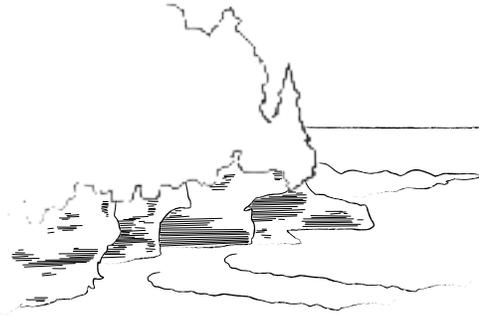


The Door County Environmental Council News



September 2016



“Fostering the preservation of Door County’s rich heritage of natural resources for the health, welfare, and spiritual uplift not only of its inhabitants, but for generations to come.”

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Light Pollution Effects on Wildlife and Ecosystems

“When we add light to the environment, that has the potential to disrupt habitat, just like running a bulldozer over the landscape can.” — Chad Moore, formerly of the National Park Service

For billions of years, all life has relied on Earth’s predictable rhythm of day and night. It’s encoded in the DNA of all plants and animals. Humans have radically disrupted this cycle by lighting up the night. Plants and animals depend on Earth’s daily cycle of light and dark rhythm to govern life-sustaining behaviors such as reproduction, nourishment, sleep and protection from predators. Scientific evidence suggests that artificial light at night has negative and deadly effects

on many creatures including amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and plants.

Artificial Lights Disrupt the World’s Ecosystems

Nocturnal animals sleep during the day and are active at night. Light pollution radically alters their nighttime environment by turning night into day.

According to research scientist Christopher Kyba, for nocturnal animals, the introduction of artificial light probably represents the most drastic change human beings have made to their environment.

“Predators use light to hunt, and prey species use darkness as cover,” Kyba explains. “Near cities, cloudy skies are now hundreds, or even thousands of times brighter than they were 200 years ago. We

**SAVE
THE DATE!**

SEPTEMBER 21st

**THE DOOR COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL**
in cooperation with the
**DOOR PENINSULA
ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY**

will present
“THE DARK RANGER”
KEVIN POE in
“Preserving Our Dark Skies”

7:00 pm
at Crossroads

are only beginning to learn what a drastic effect this has had on nocturnal ecology.” Glare from artificial lights can also impact wetland habitats that are home to amphibians such as frogs and toads, whose nighttime croaking is part of the breeding ritual. Artificial lights disrupt this nocturnal activity, interfering with reproduction and reducing populations.

Artificial Lights Can Lead Baby Sea Turtles to Their Demise

Sea turtles live in the ocean but hatch at night on the beach. Hatchlings find the sea by detecting the bright horizon over the ocean. Artificial lights draw them away from the ocean. In Florida alone, millions of hatchlings die this way every year.

Artificial Lights Have Devastating Effects on Many Bird Species

Birds that migrate or hunt at night navigate by moonlight and starlight. Artificial light can cause them to wander off course and toward the dangerous nighttime landscapes of cities. Every year millions of birds die colliding with needlessly illuminated buildings and towers. Migratory birds depend on cues from properly timed, seasonal schedules. Artificial lights can cause them to migrate too early or too late and miss ideal climate conditions for nesting, foraging and other behaviors.

Ecosystems: Everything Is Connected

Many insects are drawn to light, but artificial lights can create a fatal attraction. Declining insect populations negatively impact all species that rely on insects for food or pollination. Some predators

exploit this attraction to their advantage, affecting food webs in unanticipated ways.

Reprinted from the International Dark Sky Association website, www.darksky.org.

Preserving Our Dark Skies

What can we do to rebalance our natural systems? Join us as DCEC and DPAS (Door Peninsula Astronomical Society) welcome The Dark Ranger, Kevin



Kevin Poe, The Dark Ranger

Poe, in discussing the importance of our dark sky in “Preserving Our Dark Skies.” Kevin, along with DPAS, will be discussing light pollution and its effects on our environment, health, energy, and so much more on **September 21, 7:00 pm at Crossroads.** Visit

our website for more details and updates for this amazing insight into our dark skies.

What Is a Dark Ranger?

Dark Rangers are the sworn enemies of light pollution who champion the preservation of natural darkness for its many benefits: ecology, human health, cultural heritage, energy conservation, astronomy literacy, etc. Though they acknowledge that artificial light is a good thing (perhaps the greatest single accomplishment of our species), too much of a good thing can easily and suddenly become a bad thing. As the original Dark Ranger, Poe has deputized (literally) over 300 individuals who, armed with science, mythology, and a fierce love for all things nocturnal, push back light pollution with education, advocacy, and engineering win-win light conservation solutions.

