



The ALMANAC

A newsletter of Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center

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September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2023



Learning. Just as nature intended.

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MEMORANDUM FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Peter Smerud



This was a year of growth, resilience, and leadership. With continually increasing numbers since the COVID-19 pandemic of children, adults, and families hiked the trails, paddled the waters, and gathered to learn at Wolf Ridge, one of the most stellar outdoor learning facilities in the world. They marveled at lichens, paddled a canoe under towering cliffs, snowshoed over massive piles of snow, sat eye to eye with a red-tailed hawk, and swelled in the pride of accomplishment atop a ropes course. These are a few of the many experiences at Wolf Ridge that create an outdoor ethic that will deeply impact our future generations. The following pages feature highlights from 2022-23 made possible by the leadership of donors and staff who continued to believe in the transformative power of learning in the outdoors. Our thanks to all.

Resilience for an ecosystem is the capacity to respond to a disturbance by resisting damage and recovering quickly. For years Wolf Ridge has been recognized as the snowiest place in Minnesota, and we upheld that reputation with last winter's record setting performance of 13+ feet of snow. Our teams rose to the challenge and embraced it, from ensuring the road and pathways were always open for safe travel to reveling in the skiing and snowshoeing opportunities. As we take part in outdoor activities we naturally slow down, notice our surroundings, and share experiences with others. That journey is the development of the relationship between human systems and natural systems. Following the disruptions of COVID the Wolf Ridge community worked extra hard to enhance the student learning experience and create a more resilient future for Wolf Ridge programs and the facilities that house them.

Throughout our 2000+ acre campus last year was a year of improvements and return to nearly full operations. Critically important developments included a new steel roof, solar power generation system, and new snow removal equipment. While indoors we invested in new ovens, vacuum systems, and micro-green growing racks. An entire inventory of new cross-country skis equipped our participants. These outcomes are not possible without donors, our friends, and partners.

Today, we see and acknowledge, compared to years ago, childhood has moved predominantly indoors. Building on the core of our mission we remain focused upon breaking down barriers of access, such that every Minnesota middle school student has the opportunity to a life-changing experience of multiple days of outdoor learning, now called Outdoor School. With commitment for the future generations of Minnesotans, Wolf Ridge collaborated with other residential environmental learning center to support Minnesota legislative leaders with the introduction of three bills into the 2023 legislative session. The Outdoor School for All Minnesota Students bill would create a statewide grant program to enable every student in Minnesota to access these learning experiences. Wolf Ridge has for decades been a leader in our field, continuing that commitment our staff served in leadership positions on national level teams that are advancing the outdoor school initiative across the nation.

Contributions from generous donors and supporters power our mission and provide inclusive and accessible experiences that build connection, understanding, and tangible skills. On behalf of all of us at Wolf Ridge, thank you to the many individuals, families, corporations and foundations whose investment in and commitment to our work allows Wolf Ridge to remain a critical connection to the outdoors for thousands of people every year.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Smerud". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

SCHOOLS & GROUPS

FISCAL YEAR SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 TO AUGUST 31, 2023

Academic Arts High School
 Ain Dah Yung Center
 Assumption School
 Badger School
 Barnum Elementary
 Bay View Elementary
 Beacon Academy
 Bethlehem Academy
 Birch Grove Community School
 Birch Lake Elementary
 Blue Earth Area Middle School
 Breck Middle School
 Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools
 Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School
 Carleton College
 Cathedral School
 Central Cass Middle School
 Central Middle School
 Chisago Lakes Middle School
 Columbia Public Schools
 Community of Saints
 Congdon Park Elementary
 Conservation Corps MN & IA
 Cowern Elementary
 DaVinci Academy of Arts & Science
 Duluth Edison Charter Schools
 Ely Homeschool Co-op
 Ely Memorial Middle School
 Emanuel Lutheran
 First Lutheran School
 Fisher Public School
 Five Hawks Elementary
 Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College
 Fox West Academy
 Friends School of MN
 Girl Scouts Troop 4054 & 4055
 Glen Lake Elementary
 Glendale Elementary
 Great Expectations School
 Great River School
 Greenbush Middle River School
 Hamilton Ridge

