CASE STATEMENT
WOLF RIDGE – MAKING WAVES

THE REASONS WHY

A PROVEN PHILOSOPHY, A UNIQUE SPOT, AND AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY

Wolf Ridge is a one-of-a-kind facility that especially appeals to kids. It instills commitment, motivation, and skills in children in a setting that includes the nearby Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. A generation’s worth of heartfelt letters and comments from parents and chaperones who decades earlier attended as middle-schoolers tells us the Wolf Ridge experience is cherished for a lifetime.

And now, thanks to a generous landowner, Wolf Ridge has added 68 acres of land and over 1,600 feet of shoreline on Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world, to its menu of attractions and tools for learning. Nothing like this exists elsewhere. Add this new land to the existing 2,000 acres of forest, farm and garden, climbing walls, ropes courses, wetlands, lakes and streams on the Wolf Ridge campus, and it becomes clear that Wolf Ridge now has the raw materials to build a facility in the vanguard of environmental education and teaching in the United States.

This opportunity can soon be transformed into a part of the solution of an important problem facing all of us: a problem getting more serious by the day. Dramatic water shortages, climate change, and invasive species are now affecting the growing of our food and our way of life. The long-term answer to these problems involves focusing on educating and engaging our children on these issues.

All of us know it is difficult to get young students to focus on abstract topics. We also know our kids are spending too much time indoors and in playing with video games and electronic gadgets. But when properly done, Wolf Ridge has shown that the outdoors can get kids (and their parents, grandparents and chaperones) to discover and explore a different path; a path that leads to a lifetime of awareness, discovery, and responsibility for our collective future. The ability to attract and engage over 600,000 kids since 1971 proves that the philosophy and methods used by Wolf Ridge at its unique location work and work well. The following paragraphs summarize a plan that has been years in the making, and which will allow Wolf Ridge to leverage its special resources to bring about a better future for generations to come.
LEARNING IN OUR GREATEST CLASSROOM

Throughout the year thousands of school children, parents, teachers, and chaperones from schools all over the region live at Wolf Ridge in a total immersion program for three to five days. Using the outdoors as their classroom, kids build community with classmates, adults, and with Mother Nature. The increased cultural awareness developed in this friendly setting builds character in all. Time spent at Wolf Ridge is a proven and powerful experience.

Wolf Ridge is also a home for campers. Traditional, specialty, and family camping opportunities abound. Whether it’s paddling on a lake, hanging out around a campfire, going snowshoeing, hiking a trail, running a GPS course, or swatting mosquitoes, the options for discovery are endless. Again, the Wolf Ridge approach to camping is a proven commodity for environmental engagement, bonding, and learning.

WOLF RIDGE U

A key ingredient in our 40 plus years of success has led some people to refer to Wolf Ridge as "Wolf Ridge U.” While not a university (although it is an accredited school), Wolf Ridge also develops outstanding teachers. Wolf Ridge student naturalists (“student nats” as they are called) are 20 or so staff people who live on the campus for a school year and teach, inspire, and bond with kids. In addition to teaching classes and going on hikes and trips, the student nats are also studying contemporary learning theories and working toward advanced degrees at the University of MN Duluth or Antioch University; some getting teaching licenses or post-baccalaureate certificates, some Masters’ degrees, and some on their way to PhD degrees.

These talented and knowledgeable people have and become the seeds for a sustainable environment which are sprouting across the nation and around the world. Many of the 800 plus naturalists that have been trained at Wolf Ridge are in key position around the globe. For example, Eva Neumeyer (1997) is one of the founders of the Hungarian Environmental Foundation in Budapest, Hungary. Katya Navarro (1993) from Costa Rica and Felicita DeMedina (1988) from Paraguay were sent to train at Wolf Ridge by their respective governments.

Wolf Ridge U teaches its students how to facilitate learning of all ages in outdoor settings. All educational activities, whether camp, school stays, or wilderness trips involve an engaged and trained Wolf Ridge faculty member. Hikes, kayak and canoe trips, adventures of all kinds, and classes are designed to be fun and yet to teach. Whether the participants are ages 8 or 80 (and Wolf Ridge has both), all come away with more knowledge and new values.

