



The ALMANAC

A newsletter of Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center

October 2020 Volume 57 Number 3

SURVIVING COVID-19

by Pete Smerud, Wolf Ridge Executive Director

Since COVID began I have learned more about exponential growth than I ever thought I would know. In small numbers of infected individuals, COVID is serious but not a pandemic. But, left unchecked, the virus reproduces and spreads with an upward trajectory of growth hitting magnitudes you could never imagine when it was just that one case.

So, when Wolf Ridge started to receive donations, small and large, from people I had never heard of, I had a reference point. I understood generosity, care, and love can also spread exponentially!

Since our first public communication in April, Wolf Ridge has received hundreds of donations from across the nation. Foundations, which have supported us in the past came forward with new funding or changed restrictions to let us use the money to simply stay afloat. All together Wolf Ridge receive \$300,000 by summer's end, money that we desperately needed to stabilize our organization when we lost \$1 million dollars of program revenue, literally overnight.

I want to share with you one of the amazing experiences I have had over the last few months.

In late August, a simple email appeared in my inbox. It read, "We'd like to make a significant donation to Wolf Ridge. Please contact us." Soon after, I was on the phone with the family and a sale of

stock was arranged. I had no idea what to expect. Later, a check for \$50,000 was received and my mouth dropped open. I called immediately to thank them and have a deeper conversation. The donor explained that they had previously been giving annually to a medical facility they appreciated. They felt that the



hospital would be okay. They worried Wolf Ridge, unable to open, wouldn't make it. The donor exclaimed, "We want to absolutely assure Wolf Ridge survives as we will need you more than ever when this is over."

While not every gift we received thus far was so large. Every recent donor I thanked for their contribution sounded honestly joyful to share with us.

One donor told me straight out, "Pete, you have got to tell us what you need. Continue to be straight with us about the challenges and your plans. We are with you, keep your head up."

I promised I would. Our plan this fiscal year is to work very hard to raise \$500,000 from individuals, the majority of our operating budget for this year. In addition, we have 10,000 calendars to sell—purchased as fundraisers for schools that won't be visiting. Now we will use the calendars to raise money directly for Wolf Ridge. We are seeking grants for operating support, our new teacher training program, and completion of our Making Waves capital campaign on the main campus. We need to make sure that our live animal educators are cared for, buildings are maintained, and that there is a little extra cash to respond to future COVID-19 curveballs.

In the coming weeks we will be launching our year-end fundraising campaign along with every other organization in the nation. I hope that as you plan your charitable giving you will reflect on what you can offer Wolf Ridge during this time of tumult. In exchange, Wolf Ridge will continue to be clear with our challenges and plans and look forward to the celebration on the other side of the pandemic. I'll bring the birthday cake—we will be 50 years old in 2021!

Thank you for support both emotionally and monetarily on this ride. ♦

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VIEW FROM THE RIDGE

by Pete Smerud, Exective Director



WOLF RIDGE ADAPTATIONS

In the fall of 2021 we celebrate half a century of operations! We had begun planning gatherings, lectures, community hikes, all the trappings for a celebration of a dream achieved and one that continues to grow and evolve. As a result of COVID-19, Wolf Ridge will adapt and find new ways to celebrate having connected over 600,000 people with the outdoors and trained over 1,000 naturalists to be environmental education leaders.

The challenges of the last several months have been immense. A friend of mine recently described working remotely as, "all the work without any of the joy." That is a fair assessment of how I have come to regard the work of the last half six months as well.

As a science-based organization, of trained naturalists, we understand that species must execute behavioral adaptations to survive in their changing habitat. So, taking a note from our animal brethren, Wolf Ridge did the same. We began adapting very quickly as the coronavirus hit the U.S. Wolf Ridge embraced tools of remote learning: videography, story maps, and online-based curriculum to support teachers, families, and students. We reached out to educators and schools with whom we have relationships. We are maintaining a commitment to support them and their schools, as we are able. In reflection, it was one of the largest and quickest educational programming adaptations the organization has ever made.

As you know from our past articles and letters, we are managing our facility in a state of hibernation, triage fundraising initiatives are underway, and new program development is in the works all because of the fallout

from COVID-19. Here is a time line of key activities and actions through September.

March 13 - The last day students were on campus. Eventually all residential programs would be canceled for 2020.