Heilicher Jewish Day School
 Hermantown Elementary School
 Hilltop Primary
 Hinckley-Finlayson Elementary
 Holy Name of Jesus School
 Homecroft Elementary
 Humboldt High School
 Intl Spanish Language Academy
 Jeffers Pond Elementary
 John Ireland Catholic School
 Jordan Middle School
 Kaleidoscope Charter School
 King Of Grace Lutheran
 La Ola del Lago
 Lakewood Elementary
 Laura MacArthur Elementary
 Leave No Trace Master Educator
 Lester Park School
 Lighthouse Learning Homeschool Group
 Lowell Elementary School
 Loyola Catholic School
 Manvel Public School
 Maple Lake Elementary
 Marcy Open School
 Marshall County Central HS
 Mary Queen of Peace
 Midway School
 MN Association of Env. Educators
 Minnesota New Country School
 Minnesota Waldorf School
 Minnetonka Middle School East
 Minto School
 MN Dept of Natural Resources
 MobilizeGreen YCC
 New City School
 New Discoveries Montessori Academy
 New London-Spicer Middle School
 North Shore Area Partners
 North Shore Community School
 Northern Lights Community School
 Northland College
 Nyquist Elementary

Oak Crest Elementary
 Oak Hill Montessori Community School
 Onamia Junior High
 Our Lady of Grace Catholic School
 Our Lady Of The Lake
 Our Village School
 Park River Area School
 Pequot Lakes Middle School
 Phoenix Learning Center
 Ponemah School
 Prairie Creek
 Providence Academy
 Redtail Ridge Elementary
 River Grove Elementary
 Roseau School District
 Sacred Heart-East Grand Forks
 Sawtooth Mountain Elementary
 School of St Philip
 Schoolcraft Learning Community
 Shakopee High School
 Shell Lake School District
 Shirley Hills Elementary
 Sierra Club
 Solon Springs School
 St Anthony Park Elementary
 St Charles Borromeo
 St Croix Catholic
 St Croix Preparatory Academy
 St Francis De Sales
 St John's Lutheran School
 St John School of Little Canada
 St John the Baptist
 St Jude of the Lake
 St Mary's School - Breckenridge
 St Mary's School - Morris
 St Patrick School
 St Paul's School
 St Peter's School
 St Philip's School
 St Rose of Lima
 St Stephen's School
 St Therese of Deephaven
 St Thomas More Catholic School
 Stella Maris
 Stowe Elementary
 Trinity Lutheran/Our Lady of the Prairie
 TRIO Upward Bound - Anoka-Ramsey
 Community College
 Triton High School
 Two Harbors High School
 US Forest Service
 UW - Superior Upward Bound
 Warroad Middle School
 Washburn Middle School
 Watershed High School
 Watertown - Mayer MS
 Westwood Elementary
 Wheaton College - Honey Rock, IL
 William Kelley Elementary
 Willow River Elementary
 Woodbury Leadership Academy



La Ola del Lago Spanish Immersion School, Prior Lake.

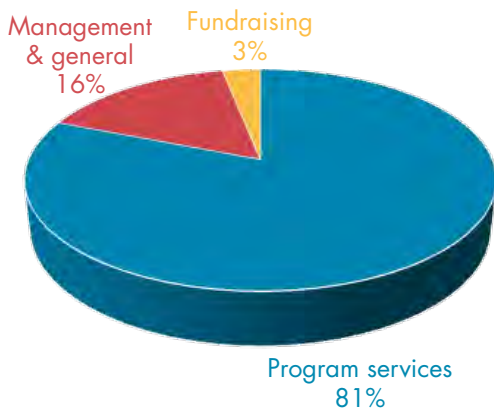
LEARNING. JUST AS NATURE INTENDED.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal year: September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2023

