneapolis School District, was looking for partners to provide instruction for Saturday School this spring. She was looking for hands-on, experiential and fun ways to engage students in science. Enter Wolf Ridge. Sara had brought her family to Family Camp at Wolf Ridge many times and thought that a Wolf Ridge experience was just the thing students needed to build science skills and increase their engagement in science. Inspired by these past experiences a partnership was formed.

This spring Wolf Ridge Saturday School is happening at Andersen Elementary. The programming focuses on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) concepts for 6th-8th grade students. Many of the students participating in Saturday School came to Wolf Ridge as 5th graders as part of their class trip. The positive experiences that the students had previously at Wolf Ridge drew many of them to the program. Throughout the program the students are provided a blended experience of Saturdays at school as well as time spent at Wolf Ridge for a weekend in the spring and a week in summer.

The focus of this spring's curriculum is scientific observation and inquiry with a content focus of plants. Students are discovering the importance of plants in ecosystems as well as basic plant physiology, to help them understand what plants need in order to grow. The students have been learning through the use of the scientific method. When students come to Wolf Ridge, they

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Wolfridge is a very successful school and camp providing life-changing experiences for thousands of children and adults each year. We are also a vibrant thriving business. We are seizing our momentum, adapting to changing audiences and times, and executing efforts for an even stronger future. I hope you like the new looks, colors, messaging and stories of Wolf Ridge. This marketing work has been created from the stories we’ve heard from you. What greater joy for me than to be part of this process! I hope you join me and embrace Wolf Ridge at even higher levels.

SUPPORTING STEM

continued from page 1

will be able to see plants in a different environment than in Minneapolis as well as learn about the cultural history of and farming in Finland, MN.

Liz, one of the two Wolf Ridge Naturalists with the program, describes the student growth she has observed, “I have witnessed student development, from not only what we are doing in class, but also why we are doing it. They bring to light insights on how their lives relate to topics like food webs, pH, and water and soil quality. To see the students enjoying getting their hands covered in dirt, creating experiments, and discussing how they shape their environment makes all the effort we put into the program worth it.”

Hopefully this spring’s Saturday School is just the start of a long-term relationship with the Minneapolis School district to provide meaningful science immersion experiences for students who need additional support. The 2013-14 school year is just the first year of the Shift initiative. Programs being piloted this year, such as Saturday School, will be evaluated and then implemented in more schools throughout the district in the coming years.

Collecting soil samples.

View from the Ridge

by Peter Smerud, Executive Director

What’s the best part of my job? Getting to hear and tell the powerful stories of Wolf Ridge. I love it and never grew tired of it.

This is true. If you walk down the streets of some communities (I can name many) in this region wearing a Wolf Ridge staff jacket, you’ll be accosted by kids and parents who will have the heartfelt need to immediately stop you to tell you their Wolf Ridge story. However, there are places you can mention Wolf Ridge and the response is only a nod with a polite smile. Wolf Ridge is well underway with distinct, diligent and thoughtful marketing efforts to broaden our scope of influence and awareness, creating even more communities of people that will greet our former staff with life-changing stories of the Wolf Ridge experience.

Branding. At first, to me, it didn’t sound like something that is a part of environmental education and not bifurting of Wolf Ridge. I was wrong and I learned this with the help of folks from within the Wolf Ridge community and Habermass Modern Storytellers, a marketing firm helping us with this endeavor. We were schooled on our old look, who we are and where we were missing the boat on telling our story. We learned that experiences here are too important to let their memory slip away, and solid branding and marketing will strengthen our community and our impact.

To learn about how people viewed Wolf Ridge, questions were asked of parents, teachers, staff, and students regarding their Wolf Ridge experience. What does Wolf Ridge look like to you? How does it make you feel? What colors come to mind?
The 2015 Wolf Ridge calendar features the outstanding photography of Jim Brandenburg. Jim traveled the globe as a photographer for National Geographic magazine for several decades. His photography has won a multitude of awards including the “World Achievement Award” from the United Nations in recognition of using nature photography to raise public awareness for the environment. Brandenburg has published many bestellers. Brandenburg’s work can be seen on his web page www.jimbrandenburg.com. Calendars are available for $14.00 for donor members and $18.95 for non-donor members, including shipping. They are also available at special prices, in lots of 25 for school fundraising and retail resale. Proceeds of all calendar sales directly support children attending Wolf Ridge school programs. Call Wolf Ridge at (218) 353-7414 for more information and to order. 