April - Wolf Ridge received a Paycheck Protection Program loan that enabled staff to be fully paid through mid-June. *Adventures in Learning*, eleven weeks of online remote lessons using Minnesota standards was launched. The series reached 11,151. All 2020 summer on-site programs were canceled.

July - As school districts began to eliminate ancillary student travel, Wolf Ridge leadership adjusted staffing and program plans.

August - Board of Trustees approved a budget, which acknowledged the earned income reduction from 87% to 5% in the next fiscal year. They capped expenses at \$950,000 compared to \$3 million in the prior year. Accepted graduate student naturalists were informed that we will not be running the Graduate Student Naturalist program during the 2020-2021 school year. Legislative Citizen's Commission on MN Resources recommended \$383,000 in scholarship funding to ensure underserved youth of MN can experience learning at Wolf Ridge from 2021-2024. Wolf Ridge receives enough donations and grants to end our fiscal year (August 31) without increasing our debt-load. Wow! Thank you.

September is the start of Wolf Ridge's fiscal year. It has been a tough beginning.

In response to current financial reality, two-thirds of staff are laid off entirely or hours reduced substantially. But there are also emerging opportunities.



Outdoor learning at Prairie Creek.

We started to get calls from educators who were being encouraged to utilize their outdoor spaces to teach during the school day. School officials called with questions like “How do I keep our students paying attention on the lesson when we go outside,” or “How can I better use our outdoor spaces as part of our lessons,” or “How do I keep my students

in a good mood when the weather is not with us.”

Research shows that outdoor learning benefits physical, emotional, academic, and community. Students’ quality of life and learning all improve. But learning outdoors and outdoor learning are not necessarily the same. As teachers explore outdoor learning this year, Wolf Ridge has taken our skills of developing outdoor educators to them. In the first three weeks, we’ve worked with over 40 teachers at 7 elementary schools (preschool to 5th grade) in Northfield, Prior Lake, Savage, and Monticello to help them become more effective at teaching outdoors.

Wolf Ridge is seeking grants and fees for service to expand this professional development program. This will raise the capacity of an entire school system and its educators. This may change everything!

At the same time a team of Wolf Ridge educators are connecting local residents and visitors all along the North Shore to the ecology and history of this magnificent area. This effort of local ecotourism broadens the scope of those we serve

and is bringing critically needed revenue. At resorts, parks, and on site at Wolf Ridge, we are engaging with the people of the area like never before. It may be meeting Hunter, our Great Horned Owl and learning about raptors, or sea kayaking on Lake Superior under Split Rock Lighthouse as you look below you and see one of the shipwrecks that spurred the construction of this iconic maritime monument.

The Wolf Ridge species is adapting and growing stronger. We are using this time to maintain, develop new skills and capacity, serve new audiences, and continue to develop a citizenry that is more environmentally literate and cares enough to take action.

As we wait for this pandemic to pass, we continue work to address the slow-moving ecosystem level pandemics of climate change, biodiversity loss, and the disconnection of young people from the natural world. Hundreds of people are telling us, again and again, that learning at Wolf Ridge is important. We must assure Wolf Ridge survives. We hope you will support our work and stay in touch. ♦

THE LEADERS OF THE PACK

Reflect for a moment on your values. What legacy do you and your family want to see in perpetuity? Thoreau said, “*To have made even one person’s life a little better, that is to succeed.*” By making a planned gift, you are ensuring the Wolf Ridge experience is enhancing lives for generations to come. Join these *Leaders of the Pack* who have named Wolf Ridge in their estate plans.

With tremendous gratitude Wolf Ridge ELC gratefully acknowledges:

Sandy Ahlstrom
Tom Berg
Russ & Becky Bierbaum
Su Blumentals
Donna Hill
Terry McLaughlin & Vern Gersh

William A. And Eloise E. Nelson
Revocable Living Trust
Robert O’Hara
Nancy Schultz & John Eckfeldt
+ 4 others who choose not to
list their names



Become a member of *The Leaders Of The Pack*. More detailed information is available on our website. Visit <https://wolf-ridge.org/donate/planned-giving-3/>. If you have already named Wolf Ridge as a beneficiary of your estate or are considering such, please contact Pete Smerud at 800-523-2733. ♦

NEWS BRIEFS

• **W**olf Ridge received a **\$5,000 grant in 2019 from the MN Dept of Commerce** to update our teaching tools for our *Renewable Energy* and *Energy in Our Home* classes. Part of this grant was used to install a 400 watt wind generator. The tower can be lowered to examine the generator, which charges two batteries. A 6 x 8 ft shed was built to house the charging station. Our maintenance team built a large portion of the shed using left over material from the construction of the MAC Lodge. This shed has a bike rack and the ability to charge multiple electric bikes each day. We hope to be able to provide electric bikes for students, parents, and teachers to try.