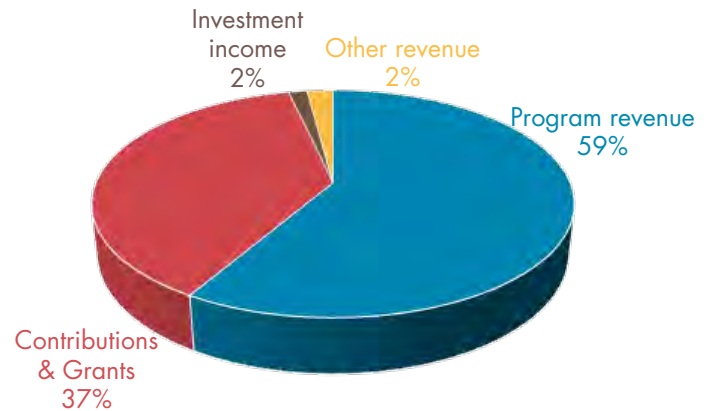
Expenses

Program services.....	\$2,703,095
Management & general.....	531,873
Fundraising.....	103,974
Total expenses before depreciation*	<u>\$3,338,942</u>
Depreciation.....	647,925
Total expense.....	<u><u>\$3,986,867</u></u>



Revenue and Other Support

Program revenue.....	1,940,935
Contributions and Grants.....	\$1,212,256
Investment income.....	49,405
Other income.....	68,981
Total Revenue.....	<u><u>\$3,271,577</u></u>



Statement of Financial Position

Current assets.....	\$1,141,966
Fixed assets.....	12,242,448
Operating Lease Right of Use.....	30,633
Investments & supporting funds	
Endowment.....	449,869
Board restricted reserve.....	588,166
Total Assets.....	<u><u>\$14,453,082</u></u>

Current liabilities.....	\$742,111
Restricted net assets.....	755,792
Unrestricted net assets.....	12,955,179
Total liabilities & equity.....	<u><u>\$14,453,082</u></u>

*Depreciation expense = \$647,925

Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center is a nonprofit, tax exempt organization under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. This financial information is drawn from the audited financial statements by the accounting firm Esterbrooks, Scott, Signorelli, Peterson, Smithson, Ltd.

DONORS

Fiscal year: September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2023

\$5,000+

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Phil Freshman Tribute

Wolf Ridge was honored that the Freshman family selected us to be the beneficiary of gifts in memory of Phil Freshman. The Freshman family connection to Wolf Ridge began with Summer Camp and continued with Phil's volunteer work. Their generous and supportive community donated over \$4,500 in his memory.

Margaret & Will Roush
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Brian Horrigan
Julia & Paavo Husen
Barbara Hustad



Wolf Ridge teaches over 60 classes in 10 categories from cultural history to personal growth and team skills. Journaling is a creative art that supports observation and reflection.



Beavers, Birds, and Small Mammals are examples of animal ecology classes.



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Marlys Johnson
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Craig Willmert
Jo Anne Wilson
Gene & Sydnie Wolfe
Clettis Wright



Geology teaches about earth and physical science and takes classes to beautiful vistas.

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Sally & David Kohlstedt
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Kirby & Cathy Wood
Allison Wood & Julie Flotten
Amy Workman & J.J. Groskinski
David & Diane Wright
Anderson-Claffy Post 109
Two Harbors Federal Credit Union
Sons of the American Legion W. Duluth

\$Under 100
Deb Abelow
Ken & Marianne Aker



Summer trips grow outdoor recreation skills.

DONOR STORY: DONALD H. NELSON

By Maya Deutchman, Wolf Ridge Naturalist

Imagine believing in the mission of an organization so strongly that you decide to pledge your support without ever having visited. The estate of Donald Nelson, philanthropist and conservationist, left a generous donation to Wolf Ridge and the four other residential environmental learning centers in Minnesota. Don never experienced the magic of a chickadee perching on his head at Chickadee Landing, never skated across a frozen Wolf Lake, or watched the northern lights dance across the sky from the observation deck. Yet through Don's experiences visiting and living on farms, his conservation work, and his family's various experiences at Wolf Ridge, he recognized how spending time in nature can transform a person's understanding of the environment and its importance.