**GREEN RIBBON SCHOOLS**

In 2013, North Shore Community School, the charter school sponsored by Wolf Ridge, was named among the first ever U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS). A Green Ribbon school is a federal recognition award for any school, public or private, or school district, wishing to apply. The schools have to meet and exceed within three areas - reduce environmental impact and costs, improve health and wellness of students and staff, provide effective environmental and sustainability education, incorporating STEM, civic skills and green career pathways.

ED-GRS allows 4 school finalists from each state to be submitted. In 2013, three of the four recipients are Wolf Ridge schools – Chisago Lakes Middle School and Prior Lake Savage Area Schools. On April 22, the 2014 award winners were announced. This time two of three were again Wolf Ridge schools – Chicago Lakes Middle School and Five Hawks Elementary School.

Wolf Ridge congratulates all these schools on their incredible efforts in modeling sustainability and environmental awareness in educating tomorrow’s leaders.

**WOLF RIDGE WEB SOURCE**

Whether you are a new school looking to come to Wolf Ridge or have been coming for thirty plus years you can find all the information you’ll need for your trip on our website - wolf-ridge.org. For new schools, go to VISIT and click on SCHOOL. Schools can filter for TEACHER RESOURCES. Examples include: Dining, menus, and special dietary requests, informational handouts for parents, chaperones, and preparing for cold weather, maps of the dorms and campus, packing lists and the liability form in English, Spanish, Hmong, etc. If you are interested in viewing our curriculum options click on EDUCATION and view the CLASS LIST. Explore the website for even more information about our other programs.

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Sarah francis (Su12) is working for Glacier Natl Park doing geology research. He is living in St Paul, married with two daughters, 8th and 9th grades.

Joel vos (10) is a wildlife biologist with the USFWS at AK Maritime Natl Wildlife Refuge. They are welcoming visitors.

Sara Sloan (13) is a wildlife biologist for the USFWS at AK Maritime Natl Wildlife Refuge. They are welcoming visitors.

Ali (Schaefer) vos (09) is a wildlife biologist with the USFWS at AK Maritime Natl Wildlife Refuge.

Sarah Mathis (13) is a wildlife biologist for the USFWS at AK Maritime Natl Wildlife Refuge.

Sarah Francis (Su12) is working for Glacier Natl Park doing geology research.
Some campers will get to actually walk in their historic footprint as they visit Wolf Ridge. This summer, the last day of the trip, ending on the rocky banks of Lake Superior, the portage expedition gets to cross the portage, canoes and all, on the vast Canadian wilderness and was tramped by hundreds of voyageurs and by famous explorers like David Thompson, the 18th century fur traders. Some highlights of the trip include exploring forests, waterfalls, learning and practicing wilderness skills, possibly encountering wildlife and, of course, the adventure, great stories, conquered challenges, and deeper friendships. There is still room on the trip for more crew members, so tell a future voyager about the expedition if they are interested in the trip of a lifetime! For more information, visit our website: http://wolf-ridge.org/camp/wilderness-trip/

Vive la compagnie!

Tourism was once mainly viewed as recreational, leisure, and business. In recent years, the depth of tourism has grown to include a greater sense of immersion within the region’s culture, an improved understanding of the environment, and the culture within that area. In other words, “What is this place truly about?” Two buzz words currently heard in the world of tourism are ecotourism and geotourism.