• Continuous records kept over a long period of time are vital to research efforts. With this in mind and a strong love of what they do, Wolf Ridge staff volunteered to conduct the work necessary for our long standing **MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) bird banding project**. Wearing masks and following safety procedures, a total of 248 birds were examined. For each bird over 30 data fields were evaluated! Although not a rare bird, but uncommon at our study site, a Cape May Warbler was a highlight.

• With all on-site programs cancelled this summer, Peter Harris and Luciana Raneli put together 4 one-hour **live on-line ornithology classes**. Sixty-one people took at least one of the 4 classes. The first was an introduction to bird biology. Another focused on bird songs, and the last two classes centered around advanced bird banding skills. Wild birds sang and had their feathers modeled. Participants attended from all over the United States. Dave Grosshuesch of the USDA Forest Service and Danielle Kaschube of The Institute for Bird Populations, regular expert visiting instructors at Wolf Ridge, volunteered in these productions.

Our **partnership with local resorts and tourist destinations** of the Northshore is growing. We continue with Bluefin



Bay at five hours/week of programming, including the well-loved “Meet an Owl” with great-horned owl Hunter and “Underwater Wonders.” Crayfish look pretty amazing when magnified under Wolf Ridge’s special stream study iPad camera, as do the fluttering gills on mayfly nymphs, and many more critters. Families, kids, and newly-weds alike spent 15-20 minutes discovering the critters of the North Shore’s tributaries. (Some kids even stayed for a good hour or more before their parents urged them to come for dinner!) This year we will continue these programs into October.

• Wolf Ridge was recommended for a **grant award of \$383,000 from the Legislative Citizens Commission on MN Resources (LCCMR)**. This group reviews and recommends the use of funds from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENTRF) of MN. The fund was created by a constitutional amendment in 1988, to provide consistent funding for activities that protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota’s air, water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources. This funding will enable scholarships for more than 6500 un-



derserved youth to come to Wolf Ridge during the 2021-24 school years.

• Wolf Ridge, together with the other five residential ELCs of MN, is working to build regional capacity in environmental education through provision of more equitable and inclusive programs and organizational practices. Wolf Ridge will serve as a **sub-grantee of a \$20,000 National Science Foundation grant secured by the UCal Berkeley’s BEETLES Project**. Each of the six centers will be evaluated and then bring in trainers to improve organizational culture, practices, and recruitment in programs. These efforts will focus on development of a more equitable and inclusive workplace and learning environment for students.

• Wolf Ridge is currently hosting a crew of 10 **AmeriCorps NCCC** (National Civilian Community Corps) workers. For 7 weeks they will be helping us with farm projects, exterior painting of the Science Center and Education buildings, trail and deck work, and a few other projects.

• Working with the Grand Portage Trust Lands Department, a **grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)** was obtained for programming with the Grand Portage **Oshki Ogimaag Charter School** 5th and 6th grade classes. Wolf Ridge has modified our classes into 2 hour sessions that can use sites on the reservation land. Fall programming will includes classes such as Northwoods Mammals, Birds, Fall Phenology, Fisheries Management, Small Mammals, Beaver Ecology, Forest Ecology, and Weather Forecasting. Classes will be taught on a weekly basis through May. This grant will give Wolf Ridge naturalists the opportunity both to teach to and learn from local tribal members.

SEAK Program

• Students of Wolf Ridge’s high school academic **SEAK program** were joined this summer by peers at the MN Valley Natl Wildlife Refuge for a paddling experience on the Mississippi River. This event served as an adaptation to the

SEAK summer program, traditionally held on Wolf Ridge's campus.

Launching from River Park, students met with a representative of the Urban Connections program of the U.S. Forest Service, received instruction on basic paddling skills, and explored their personal environmental ethic before WR instructors Christopher Dunham and Kim Swanson led them on a 9-mile journey into the iconic urban skyline of downtown Mpls.

Students witnessed bald eagles and great blue herons and learned about the critical habitat the Mississippi River offers birds. Passing the Mpls Public Water Works Treatment Center, students saw first hand the intake where 57 million gallons of the Mississippi River, are processed into drinking water each day for nearly 500,000 Twin Cities residents. Students continued downstream past barge containers and various industries and learned how St. Anthony Falls generated the energy needed to power the flour mills that would turn the Twin Cities into a major urban and economic powerhouse.