Although Don was an accomplished dentist and orthodontist by trade, his passion for the outdoors began in childhood when he regularly visited a generations-old family farm near Nerstrand. After earning multiple degrees in dentistry and orthodontics

and establishing a private practice in Minneapolis, Don moved to Rochester to accept a position at the Mayo Clinic, where he worked for over two decades. Shortly after his move, Don experienced a renewed passion for farming and exploration of the outdoors and purchased a farm that quickly became his new home.

Don realized the value of an immersive outdoor experience. He understood the unparalleled benefits that people of all ages can gain when allowed the chance to learn about and explore nature, so much so that he decided to turn his 800+ acres of farmland into wildlife management areas for people to enjoy and learn from. He donated the proceeds from the sale of his farms to colleges across the Midwest to create endowments that will fund educational programs, support research, and provide land-based stewardship for decades to come.

Don's sister and six of her grandchildren participated in the Grandparent & Grandchild Camp at Wolf Ridge. The



Don Nelson, center, & family members gather at the dedication of the Prairie Creek wildlife management area.

Donald Nelson Estate believed in the vision of environmental education so strongly that it decided to pledge support. Whether or not you have been lucky enough to watch the sunset from the top of the North Stairs, skied the Baptism River trails, or harvested potatoes at the Wolf Ridge Organic Farm, I encourage you to imagine the magic that these experiences can provide for people of all ages.

Wolf Ridge thanks Don for his estate gift. We are inspired by his lifelong commitment to environmental education, conservation, and expanding access to natural spaces.

THE LEADERS OF THE PACK

Wolf Ridge recently received an estate gift from Donald Nelson, his first gift to our organization. We're honored he included Wolf Ridge in the list of great organizations doing the work he wants to see perpetuated. If, like Donald, you've included Wolf Ridge in your estate plans, let us know, so we can say thank you and recognize you as a member of the *Leaders of the Pack*.



With tremendous gratitude Wolf Ridge ELC gratefully acknowledges:

Anonymous - 3x
Sandy & Tom Ahlstrom
Tom & Margit Berg
Russ & Becky Bierbaum
John & Laura Crosby
Patricia Harman
Andy Datko & Lisa Hesse
Marty & Kathy Duchscher
Donna Hill
Harpreet Kaur

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Gregory & Donnette Wheelock

Please consider gifting part of your estate to Wolf Ridge. For more info visit wolf-ridge.org/support or contact: Meredith St. Pierre at 218-353-7414 or meredith.stpierre@wolf-ridge.org.

LICHEN CITISCI

By Charlie Pavlisich, Wolf Ridge Naturalist



Charlie Pavlisich & Joe Walewski collecting Common Greenshield during a Lichen CitiSci training session in WI.

This past fall, I found myself bushwhacking in the woods off a remote forest service road. I was in search of Boreal Oakmoss (*Evernia mesomorpha*). Don't be confused by the name, it is a lichen, not a moss. I value adventures such as this because it brings my passions of science, learning, and being outside together. This particular exploit is a result of a partnership between Wolf Ridge and Lichen CitiSci to help monitor national air quality monitoring.

Lichen CitiSci is a community science project funded by a grant from the United State Forest Service to train volunteers to help collect and submit lichen samples to use as air quality bio-monitors. There are currently volunteer networks in California, Minnesota, and New Hampshire. Let's explore the components of this project.

First off are the lichens. They are unique beings. Lichens are actually made up of two or more organisms, usually of algae and fungi. The fungi provides the physical structure and the algae is able to survive inside this structure and provide energy via photosynthesis. This relationship allows both organisms to survive in areas where neither would be able to do so alone and provide new opportunities to thrive. Lichens are amaz-

ing bioindicators for air quality as they lack roots and rely on the nutrients they get from the air in the forms of precipitation and dry deposition, making them essentially air sponges, soaking up what is in our atmosphere.