Geotourism • is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents. (National Geographic)

Emphasizes:
• culture and heritage
• well-being of local community
• environment
• provides “sense of place” to visitor

Ecotourism • is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.” (TIES, 1990)

Emphasizes:
• conservation
• respect for different cultures
• social & economic benefits
• appreciation of local community

The area dubbed “Heart of the Continent” spans 5 million acres, from Duluth to Ontario. If you have watched the Super Bowl in the last decade, you are likely aware that the commercials have become as much an event as the football game. Companies spend enormous amounts of money for this advertising. Most organizations, businesses, and events do not have Super Bowl size budgets for their marketing especially if they are in rural areas and are fueled by tourism. Recently a group of such organizations came together to form the Heart of the Continent Partnership. They are now working with National Geographic to develop a website to promote geotourism in northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario. (See below to learn more about geotourism.)

Wolf Ridge is a member of Heart of the Continent Partnership. Peter Smerud, Executive Director of Wolf Ridge, is part of the design team for the project and website. Consisting of 44 people, this team will help select groups and events to be displayed on the website. Smerud states, “It is exciting to be working with a diverse group of organizations and people who are invested in getting those visiting the area connected to the land and water.”

Organizations such as restaurants, B&B’s, local hiking trails, parks, interpretive centers, and events can nominate themselves, or be nominated. Only local organizations will be featured on the website. Wolf Ridge is one of the few nonprofit organizations with an education emphasis involved in this project.

Purposes for this project from can be viewed from two perspectives. As a traveller visiting this area, it is a great resource for anyone planning a trip. For example, if someone is looking for a locally made dish, say lutefisk, an array of restaurants with descriptions and locations will pop up on an interactive map or maybe they want to explore what programs a residential learning center may offer. From a local organizational standpoint, it is a great marketing tool with world wide access through the web.

In the fall of 2014 the National Geographic Heart of the Continent website will become available for your vacation planning. If you are interested in investigating an example of a finished website, several have been completed across North America - the most recent being Crown of the Continent, crownofthecontinent.net. To nominate your favorite hiking trail or other attraction go to traveltheheart.org.

Every year many campers and students get to experience Voyageur Life class when they visit Wolf Ridge. This summer, some campers will get to actually walk in their historic footsteps of voyageurs. The Grand Portage Expedition is a wilderness trip for campers entering 10-12 grade and is a 12 day canoe trip across the Boundary Waters, from Snowbank Lake to Lake Superior, retracing the original route of the famous early 19th century fur traders. Some highlights of the trip include exploring forests, waterfalls, learning and practicing wilderness skills, possibly encountering wildlife and, of course, the adventure, great stories, conquered challenges, and deeper friendships. There is still room on the trip for more crew members, so tell a future voyager about the expedition if they are interested in the trip of a lifetime! For more info, visit our website: http://wolf-ridge.org/camp/wilderness-trip/
What is your connection to Wolf Ridge ELC? I have a long connection to Wolf Ridge. In 1983 I first visited the ELC in Isabella as a sixth grader from the Minnetonka school district. I trained in the Student Naturalist program in 1993-94, working various summers. The next few seasons I worked at the Ashokan Field Campus (NY), Sound to Sea (NC), and Eagle Bluff ELC (MN) as a naturalist before returning to Wolf Ridge as the Program Coordinator on the permanent naturalist staff. I left Wolf Ridge when I got married and moved away. With this move I took on the primary role as stay-at-home parent for our children as well as fielding a variety of part-time jobs: adjunct community college instructor, assistant cross-country coach, barista, bookseller, newspaper deliverer, and greenhouse worker. In the springs of 2010 & 2014 I chaperoned my daughter and son’s school trips to Wolf Ridge. Currently I’m writing and drawing the Wolf Ridge Dissected comic for the Wolf Ridge Almanac.

What is your current occupation(s)? I am transitioning from being a stay-at-home parent by volunteering as an elementary literacy tutor with the Minnesota Reading Corps, an Americorps program. My site is at Lowell Elementary in Duluth, MN. My tutoring duties are part-time. Six years ago I started to explore drawing and took classes to learn about art in a more formal manner than the doodling I did in the margins of my life. I have had my drawings in some local shows in Duluth and continue to explore my creative side. In the rest of my time I work continue to make sure the family has good food to eat and is where they need to be.