On a sandy island students discussed the principles of Leave No Trace and built upon earlier conversations as they considered how our daily human activities impact the health of the river, and how



they in turn have impacts on the health of our communities. As students paddled into Boom Island with the full skyline of downtown Mpls above them there was a new appreciation for the wildness of the urban environment. One student explained that this experience "was on the top 3 experiences for 2020". Even with the challenges that 2020 has brought we are excited to have had the opportunity to connect with these youth and look forward to the new school year ahead!

Farm

- As with many farm educators, COVID-19 had Wolf Ridge farmers thinking outside the deer fence.

Because of funding assistance from the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Iron Range Resources and Reha-

bilitation Board, and the Duluth Superior Community Area Foundation. The **farm** expediently transitioned to viable markets for the 2020 season. Arrowhead Transit delivered Wolf Ridge produce to the Two Harbors, Chisholm, Ely, and Silver Bay food shelves each week.

To supplement this outside funding we set up an 18-week farm share for locals to purchase, sold greens to the Finland Co-op from May through October, developed

value-added products (sauce, sorbet, pesto, dried veggie snacks, frozen pizza) to sell at the Finland Farmers Market, and designed and implemented 16 weeks of Farm-Side Wood-Fired Pizza sales, curbside.

Besides furnishing food products to the community, the farm provided food production, processing, and marketing experiences for five second-year naturalists, one field manager, two summer college interns, four WWOOFers (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms), and 10 AmeriCorps volunteers, most of whom had not worked on a small, diversified market farm before. Additionally, we were delighted to invite Finland Teen Campers to become farmers and pizzeria chefs for a day as part of their summer camp experience.♦



Find Your Way to Support Wolf Ridge



Purchase

- If you shop on AmazonSmile, type in Wolf Ridge ELC as the charity of your choice.
- Wolf Ridge's store is online. Buy any branded merchandise and share the love at <https://wolf-ridge.org/store/>
- 2021 calendars. See page 11 for prices and ordering.

Donate

- Visit <https://wolf-ridge.org/donate/>
- Many employers have increased their employee match programs during COVID-19. Contact your human resources or business office to see how to set up a matching gift.
- Join *Leaders of the Pack*, Wolf Ridge's committed donors who have added Wolf Ridge to their estate plan.

Contact

mail@wolf-ridge.org or (218) 353-7414 with any donation questions.



ABC'S OF VIRUSES

by Lori Walewski, Wolf Ridge Naturalist

My grandpa and his siblings grew up in an orphanage as a consequence of the 1918 Spanish Influenza. Before COVID-19 hit, this was just an anecdote I shared in history class. Now, this piece of my family history has taken on greater meaning.

Prior to COVID-19, I rarely thought about viruses. Sure, I'd get my yearly flu shot to protect myself from getting the "crud" during flu season. In the recesses of my brain I knew this shot was a vaccine to protect from viruses. With a viral pandemic rocking the world and significantly altering daily life, I have a lot of questions and realized it was time to increase my knowledge.

What is a virus?

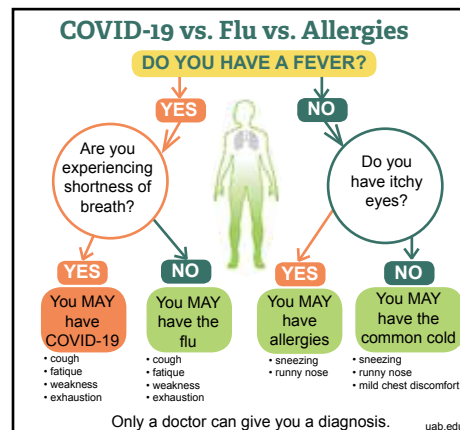
Simply put, a virus is genetic material (DNA, RNA) wrapped in a protein. Notably, a virus is neither a living nor a non-living organism. Some authors choose to call it pseudo-alive. Living because it can replicate itself. Non-living because it needs a host to do so. Viruses need to meet a host cell that has a protein "gate" matching its protein "key". Once contact occurs, the virus's genetic material is engulfed or inserted. The host cell becomes a factory, duplicating the virus, which invades and enslaves more cells.

Where do viruses come from?