Lichen CitiSci trains volunteers to take lichen samples of specific species in designated areas within national forests. The samples are processed by a lab to analyze metals and chemicals that have been absorbed by the lichen. This tells us a great deal about what is in our air and the general quality of air in the area. The goal of this project in our area is to establish a baseline for each site and to return to the area in future years to monitor for any changes whether positive or negative. In northern Minnesota we are using Boreal Oakmoss, a fruticose lichen that is bushy greenish gray in color.

Sampling takes place at locations selected by the forest service. Volunteers who have completed the training take a basic inventory of the dominant tree and plant species in the area, then collect two samples of 20g each of Boreal Oakmoss. Imagine a sandwich bag stuffed to the brim. Collecting can be tricky, you have to make sure not to contaminate the sample, not collect foreign materials such as tree bark or dirt. The sample

must be dry in order to prevent mold so no collecting in the rain. We bring graduate naturalists along for the experience so they have the opportunity to engage in citizen science and in turn share this with their classes at Wolf Ridge.

Thanks to the partnership we created, Wolf Ridge will also be a monitoring site. This year with the help of fellow naturalists I will be selecting a site on campus to use as a monitoring site where we will do lichen sampling on a regular basis.

Wolf Ridge has been involved with many different citizen and community science projects over its 50-year history. From taking weather data for the National Weather Service (NWS) to helping the Midwest Peregrine Society in restoring the falcons to the North Shore, Wolf Ridge is always looking to find ways to be a bridge between learners and science. These partnerships build new opportunities for us. Weather monitoring for the NWS influences our Weather Forecasting class. Students in Canoeing class take water clarity data for Wolf Lake using secchi disks for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. We are currently working on plans to incorporate air quality monitoring into our curriculum. Like lichen, which are not an individual but a small ecosystem of two or more species working, creating partnerships with Lichen CitiSci and the USFS can lead to the creation of new and exciting things that might not be possible otherwise.



Boreal Oakmoss lichen.

FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

CAMPUS AND CLASS IMPROVEMENTS

Donors powered many improvements across campus.

Thanks to over \$500,000 in donor support the Science Center has a new roof system without having to dip into our operational budget. Components of the project included a new metal roof, vapor and air barriers, ventilation, insulation, and daylighting through Solatubes.

Through foundation support Wolf Ridge increased staff efficiency with new ovens in the kitchen, a floor scrubber for the dining hall, space vac cleaning system, and a snow-blower.

On the farm we replaced the cover on a high tunnel with a new system and built a timber frame addition for cleaning vegetables.



New Science Center roof.

Classes saw upgraded binoculars, compasses, infrared thermometers, climbing ropes, Vernier optical dissolved oxygen and pH probes to name a few things. Cross Country Ski Class was completely re-outfitted with brand new Fischer skis, boots, and poles. Summer programs benefited with added kayaks, a new canoe/kayak trailer, and tents.



Skiing Raven Lake trails.

Donors continue to be the foundation Wolf Ridge builds on to fulfill our mission and deliver experiential learning in the greatest outdoor classroom. We are grateful for their partnership and belief in our work. We are grateful for their support and the ability to improve campus without increasing student fees. The above projects were made possible by committed individual donors, generous estate gifts, and grants from numerous foundations.

RECOGNITION

Wolf Ridge Executive Director Peter Smerud received the Nature Center Leadership Award from the national Association of Nature Centers Administrators (ANCA). They presented this honor to Peter because of his contributions to outdoor centers and their staff in furthering their success of their organizations and missions.

Wolf Ridge has been collecting weather data every day since 1988 and submitting it to the National Weather Service (NWS). A record total of 156.1" of snow went in the books for 2022-2023 season. Steve Gohde, hydrologist and the Observing Program Team Leader in northeast Minnesota for NOAA presented Wolf Ridge with a certificate recognizing 30 years of continuous data recording.



Steve Gohde, center, with Wolf Ridge staff. If you have been a naturalist at Wolf Ridge you have collected weather data.



Some of the 2023 Wolf Ridge Farm Family.

The Minnesota Association for Environmental Education bestowed the Wolf Ridge with their 2022 Partner of the Year Award. This award is made to an organization that has made significant contributions in advancing environmental education in Minnesota.