“Nature is not a place to visit.
It is a home.”

Gary Snyder –
Pulitzer prizewinning poet
FACILITIES TO IMPROVE IMPACT

Need For a Change

Wolf Ridge has found that some of its facilities are now significantly limiting capacity and impact. As a result of outdated room and bathroom configurations, our West Dormitory can now only serve 18% fewer students than when first designed. Changes in liability laws and societal changes have resulted in the smaller capacity. After a national search, Wolf Ridge hired the HGA architectural firm to study and design a rebuilt dormitory.

The student naturalists at Wolf Ridge U are currently housed in cramped quarters on the second floor of the West Dormitory. With over a hundred noisy kids living on the first floor, it makes a poor place for these graduate students to study and pursue their research and other graduate program requirements. Wolf Ridge also asked HGA to study this problem and they concluded that a separate graduate student housing facility needed to be built. The Wolf Ridge Board of Trustees and staff agreed.

Building For Sustainability

Wolf Ridge has made the commitment that the buildings should serve as a teaching tool for sustainable living and construction. Wolf Ridge has designed the renovated dorm and new buildings to conform to the highest international standard for sustainable building, a standard known as the Living Building Challenge (LBC). As of January 1, 2016 there were only 248 LBC buildings in the nation. The standard is very tough – it requires net zero energy usage, recycling of water, documentation of environmentally friendly materials, etc. (This standard is more difficult to meet than even the very good LEED platinum standard). This building will be a national model and a teaching tool for students and visitors to Wolf Ridge.

Maintenance for 40 More Years

With thousands of kids on the Wolf Ridge campus every year, the need for timely maintenance is critical. Wolf Ridge has a talented maintenance staff which has struggled with rambunctious kids, a tough climate, and only a small place in the basement of the West dormitory in which to store and fix equipment. As part of its building plan Wolf Ridge will also fix this long-standing problem. A small maintenance building will be built near the Wolf Ridge Energy Center.

STARRY SKIES AND FRESH WATER

Wolf Ridge has been dreaming of land on Lake Superior for years. A thoughtful approach for use of the land and lake has been designed. A small road will get people into the edge of the land. Students will walk on paths to camping spaces and a small classroom building with limited kitchen facilities. A new curriculum is being developed to teach about the largest of the Great Lakes and the critical importance of its contents. Students will learn essential concepts and important values while experiencing spectacular sunrises and sunsets, starry skies, and crashing waves, all from one of the most inspirational viewing platforms in America.
THE COSTS

Costs include design and construction with a guaranteed maximum price contract, as well as all site infrastructure and sustainability features.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>West Dormitory</td>
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<td>Lake Superior Site</td>
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<td>and Maintenance Building</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Thanks to a generous donation from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation the design plans for the project have been completed by HGA. Wolf Ridge has elected Gardner Builders as the general contractor for the project and construction has begun on two of the buildings.

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

With your help, these projects will play a significant role in building a citizenry that not only understands the critical problems facing our environment, but which also has the skills, commitment, and motivation to thoughtfully act on the solutions. Wolf Ridge needs a total of $9.4 million dollars to make this happen. Gift commitments of over $5.1 million dollars have already been received.

Now Is The Hour

Due to the short construction season in northern Minnesota, the complexity of scheduling schools and campers, and the inflation of construction costs over time, it is critical that Wolf Ridge raise the remaining $4.3M as soon as possible. Wolf Ridge asks that you assist with as large a gift as possible. Gifts can be spread out over multiple years and naming rights and several recognition programs are available. A pledge form is available on the website: wolf-ridge.org. Please contact Executive Director Pete Smerud, pete.smerud@wolf-ridge.org or at 218-353-7414 with any questions.

Thousands of school children and campers will be thanking you for the rest of their lives.

“Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable.”

William Pollard – English Clergyman