To date, we lack a clear answer to viral origins. Each viruses' emergence story is unique, including its path to infecting humans. The most deadly viruses are those that recently jumped species. The world is seeing an increase in viral diseases spilling over from other species.

What is the difference between the influenza (flu) and COVID-19?

According to Mayo Clinic, both contagious respiratory illnesses exhibit similar symptoms, however different viruses cause each. Influenza symptoms appear 1-4 days after exposure while COVID-19 takes 2-14 days to emerge. COVID-19 seems to be more contagious, spread faster, develop greater incidences of lung injury and death. Treatment with antiviral drugs and preemptive vaccines exist for influenza however such remedies are not yet available for COVID-19.



Why are we seeing more infectious diseases?

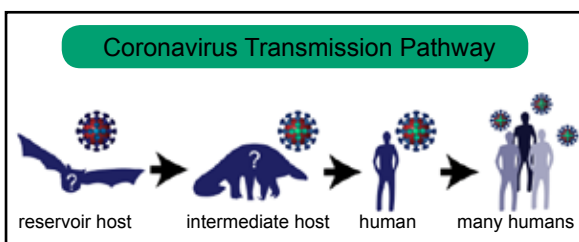
Our world is changing quickly. Nearly eight billion humans inhabit the planet. To meet our needs and wants, we destroy habitats and decrease overall diversity. Many viruses are thought to spread from bats to humans through intermediary hosts such as livestock. The 1998 Malaysia Nipah virus outbreak was traced to deforestation for growing palm oil. With loss of roosting areas (habitat), bats relocated to fruit trees shading massive pig farms. The bats ate the fruits, dropping bits and feces infested with the virus into the pig corrals. The virus traveled from pigs to humans. Habitat loss from increased development, agriculture and stock production, illegal and poorly regulated wildlife trade, and more

contact between humans, domestic, and wild animals all contribute to the problem. Faster, worldwide travel may contribute to the uptick in deadly virus outbreaks over the past few decades.

Is there a positive side to viruses?

Surprisingly, my research into this topic, indicates that the answer is yes. Viruses are critical for population control of many species. They demonstrate a strategy called "kill the winner" to decrease overpopulated species making space for diversity. Diversity, we know, is the key to stability. Without viruses, some species would overpopulate to the detriment of others. Here are some examples of good viruses in action.

1. Viruses passed on through jalapeno pepper seeds produce plants that have greater protection from aphids.
2. In Yellowstone National Park, a virus living in fungi colonizes a specific grass, which in turn allows the grass to grow in really hot soils. This grass is an important part of the food chain base.
3. Viruses kill 50% of ocean bacteria each day, allowing oxygen-producing plankton to receive sufficient nutrients as the highly photosynthetic food chain base sustaining life in the ocean and on earth.
4. HIV positive people benefit from GB virus C, a common blood borne human virus that slows the progression of HIV to AIDS.
5. In mice, the herpes virus makes it less likely they will get certain bacterial infections including bubonic plague and listeria. Researchers believe this might be similar in humans.
6. Viruses that infect bacteria can be used to kill antibiotic resistant bacteria. A virus can be engineered to wipe out specific bacterial populations while general antibiotics kill both good and bad bacteria.
7. While many common cancer treatments are quite harmful and lead to side effects, viruses can be manipulated to select and destroy cancer



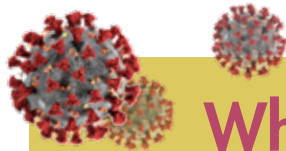
cells in a more efficient and less toxic way.

8. Viruses exhibit high potential for genetic innovations since they are constantly replicating and mutating. Organisms can use the viral genetic material to their advantage.

What can we do to protect the world and ourselves from viruses?

The solutions all sound quite familiar: prevent habitat loss, allow space between wild and domestic species, support research about both good and bad viruses, vote for legislation to protect wildlife and natural spaces, get vaccinated, social distance, wash hands, wear masks during pandemics, recycle more, consume less, and learn about them. Increased understanding of viruses can help us utilize them for valuable solutions and safeguard against future pandemics.

We are certainly more knowledgeable and better equipped to deal with a pandemic than 100 years ago. I found the scientific information and historical



What's with the Names?

If you're like me, you may be confused by the myriad names associated with this pandemic. I learned that viruses and the diseases they cause often have different names. For example, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the virus that causes autoimmune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). In this pandemic, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV2) is the name of the virus. The official name of the disease is coronavirus disease. The acronym is COVID-19. 'CO' stands for corona (relating to its appearance), 'VI' for virus, 'D' for disease, and 19 for the year it emerged. COVID 19 was formerly known as the 2019 novel (meaning new) coronavirus 2019-nCoV.