The University of MN Farm Family Recognition Program selected Wolf Ridge to be the Minnesota Lake County farm family of the year. The program honors farmers' significant contributions to the agriculture industry and their local communities.

The Lake County Chamber of Commerce chose Wolf Ridge as the 2023 large business employer of the year for our dedicated service to the community, county, and surrounding area.

OUTDOOR SCHOOL FOR ALL MINNESOTA

The spring of 2023 Minnesota legislative session saw the introduction of the *Outdoor School for All Minnesota* bill. Wolf Ridge lead a collaboration with 4 other residential outdoor school providers in Minnesota and several legislators to introduce this proposal. *Outdoor School for All Minnesota* is advocating for the establishment of a statewide grant program to support immersive, multi-day, accredited overnight outdoor education program experiences for students in grades 4 to 8 to address these needs and to ensure that all students have a chance to benefit from outdoor education. Outdoor School program providers would work with partnering school groups to meet curriculum goals and state academic standards.



Wolf Ridge Graduate Naturalist Alumni Kristi Pursell, now serving as State Representative for Minnesota District 58A was the lead author in the House for the bill. This bill is receiving the largest bi-partisan support for any bill introduced in Minnesota legislation in the last 25 years.



NEWS BRIEFS

The **snows of 2022-23** took their toll on our solar array with the reflective panels. These reflectors can increase electric output up to 30% however they do not allow snow to shed efficiently in record snow years. Fortunately, with insurance, we were able to replace the damaged array with a larger system sans reflectors.

In October, Wolf Ridge hosted 15 Oak Ridge elementary school teachers and their families as they attended a **teacher training workshop**. Oak Ridge doesn't currently attend Wolf Ridge (although they hope to in the future) which makes it all the more remarkable. They received a grant through the state which they chose to use at Wolf Ridge because of connections with Teach Outdoors Minnesota (an initiative started during COVID). The grant and reason for coming was threefold: to learn more ways to do outdoor learning, to bridge curriculum standards to the outdoors, and to experience direct support in teaching outdoors. The training was a huge success with teachers reporting it was "a high quality professional development weekend."

Maintenance staff are very pleased to have a **new skid steer** with a capacity for heavy duty projects. This acquisition was, in part, made possible by Lulich Implements.

On January 3rd, Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) aired a **story featuring Wolf Ridge** and our efforts leading the upcoming legislation for *Outdoor School for All Minnesota*.

With COVID, Wolf Ridge expanded its teaching repertoire to include virtual learning. Three Wolf Ridge staff teamed up to conduct a **webinar** for Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship Series (MOSSS) hosted by the MN DNR. Over 700 registered participants learned about animal tracks and the practice of tracking in the snow. Feedback in the comments was very positive with remarks like, "That was a great presenta-



Installing the new solar array.



Skid steer in action.



Senator Grant Hauschild and Chisago Lakes students thrill at chickadees landing on their heads and hands.

tion and the Wolf Ridge crew was spectacular. Have them help out again some day soon!"

Senator Grant Hauschild recently visited Wolf Ridge promoting the *Outdoor School for All Minnesota (OSFA)* which he is the chief author of in the Senate. While here he conversed with students and adults from Chisago Lakes. Hauschild chatted with folks in GPS and Geocaching, Rock Climbing, Northwoods Mammals, and Bird classes. Chickadee Landing brought smiles to everybody's faces. Hauschild is hopeful for the OSFA bill passing based on the huge bipartisan support. WDIO was on hand to record this event.

Castle Danger Brewery of Two Harbors hosts regular fundraisers called **Pints for a Cause**. "It's an employee-driven program that benefits local non-profits by donating money from every pint sold of a specialty brewed beer to causes important to our community." Wolf Ridge was a recent recipient. A black lager debuted that was a big crowd pleaser for lovers of dark beers. Many area alumni joined in the evening.

The Wolf Ridge Board of Trustees is pleased to announce **four new board members**.