Please share a Wolf Ridge ELC memory. As a sixth grader I remember hiking around Flathorn Lake on a tree identification walk. The forest was so lush, mossy, and green. It is my most vivid memory of the sunny sweet vanilla smell of pine needles mingled with the earthiness of moss. As a chaperone I really enjoyed seeing the wonder and excitement the Wolf Ridge experience can bring to those who have never done or seen anything like this before. Also, the complete exhaustion felt after boarding the bus for the ride home really stood out.

Tell us an item of interest about yourself and about your family. During the 2010-2011 school year my wife and I had a sabbatical and our family moved to Turkey for a year. We lived in the center of the country in a region called Cappadocia, known for its fantastic geological formations and long history of human habitation (the oldest known city in the world, Catalhoyuk, was less than 4 hours away). We fell in love with the country and its history, people, and food. Jocelyn Pihlaja and I have been married 14 years. We have two children, Allegra (14) and Haakon (11). If you count my water and milk kefir grains and my yogurt starter I have three bacterial pets that I feed and care for on a regular basis.

Can you give us a travel tip? Make sure, at least once during a trip, you do something that you did not plan or expect to do. Preferably, make it something that pushes your comfort zone. It could be not booking a hotel for one night and finding a place to stay when you get to your destination. Or try the grilled lambs intestines the street vendor is selling and all the locals are enjoying. These random and uncomfortable choices tend to make the best and most memorable experiences.

If you could visit with any conservationist/naturalist/environmentalist, living or dead, who would it be and what would you say? I’d like to shake Theodore Roosevelt’s hand and thank him for tirelessly working to preserve wilderness areas in the United States. Samuel Snivley, former mayor of Duluth also deserves praise for having the foresight to create parks throughout the city. Both of these men, in times of reckless resource use, had the foresight to preserve land when that was not the trend.

Anything else you would like to share with our readers? The goal of the new Wolf Ridge Dissected comic is to examine small and unseen details of Wolf Ridge and illustrate how they support its mission. So many people and elements come together to make the Wolf Ridge experience. They need their time in the spotlight.

Ghosts have been spotted at Wolf Ridge this winter. The Canada lynx has earned the nickname “ghosts of the north woods” due to their incredible ability to stay out of sight. In fact, many trackers, biologists, researchers, and naturalists who pursue these incredible mammals as their life work may go through their entire lives without seeing one. So spotting a lynx? Kind of a big deal.

A family of lynx was sighted near the Forest Ecology Building. It appeared to be a female with five kits. Naturalist Ryan Pennesi, who’s goal is to get a glimpse of the Canada lynx, placed a trail camera near a highway of snowshoe hare trails near the Baptism River and Sawmill Creek. With a notable boom in the snowshoe hare population in recent years, this was a idea spot to photograph lynx since hares are their primary food source. A few days later, his goal of capturing this elusive feline on film was achieved. “I was hoping for a far off shot along the tree line, but instead several walked right in front of my camera - even more than what I had hoped for,” Ryan states after sharing his photographs coworkers.

Nabbing the attention of the MN DNR and Forest Service with these numerous lynx sightings, Dave Grosshuesch, Forest Service Biological Technician, emailed Peter Harris and Ryan to further investigate. Scat samples were collected and are currently being analyzed to isolate the DNA from the scat to map out the family tree of the lynx in the area and possibly see where they were coming from. Results are pending.

How do you tell a lynx from a bobcat, a similar sized predator that is even more wary of humans? Lynx have larger feet and ear tufts. Their tail has a solid black tip while bobcat’s tail have stripes toward the end with a black tip.

Presently, the family of lynx have traveled away from Wolf Ridge. Locals have reported a few glimpses around Finland, but just as mysteriously as they came, the ghosts have disappeared back into the north woods.


NORTHWOODS GHOSTS: THE LYNX
by Mary Beth Factor, Wolf Ridge Naturalist

Ghost have been spotted at Wolf Ridge this winter. The Canada lynx has earned the nickname “ghosts of the north woods” due to their incredible ability to stay out of sight. In fact, many trackers, biologists, researchers, and naturalists who pursue these incredible mammals as their life work may go through their entire lives without seeing one. So spotting a lynx? Kind of a big deal.