The International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) chooses names for viruses and they base the name on genetic structure. The World Health Organization (WHO) in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) names diseases. They base the disease name to "enable discussion on disease prevention, spread, transmissibility, severity, and treatment." The WHO chose not to use SARS as part of the disease name to reduce fear among populations severely affected by the 2003 SARS outbreak. ♦

stories to be fascinating and complex in my search for greater understanding. As this pandemic adds to all our

personal stories, I hope the outcomes will be more positive than my grandpa's generation. ♦

BJ Kohlstedt (77) retired as Lake County Emergency Manager. She was also named the 2020 Emergency Management Director of the Year by the Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers (AMEM). **Rachel (Jepson) Wolf (98)** 2nd book, *The Unplugged Family Activity Book: 60+ Simple Crafts and Recipes for Year-round Fun* is out. **Julia Luger (17)** is the education and communication director at Wildlife Forever and manages the state-fish art contest. **Sarah Waddle (15) and Mike Krussow (14)** got married. Mike is now working at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic in Grand Marais, MN. **Betsey Mead (90)** is employed in administration at the Veteran's Home in Silver Bay, MN. **Shannon Walz (05)** can now be found at the Silver Bay Public Library. **Laura Prasek (10)** got married. **Isabel Gerber Brydolf (19)** is beginning an AmeriCorps service year at Tiny Trees Nature Preschool in Seattle. **Sam Guida (19)** is working grounds and custodial at Tettegouche State Park. **Robby Holmes (19)** is working with high schools in Seattle to help coordinate their environmental service clubs. **Katie McCreary (19)** is planning to work in a preschool or do distance learning tutoring. **Caroline Urban (19)** is employed at Bluefin Bay resort as an activities guide. **Class of 2020:** **Celia Carr** pulled weeds, rode her bicycle, read books, ate berries, and started learning to play concertina. She is now doing virtual learning with a pod of 4th graders and getting a little better at concertina. **Emma Davis** is working as a habitat restoration specialist in Portland, OR. **Sydney Fuerst** is at River Grove Community School as a kindergarten teacher. **Sal Hertz** worked as a forest interpreter for the Superior Natl Forest, creating digital content in place of in person campfire programs. She is currently in Keene, NH studying towards an MS at Antioch. To find **Katelyn Lavrenz** head up the Gunflint Trail to Wilderness Canoe Base. **Shannon Lusk** is in Greenville, SC working for a medical supply company, updating their website with images and descriptions for the items they sell. She is also taking classes at Antioch to finish her MS. **Mary Junko** is employed as an outdoor educator at Three Rivers Park district and volunteering at the Raptor Center. **Becca Maxwell** landed a job as a nature preschool teacher in Salt Lake City, UT. **Emma McHone** spent the early summer bonding with her mother in the garden. Later Emma moved to NH where she has been farming. **Angus Mossman** is spending his days in an elementary school, encouraging students and teachers to embrace our environment as part of the classroom. Wedding bells rang for **Claire Poppendeck** this summer on a wonderful, sunny day! She is teaching elementary special education in Cloquet, MN. **Federica Ranelli** worked with the Finland Food Chain team. She is now living in the NC Appalachians, teaching and coordinating the farm at Arthur Morgan School. **Kenzie Romportl** recently got a job with Active Solutions in Mpls helping run outdoor recreation camps for elementary age kids. **Cora Walsh** just started as a youth development professional at My Place in Mankato, MN. **Sofie Wicklund** started a new position as a classroom assistant at Great River School, a charter Montessori school in St. Paul, MN where she works with 4th through 6th graders - many of whom she taught last fall at Wolf Ridge! ♦



PROFILE: CARLYLE MILLER

Carlyle Miller lives in Nevada City, CA with her husband, two kids, and cat. Inspired by her passion for Wolf Ridge, Carlyle recently organized a fundraiser for Wolf Ridge on the Wolf Ridge alumni Facebook page. Her initiative netted over \$3,300! Thanks to Carlyle and all those who have donated through this fundraiser. We at Wolf Ridge are feeling your love and support during these uncertain times.

What is your connection to Wolf Ridge? I was a student naturalist in 2000-2001.