Gaylen Harms came to the Wolf Ridge board through his good friend, Russ Biberbaum, former long term board member and chair. He has a home near Wolf Ridge. His family consists of wife Julie, and daughters Jackie & Vicki (along with son-in-laws Marcus & Zack, respectively). Gaylen is a Financial Advisor and hopes to use his skills to serve Wolf Ridge well on the financial side of things.

Lori Meehan grew up in the Chicago area and earned a law degree at Northwestern University. She practiced corporate law for many years before transitioning into insurance company management. Lori has a lifelong love for animals, the outdoors and adventure. Soon after moving to Minnesota in 2009, she was introduced to the North Shore – the perfect place to indulge her interests. Now "semi-retired", Lori and her husband spend about a third of their time in their home in Tofte, and Lori manages a non-profit that provides scholarships to deserving college students. She looks forward to contributing to Wolf Ridge's success.

Anne Schneider has always been interested in the outdoors and finding ways to make a positive impact on the environment. Growing up, Anne attended environmental learning centers which sparked her interest in the outdoors and this interest continued

to grow from summers spent at a family cabin in northern Minnesota on Lake Vermilion. Anne graduated from the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management with a double major in accounting and finance. As a current CPA and audit manager at EY, Anne has significant experience related to the audit process, financial reporting, strategic thinking, and building relationships. Anne enjoys outdoor activities, reading, playing bridge, traveling and spending time with family.

- **Bill Vanderwall** has a long history with Wolf Ridge ELC. His first experiences were in the early 1970's as a high school student attending a series of



Gaylen Harms



Lori Meehan



Anne Schneider



Bill Vanderwall

biology seminars at the Environmental Learning Center in Isabella. Those experiences at the ELC led Bill and his family to have a life-long love of the outdoors and Wolf Ridge. All three of his children attended summer camps, and this summer his two granddaughters are signed up too! Semi-retired, Bill spent most of his career managing, leading, and consulting in the non-profit sector. He has served on many organizational boards and has expertise in strategic thinking, partnerships & collaborations, community development, and affordable housing. Bill and his wife Kathy enjoy travel, biking, and hiking - especially at state or national parks.

NEW WOLF RIDGE TEAM MEMBERS



Barb Doherty

Our custodial team welcomes Barb Doherty, mother of 8 and grandmother of 14. Barb grew up with what would become Wolf Ridge right in her "backyard." She recalls jaunts out to Johnson Lake, what we now call Wolf Ridge. Barb lived for awhile in Hutchinson before returning to Finland. With all her kids, and grandkids, it is not surprising that Christmas is her favorite holiday, watching little ones opening gifts and baking cookies. She finds the drive up the Wolf Ridge road beautiful and was surprised at the size of the campus and all the interesting things in the buildings. Although Barb is outgoing and has worked as a bartender, it might surprise folks that she really enjoys her alone time especially playing in her greenhouse and yard with her tomatoes, veggies, and flowers.

Nathan Engstrom has filled the new role of operations director at Wolf Ridge. That means he oversees and manages the maintenance, custodial, food service, farm, office, and store operations. He makes sure that the needs of our employees and visitors are met. A graduate of Northland College with degrees in Sociology and Environmental Studies, Nathan has worked with many different educational facilities over the years. Being a self-described local traveler, Nathan enjoys exploring the small towns of the Midwest. As a youth, one of his local travels included a backpacking trip to Isle Royale. On the first afternoon, he fell on a rock, split open his knee, and had to be evacuated. The result was a good story and scar. On a larger scale, Nathan anticipates traveling to Alaska at some point to check that 50th state off his bucket list. Passionate is a word Nathan choose to describe himself. He brings this both to his work place and hobbies. One thing that Nathan noticed as he began working here was the that the staff at Wolf Ridge have lots of energy and enthusiasm for their jobs and the mission.