Money, Politics, and Pollution

Many people are aware that Northeastern Wisconsin has a very serious problem with pollution in both ground and surface water. What folks may not be aware of is how that affects their health, finances, and the local economy. Without serious changes, phosphorus contamination of the bay of Green Bay will dramatically impact Door County and all of Northeastern Wisconsin. Recently, Robert Atwell, CEO of Nicolet Bank, estimated that it will cost the people and businesses of northeastern Wisconsin around one billion dollars to attempt to reduce phosphorous in the Fox River and the bay of Green Bay.

So why is this happening now? The answer is complicated, as there are multiple contributors to the pollution. What is clear, however, is that agriculture pollution, primarily from Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), is one of the major contributors of phosphorus pollution. Poor management of millions of gallons of cow manure is to blame. Strict manure management is vital, since one pound of phosphorus in water can create up to 500 pounds of algae. Interestingly, it seems that dairy herd sizes have increased in only five Wisconsin counties in the last 30 years. Three of them are in northeastern Wisconsin: Brown, Calumet, and Kewaunee. These herd increases have come mainly from industrialized dairy CAFOs.

A single CAFO can house as many as 4,000 cows or more. Each cow produces about 18 times the waste of a human. So a CAFO with 4,000 cows produces the waste equivalent of a city of 72,000 people! The big difference is there is no waste treatment system at CAFOs, and the manure, in a liquefied form, is simply being sprayed on the ground. These figures

pertain to just one large CAFO. In Kewaunee and Door Counties, we have 18 CAFOs.

In some parts of the state, where soils are deep, this practice would not likely be a problem. But in Northeastern Wisconsin, we have very shallow soils with sometimes less than a foot of dirt to bedrock. Hence, there is very little natural filtration. On top of that, much of our rock strata is composed of fractured dolomite rock with many cracks and fissures that allow polluted water to pass through very quickly.

In Kewaunee County, a third of the homes served by private wells that have been tested, reveal water that is unsafe for human consumption. All three of the Kewaunee County rivers are impaired by phosphorus. Likewise, “dead zones,” which are areas with no oxygen, appear seasonally in the waters of the bay of Green Bay.

So where is the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and why aren't they doing something about this? Well the answer is once again complicated, but has mostly to do with politics, money, and lack of will. It's not a question of science. For example, it seems that the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau recently examined the Wisconsin DNR's wastewater permitting and enforcement practices. They found issues with staffing, procedures, and backlogs. Indeed, the audit found that the DNR did not follow its own policies when it came to overseeing municipal and industrial wastewater facilities as well as CAFOs. Specific to CAFOs, the reduction and turnover of DNR personnel is a real problem. Records indicate that from 2005 to 2015 the turnover of DNR people responsible for CAFO permitting increased from 6% to over 20% in 2014. This turnover and lack of staffing has significantly affected the number of people

available to monitor CAFO compliance. Furthermore, from 2006 to 2014 the DNR inspected only 17 of the 260 CAFOs for “substantial compliance” before reissuing renewal permits for existing operations. Incredible! Since the 1990s, DNR staffing has been declining. Some DNR staffing reductions and budget cuts occurred under Democratic leadership, but the large staff reductions and budget cuts have occurred under the Walker Administration the last five years.

Some people, however, feel that environmental rules and their enforcement are bad for business. Environmentalists and economic development need not be in conflict. Proper zoning based on science and related consistent rule enforcement helps everyone, including businesses. In Door County, where tourism is the leading industry, clean water is the key to sustaining and promoting the economy. Can you imagine Door County surrounded by polluted water? What would happen to our tourism businesses and our current way of life? This threat is real and appears to be growing. I personally believe our elected representatives, from both parties, have let us down. Indeed, both parties have contributed to this current mess.

So what can we do to address these ongoing water pollution problems? For starters, the people need to demand that the next legislature adequately funds the DNR so it can hire staff to enforce existing water pollution laws. The people need to demand that the DNR be an independent, nonpartisan agency. The DNR Secretary should be chosen by the seven citizen members of the Natural Resources Board. The Governor should not be able, as a political appointment, to choose the DNR Secretary. The agency’s decisions need to be based on hard, indisputable science, not campaign contributions and partisan politics. The DNR needs to adhere

to its own rules and policies in a consistent, transparent, and objective manner. Why are multiple judicial rulings needed in Wisconsin just to get the DNR to enforce the law?

Since the actual funding of the agency will be dealt with in the next budgetary year, the legislators we elect in November will get to vote on these matters. The topics of water quality in Northeastern Wisconsin and related DNR and CAFO rule enforcement need to be at the forefront of discussion and debate as we consider all candidates for elected office. The incumbents and challengers, regardless of their party affiliation, need to tell us exactly how they intend to better protect our precious water resources.

Steve Eatough

Excerpts and some facts taken from articles by Jim Lundstrom, Peninsula Pulse and Peter Frank, Green Bay Press Gazette.

