

## Leadership and Stewardship – Impressions of the NOC Conference, Green Bay, 2009

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More than 100 participants from six countries attended the 2009 Native Orchid Conference which was held at the Cofrin Center for Biodiversity (Mary Ann Cofrin Building), University of Wisconsin, Green Bay WI, June 12-16. The focus of the conference was on the area of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan with an emphasis on stewardship by example. The two days of presentations focused on orchid conservation and especially on strategies, challenges, and ethics of stewardship and leadership. Kathleen Garness presented her experience with conservation challenges in Illinois, Matt Richards on conservation efforts in Georgia, and Thomas Meyer on Wisconsin State Natural Areas – A Place for Every Orchid.

Kim Herman, Yarrow Wolfe and Howard Lorenz offered a different perspective on how the 2300 acre Carney Fen MI State Natural Area (SNR) came to be recognized after 7 years of hard work, and how it is being conserved today. Soil scientist Howard Lorenz gave us an excellent introduction to the impact of glaciation on the region, especially in Menominee County, Michigan, where we would later visit the Carney Fen SNR to view the diversity of orchids supported by this habitat. Howard explained how carbonate-rich waters well up from underlying dolomitic limestone thus continually enriching the fen thus creating an ideal substrate for certain orchids including *Corallorhiza striata*, *Cypripedium arietinum*, *Cypripedium reginae*, *Neottia* (syn. *Listera*) *cordata*, and *Platanthera obtusata*. Yarrow Wolfe has been studying the Ram's Head Lady's-slipper. We will eventually be able to read more about her interesting study and other conference presentations in the proceedings.

The Marsh Thistle, *Cirsium palustre*, has invaded many wetlands including parts of Carney Fen SNR. This invasive biennial species has unmistakable dinner plate-sized spiky rosettes during its first year followed by a tall flowering stem a year later when seeds are produced. The conference chairman, Kip Knudson, explained how the thistle could be controlled. "We are using horticultural vinegar (5% acetic acid). Our testing showed excellent control of first year rosettes with 3 to 5 drops of vinegar in the crown." He showed us the 37-inch Weed-Eez™ No-drift applicator which he recommends to control the vinegar application without bending.

Fens and dunes are places that time might have forgotten but for some dedicated individuals who have recognized such locales for their importance to the creatures that live there and for those of us who need to feel one with nature.

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) once stated that “We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see the land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” And so our present link with stewardship is understood and appreciated as with the example of The Friends of Carney Fen who were instrumental in promoting Carney Fen in the spirit of those who have recognized land and the creatures it supports as a community to which we all belong. Some of us had the opportunity to participate in the dedication ceremony of Carney Fen MI State Natural Area which now has the highest level of protection for the State of Michigan. Articles of Dedication are a type of conservation easement that cannot be revoked.

The Ridges Sanctuary, Door Peninsula, WI, is yet another example of leaders who appreciated the land as a community to which we all belong. They sought to preserve an unique dune complex on the shore of Lake Michigan. We are told that in 1938, they resolved: “Here is something we have. Let’s save it, instead of leaving it to future generations to spend 50 years trying to re-create it” (Lukes, 1988). Those of us who chose the guided tour of the Ridges Sanctuary had the pleasure to experience a place where a group had resolved some 70 years ago that there would still be a unique dune complex today. We were honored to be led by a contemporary steward, Roy Lukes, Ridges manager and chief naturalist from 1964 until he retired, who showed us how he placed bridges to lead visitors safely across water-filled dune slacks. One bridge is close enough to view and photograph a fallen log draped with a myriad of interesting plants but not so close as to tempt a visitor to jump from the bridge onto the log for a closer look. An unexpected delight at the Ridges Sanctuary was a population of the dwarf lake iris, *Iris lacustris*, found in full bloom along one of the narrow trails. The iris is an endangered species now to be found in a very few localities. It is obviously benefitting from early and on-going conservation efforts and to the care visitors take in keeping to the established trails.

Nancy Baehnman and I led a field trip to view *Platanthera* (syn. *Amerorchis*) *rotundifolia* on a private property in the Upper Peninsula. Because the orchid is locally rare and the habitat unable to sustain the impact of many visitors, organizers limited the number of visitors to two groups of 10. Jim Going had already flagged a safe path for us to follow and indicated the part of the population that was available for observation and for photography. These orchids are small and when not in full bloom can be easily stepped upon. It was good to see how very careful visitors were during this privileged viewing opportunity.