Nathan Engstrom



THOMAS SPENCE

2025

The 2025 Wolf Ridge calendar's photographer is Thomas Spence. He is a carpenter by trade, spending most of his free time in the Superior National Forest and the BWCAW, always with a camera near by. Photographing MN wildlife and learning the habits and patterns of the creatures that inhabit the northern woods are his passion as well as night sky photography. He has published his outdoor photography and video in print, online, and TV at *Lake Superior Magazine*, *Backpacker Magazine*, *Warner Brothers Television Productions U.K.*, *Animal Planet*, *Virgin Atlantic Travel Blog*, and *Space Weather* to name a few. Thomas received the grand prize in landscape for his photograph in *Minnesota in Seasons: A Photographic Journey through Minnesota* (2016). His photography can be viewed at thomasspenceimages.smugmug.com. Wolf Ridge calendars are available individually and in lots of 25 for school fundraising. Email mail@wolf-ridge.org or call Wolf Ridge at (218)353-7414 for more information and to order.

ALL AGES

2024 PROGRAMS

- Open House:** (all ages) June 29 10:00-4:00 **Free**
- Bird Banding Drop-in days:** (all ages)
June 5, 12, 26, July 2, 10, 24, Aug 7 7:00-11:00am **Free**
- Family Sampler:** (all ages) Aug 11-15: \$448/person
- Family Camps Full-week:** (all ages) June 30-July 5, July 28-August 2
\$667/person
- Grandparent/Grandchild:** (ages 8-12) July 14-19: \$672
- Family Wilderness Trips:** (all ages) June-August. Call for details.
- Split Rock Kayak Tours:** (12yrs - adult) June-August. Call for details.



TRADITIONAL CAMPS

- Discoverers:** (4th-5thgr) July 7-12, July 21-26, July 28-August 2, August 4-9: \$722
- Voyageurs:** (6th-7thgr) July 7-12, July 14-19, July 21-26, August 4-9: \$722
- Adventurers:** (8th-9thgr) July 7-12, July 14-19, July 21-26, July 28-August 2, August 4-9: \$737

YOUTH



SPECIALITY CAMPS

- Day Camp:** (K-5thgr) July 1-5: \$315
- Story Day Camp:** (K-5thgr) August 12-15: \$315
- Eco Artists:** (4th-5thgr) July 14-19: \$722
- Beginning Survival:** (4th-5thgr) July 21-26: \$722
- Nature Quest:** (6th-7thgr) July 21-26: \$737
- Girls Rock the Ridge Leadership:** (6th-7th) July 7-12, July 21-26: \$737
- Adventuring for Animals:** (6th-7thgr) July 28-August 2: \$722
- Survival Camp:** (8th-9thgr) August 4-9: \$722
- Farm, Feast, & Fire Camp:** (8th-9thgr) August 4-9: \$722
- Rock Climbing Camp:** (8th-9thgr) July 14-19: \$806
- Ornithology Field Camp:** (10th-12thgr) July 7-12: \$1008
- Fishing Ecology Camp:** (10th-12thgr) July 28-August 2: \$806

NEW



WILDERNESS TRIPS

- BWCAW Canoe 5-day:** (7th-8thgr) July 21-26, August 11-16: \$789
- Isle Royale Backpack 2-wk:** (8th-9thgr) July 14-26: \$1842
- BWCAW Canoe 2-wk:** (8th-9thgr) July 28-August 9: \$1722
- Superior Hiking Trail Stewardship Backpack:** (10th-12thgr) July 7-19: \$1628
- S.T.I.N.T. in the BWCAW Canoe 2-wk:** (10th-12thgr) August 4-16: \$1640
- Voyageurs NP Kayak 2-wk:** (10th-12thgr) August 4-16: \$1822

NEW



ADULT

Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor Course:

May 15-19: \$600, register at:

https://www.nols.edu/en/coursefinder/session_search/leave-no-trace/

Beginning Bird Banding: June 20-27: \$2,835

Advanced Bird Banding: June 29-July 3: \$1,785

Fall Adult Weekend: September 27-29: \$390/person



Leave No Trace Level 2 Instructor Course participants cooking up dinner at their campsite.

REGISTRATION is open: <https://wolf-ridge.org/programs/>

For more information call 218-353-7414 between 8 and 4:00, M-F or email us at mail@wolf-ridge.org.

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Complimentary Issue

LEAVE A LEGACY

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