What is your occupation? For a few years after Wolf Ridge, I ran a “River Teachers” program with fellow naturalist alumni Kate Hofmann for a local river protection organization. We birthed two school assemblies that were similar to Wolf Ridge’s evening programs, and that taught over 200,000 kids around CA about salmon and water conservation. Now, I am Operations Director for Sierra Harvest, a local non-profit dedicated to supporting our local farming community and teaching children to love local, organic food through a Farm to School program, farm field trips, chef visits, and a farm-based summer camp. While I’m mostly on the financial/database end of things, I’m lucky to be raising two great kids who keep me honest and outside.

Tell our readers about something that you have learned as the result of your time at Wolf Ridge.

When you make things silly and even ridiculous, it’s SO much easier and fun to learn.

Please share a Wolf Ridge memory. A tradition we had the year I was at Wolf Ridge was the “Full Moon Sleepout.” Every full moon, we slept out under the stars at a different spot around the ridge (no tents allowed). My favorite memory from these sleepouts was walking victoriously back to the West Dorm on squeaking snow to check the thermometer after a frigid night out. We were duly impressed to find that we’d been “sleeping,” i.e. alternating between getting frostbite on our noses and suffocating in our sleeping bags, at -17°F.

What are your hobbies? My fellow naturalists will not be surprised to hear that I still love swing and salsa dancing, playing guitar and violin, and swimming in our local river.

Tell us an item of interest about yourself. I live in a cohousing community, which is like the love child of a commune and a condominium, but in a good way. While its definition is “an intentional community of private homes clustered around shared space,” it’s really just another way of saying “one big family.” It means that my kids (and I!) have multiple adults and kids of all ages (and patience levels, and skill sets) available at all times of the day. It means we all get practice learning from and living with people with different beliefs and life histories. It means that my kids have deep relationships with their elders next door. And during non-covid times, it means that I have the option of eating a meal that I didn’t cook (and don’t have to clean up after) with a bunch of other people 5 days a week (for the low-low price of hosting one of these “common meals” in our community building once a month). We share work and decision making, births and deaths, and laughter and pain. I feel so lucky to live here!

What book and/or movie would you recommend others read. *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. It’s a great introduction to the issues of race in our country, and how they affect citizens of all races to this day.

Please share a travel tip? If you’re doing a challenging outdoor adventure with your kids, bring other friends with kids. Kids don’t whine nearly as much in front of witnesses.

What is your favorite place at Wolf Ridge and why? The middle of Wolf Lake when it is frozen solid. I love how when the sky is clouded over, and the lake has snow on it, you feel like you’re in a black and white painting, except maybe the bright blue of your staff jacket.♦



TRIBUTE TO JEFF KLIMMEK



Jeff engaging his students.

Jeff Klimmek, the “Dad” of summer youth programs at Wolf Ridge passed away in June. Jeff first began bringing children to the Isabella ELC as a school teacher. He continued as the driving force behind the Wolf Ridge trip for Mississippi Elementary and Hayden Heights Elementary until his retirement in 1997.

In the spring of 1990, Jack Pichotta, Wolf Ridge’s director, asked Jeff to run the summer camp program for individual kids. Jeff, his wife Katherine, and their 4 children moved to Wolf Ridge for the summer. For seven summers, the Klimmek family grew to 60 kids each session at Wolf Ridge. Katherine became camp “Mom” while Jeff served as the director and “Dad.” Their children were campers and eventually counselors.

Jeff’s goal for the campers was to learn to love and treasure the outdoors not only through the regular Wolf Ridge classes but through extra activities such as swimming in the lakes and rivers, field trips to Grand Portage, Temperance River, the alpine slide at Lutsen, campfires, ice cream parties, and more. Summer Youth Programs have evolved and will continue to evolve

Mr Klimmek was my sixth grade teacher at Hayden Heights Elementary. He was one of my favorite teachers and one that made you enjoy learning. A memory that sticks with me is going to Wolf Ridge and his inspiring words he shouted while I was attempting to do the rope course. "If you can conquer this fear, you can conquer anything." He was right.

~ Heather (Voss) Keating

but Jeff laid much of the foundation for mixing education with fun in the great outdoors.

As a teacher, Jeff worked hard to make sure all his students could attend regardless of their economic or cultural backgrounds. He made sure that the schools had the right chaperones so that the southeast Asian girls could attend. Getting kids with limited opportunities to camp and outside was a high priority. Jeff established scholar-

ships for campers to attend the summer youth programs.