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Our youth camp programs offer unparalleled opportunities to explore clear lakes and streams, develop life-long connections to the natural world, make friends, create memories, and grow in self-confidence. With a wonderfully diverse campus and variety of activities, campers can return year after year for new experiences.

**Summer Sampler:** June 25-28, Aug 13-16. $350


**Ecology Credit Camp:** (10th-12th gr) July 13-Aug 9. $2000

**Outdoor Explorers (6th-7th gr):** Aug 10-16. $600

**Day Camp:** (1st-7th gr) June 23-27. $175

**5-Day Apostle Islands Kayak:** (7th-8th gr) July 6-12. $570

**5-Day BWCAW Canoe:** (7th-8th gr) July 6-12. $570

**Adventurers BWCAW Canoe:** (8th-9th gr) July 13-26. $1275

**Adventurers Isle Royale Backpacking:** (8th-9th gr) July 20-Aug 2. $1275

**Jr. Naturalists Quetico Canoe:** (10th-12th gr) July 13-26. $1340

**Jr. Naturalists Apostle Islands Kayak:** (10th-12th gr) Aug 3-16. $1340

**Grand Portage Expedition:** (10th-12th gr) Aug 3-16. $1370

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**Split Rock Kayak Tours:** June-August, Tues. mornings & Thurs. evenings. Check our website for dates. Fees $59 each, must be 12 yrs or older.

Sea kayak past towering cliffs, over shipwrecks, and under the Split Rock Lighthouse. Enjoy a pebble beach picnic.


Imagine a family vacation with no hassles. With over 50 different activities to choose from during your stay, the only question you’ll face is, “Which adventure today?”

**Family & Group Trips:** Call 218-353-7414 to arrange your dates. Fees: Up to 4 people $1,800, discounts for more.

Learning and laughter are the hallmarks of our custom group and family wilderness trips whether you are hiking, canoeing or kayaking. Wolf Ridge’s naturalist guide will teach you all the skills needed to meet the challenges of your trip.

**Road Scholar Intergenerational:** Fees: Starting at $579

Build lasting memories with your grandchildren ages 8-12. Become a voyageur, visit our Ojibwe camp, learn ecology, visit Lake Superior, paddle a canoe, experience our ropes course, and climb our rock wall and much more. Call Road Scholar at 800-454-5768 to register.

**Phenology Adventures**

**Beg. & Adv. Bird Banding Classes**

**Beg. & Adv. Bird Banding Classes:**

**Beg. June 22-29, Adv. June 16-20**

Fees: Beg. $1,594, Adv. $794 for sharing room with one, more for private

Join well known Naturalist and Phenologist, Jim Gilbert on seasonal explorations of Wolf Ridge. An experienced and enthusiastic storyteller, Jim will interpret the phenology of the plants and animals.

Wish to improve their sexing and aging skills by using the Identification Guide to North American Birds by Peter Nyle.

Since 1993, Wolf Ridge has been part of an international study on bird populations. Come observe and sometimes participate in bird banding. Find us at the Forest Ecology Building on any one of seven summer mornings.
Wolf Ridge thanks these $1,000+ donors:

Anonymous
The Dan & Sallie O’Brien Fund of the St. Paul Foundation
Boston Scientific Foundation Inc.
Kiri & Kelly Geadelmann
Northeast Sustainable Development Partnership

Carleton College students visiting Wolf Ridge as part of a spring break work/learning experience help plant seeds in the hoop house at our new organic farm. This occurred in March with three feet of snow and 20°F outside, and 70°F inside the hoop house.

Wolf Ridge is an accredited residential environmental school for persons of all ages. We offer immersion programs which involve direct observation and participation in outdoor experiences. Wolf Ridge programs focus on environmental sciences, human culture and history, personal growth, teambuilding and outdoor recreation.

Our mission is to develop a citizenry that has the knowledge, skills, motivation and commitment to act together for a quality environment.

We meet our mission by:
- Fostering awareness, curiosity, and sensitivity to the natural world.
- Providing lifelong learning experiences in nature.
- Developing social understanding, respect, and cooperation.
- Modeling values, behaviors, and technologies which lead to a sustainable lifestyle.
- Promoting the concepts of conservation and stewardship.