Stewardship continues to be an ongoing challenge to us all. When John Muir (1838-1914) arrived in central Wisconsin as a boy from Scotland in 1849, he revelled in nature, especially the forests, and later would write: “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” Today we have excellent examples of leadership within the NOC.

Figures to accompany 'Leadership and Stewardship – Impressions of the NOC Conference, Green Bay, 2009' by Marilyn Light (page 5). Images: Marilyn Light.

1. The Friends of Carney Fen are honored with a plaque to recognize their collective and sustained effort toward the dedication of the Carney Fen MI SNR. From left to right are: Jim Going, Linda Warren, Adrian Konell, Barb Bareza, Dale Leitzke, Holly Wolfe, Ross Wolfe, Yarrow Wolfe, Howard Lorenz, Marge Bjork, Ron Van Der Velden, Kip Knudson receiving the award and Robert Doepker, Western Upper Peninsula Management Supervisor, DNR Wildlife Division, Michigan making the presentation.
2. The invasive Marsh Thistle may be controlled by the application of a few drops of horticultural vinegar to the crown.



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3. *Neottia* (syn. *Listera*) *cordata*, is a tiny treasure that could easily be overlooked and stepped upon. See how many plants you can find in this picture.
4. Terry Kennedy of Toronto, Canada, photographing a group of Striped Coralroots while standing well away from the plants.
5. *Platanthera* (syn. *Amerorchis*) *rotundifolia* habitat.
6. Nancy Baehnman.



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7. *Iris lacustris* at the Ridges Sanctuary in Wisconsin.

8. Dwarf Rattlesnake Plantain, *Goodyera repens*, at the Ridges Sanctuary.

9. Roy Lukes pointing to a log while explaining the strategy of trail placement.

10. A porcupine bids us farewell to the Ridges Sanctuary.



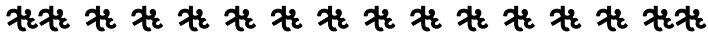
There are experienced stewards who share their knowledge with the benefit to future generations in mind. We are fortunate to have those who through their collective and sustained action and example, strive to make their natural and human communities a better place to live. It is an honor and a privilege to be where they have been, to see what they have seen, to be inspired by what they once recognized as being important, and to know that many more now strive to follow their example.

**Notes:**

1. Figures to accompany this article are on pages 9-11.
2. Taxonomy follows The World Checklist of Selected Plant Families <http://apps.kew.org/wcsp/>

**Literature Cited:**

- Lukes, Roy. 1988. *The Ridges Sanctuary, its history, geology, plants and animals*. Ridges Sanctuary, Bailey's Harbor, WI. 322 pp.
- Cirsium palustre* Marsh Thistle invasive in Wisconsin [http://www.uwgb.edu/BIODIVERSITY/herbarium/invasive\\_species/cirpal01.htm](http://www.uwgb.edu/BIODIVERSITY/herbarium/invasive_species/cirpal01.htm)
- Ecoregions of Wisconsin — [http://www.eoearth.org/article/Ecoregions\\_of\\_Wisconsin\\_\(EPA\)](http://www.eoearth.org/article/Ecoregions_of_Wisconsin_(EPA))
- The Ridges Sanctuary— <http://www.ridgessanctuary.org/>
- Plant Profile – *Iris lacustris*— <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=IRLA>



## **Fourteen Firsts: at the 2009 Native Orchid Conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin**

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It was only a few years ago that I said “what's that?” when orchids was a suggested research topic for a travel study course I took to Costa Rica. My research for that course, seeing orchids for the first time *in situ*, and knowing what they were led me into a whole new world of fascination. It was from then on that I had caught the “orchid bug”. Soon there after I discovered the AOS and once I became a member I read *Orchids* magazine from cover to cover every month. In Volume 77 Issue 10 I read Chuck McCartney's article “Orchids in Nature” and learned of the NOC. I have always focused my fascination with the orchid family on natural species and when I discovered there was an organization dedicated to the natural and native species of North America I said to myself “Where do I sign up?” Now I read every issue of the NOC journal cover to cover also. Ever since I discovered the orchid family everything I have learned, all my experiences bring me greater enthusiasm and pas-