Jeff was a large guy - 6’7” tall. His heart and hug were even larger. Bedridden for many years, about 4 months before he passed he said, “I no longer have a body and I have no future, but I still have my love and I can still give it away.” He was large on hope and possibilities. With his passing he and the Klimmek family are creating opportunities for kids to attend Wolf Ridge. Donations in Jeff’s memory may be sent to Wolf Ridge to support camperships for underserved youth of St. Paul.

Wolf Ridge salutes and thanks Jeff for developing a strong foundation and joyous spirit for our summer youth programs. ♦



Jeff and his family at Wolf Ridge.

WOLF RIDGE
ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER



BRYAN HANSEL

2021

The 2021 Wolf Ridge calendar features the work of Bryan Hansel. Bryan is an award-winning professional landscape photographer and outdoor educator. He has over 25 years of photography experience with over 100 publication credits from publications such as *National Geographic*, *Outdoor Photographer*, *Lake Superior Magazine*, *National Park Traveler*, *Ocean Paddler*, *Canoe and Kayak Magazine*, *Backpacker Magazine* and many more. In 2018, he received Lake Times Magazine’s Best Photographer in Minnesota award. An outdoor educator and guide at heart, Bryan decided to share his passion for outdoor photography and started a photography workshop program in 2006. His programs take students to the best and often unknown locations in the northland and across the nation. He lives in Grand Marais, MN. See page 11 for prices and ordering. ♦

Adventures on the Ridge

Wolf Ridge in-person experiences are back, day-use only!

Our naturalists will guide you and your group on either a half-day or whole-day adventure, exploring forests and lakes of our secluded property leading activities such as bird watching, animals signs, canoeing, and hiking. As the seasons change, so do the activities.

Now through December 20th Wednesdays through Sundays.

Fee: \$69/person for a half-day experience.
\$138/person for a full-day experience.
Children under age 2 are free.

Group size is 4 to 8 people. Groups of less than 4 participants will be cancelled unless the existing participants choose to pay the minimum cost of \$300.

To register: Visit our website at wolf-ridge.org or call 218-353-7414.

COVID-19 Protocols: Wolf Ridge requires the use of face coverings and social distancing during programs. The majority of programs will be held outside. All equipment will be cleaned and sanitized before use.

For more details on activities, meeting place, daily schedule, what to bring, COVID-19 protocols, logistics, cancellation policy and travel directions visit our website at wolf-ridge.org or call 218-353-7414.



Wolf Ridge thanks these \$1,000+ donors

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★ ATTENTION ★

Wolf Ridge values keeping in contact with you, our friends, supporters, and participants.

To curtail expenditures during the pandemic we are working to reduce our printing and mailing costs. If you received a printed copy of this October *Wolf Ridge Almanac*, we do not have your email address. This will be your last paper copy of our newsletter until our economic situation rebounds.

Thanks for supporting Wolf Ridge by sending us your email to:

mail@wolf-ridge.org

You can also use the **"Subscribe to E-News"** button found at the bottom of every page on our website.

Support Wolf Ridge and Stay in Touch

2021 Calendars

Join Wolf Ridge in a wish for a healthier, happier and more prosperous tomorrow by buying a 2021 Wolf Ridge calendar today. Due to COVID-19, school trips to Wolf Ridge have been canceled losing out on 12,000 participants and 87% of our income. To supplement the lost revenue we set the goal of seeing 10,000 calendars by the end of January. Please support Wolf Ridge by purchasing calendars for yourself, friends, teachers, and clients.

Wolf Ridge calendar prices.

1 calendar	\$20
2-9 calendars	\$15 each
10-24 calendars	\$13 each
25-100 calendars	\$12 each
>100 calendars	\$9 each
Schools contact us for special pricing.	



To place your order:
Go to store@wolf-ridge.org OR call 218-353-7414.

Your gift supports Wolf Ridge:

- Consider monthly donations with automatic payments.
- Contribute an annual donation.
- Become a planned giver.
- Make an in-kind donation.

Call to set-up your gift.



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800-523-2733
MN, WI, ND
218-353-7414

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Complimentary Issue

Because of the generosity of so many during this crisis, our latest group of \$1,000 plus donors was too numerous to be listed in this space! Look inside at page 10 for these benevolent folks.

Thank you!



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, team building, 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.

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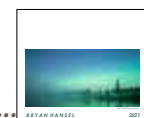
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