Letter to the Editor: Why All the Surprise?

Peninsula Pulse, July 21, 2016

The latest Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau report, revealing deficiencies in the DNR’s regulation of water pollution, has evoked responses of “surprise” from various leaders, including the Natural Resources Board, Governor Walker, and those serving in the legislature.

For those of us living with the resulting contamination due to lack of enforcement, the audit lacked the element of surprise. It rather confirmed what we have said now for well over a decade. Judge Jeffrey Boldt called conditions in Kewaunee “deplorable...massive regulatory failure,” and USDA researcher

Mark Borchardt described our well water as “that which he would have expected to find in a third world country.”

Citizens continue to remain repetitively exposed to behaviors that pollute and poison where they live, due to the current system of “voluntary compliance” that has not only failed our state, but failed us nationally. Its aftermath scarred the landscape—leaving behind reams of waterways included on the impaired waters list, multi-million dollar pollution clean-up costs, and waters that are neither fit to drink or recreate in.

The systematic failings of the DNR, made public for years now, leave no room for “surprise.” Cuts in budget and the gutting of the DNR, including the DNR Science Department, have been indicative of the inner workings of the current administration and the failings of government to protect both the environment and human health.

Secretary Stepp’s address in an Opinion piece in early May marginalized Kewaunee’s crisis, and included the statement that our nitrate problem is shared by many communities, and “is consistent with statewide averages in agricultural areas and areas without sewers.”

What Secretary Stepp fails to recognize is that those high nitrates shared throughout the state exceed EPA standards for safety, and deem one’s water undrinkable. The day after Stepp’s opinion appeared in the paper, the news broke of rotavirus and salmonella found in 11 wells in our county, and the concern that two schools were in the radius where possible contamination could occur. Stepp’s parting words were a particularly stinging slap, claiming that “the public should also know we will continue to use the full extent of our authority to pursue violations that happen on the ground.” The audit, and

ongoing contamination in Kewaunee, reveals otherwise.

Embracing the concept of “when bad becomes normal” Stepp did less in her statement to diminish the problems we have in Kewaunee, but rather highlighted the problem of high nitrates which exists throughout the state.

The reduction in budget and cuts to DNR staff occurred while “streamlined permitting” and “collaboration” with industry-minded individuals were touted by the agency. Former Deputy Secretary of the DNR, Matt Moroney, left no room for surprise or confusion on the agency’s direction, when he stated in 2013 that: “The DNR is no longer a strong advocate one way or another on environmental issues” (Feb. 28, 2013, Agri-View).

While cuts in both budget and staff ensued, permit streamlining for CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) exploded in the state, with their number now reaching 282—and many more permits awaiting approval. Many existing CAFOs are also seeking expansions, expansions which further leave communities shouldering the burden of the external costs of these operations, and the resulting contamination of the land, air and water where we live – a constant and continuous threat to property values, quality of life, and human health.

For far too long the DNR has been negligent in its responsibilities to Wisconsin’s citizens and its beautiful natural resources, formerly the envy of the nation—Wisconsin, the destination the famous logo from the ’70s, heralded as the place to “escape” to.

While people can muddy the waters with debate, the undrinkable, unswimmable, unfishable waters of northeast Wisconsin

tell the bigger story – the unsurprising truth.

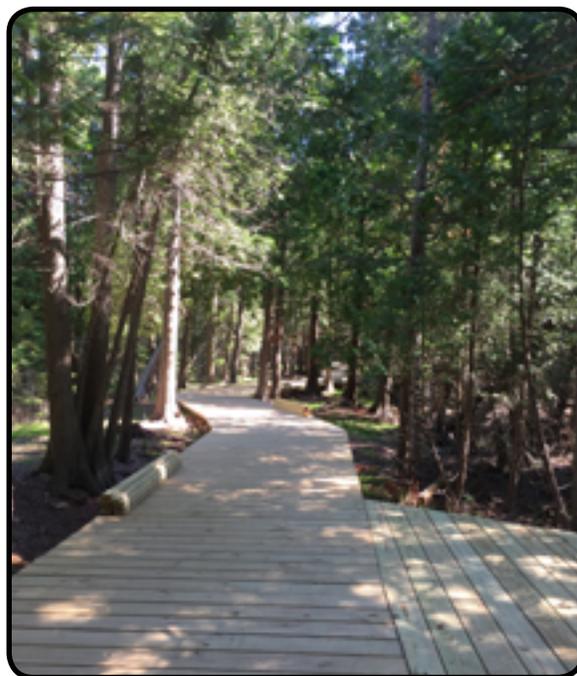
*Nancy Utesch
Kewaunee, WI*

Under the Boardwalk— The Ridges Sanctuary

A great mystery is being unraveled “under the boardwalk” at the Ridges Sanctuary. The goals? To discover the growth needs of the 26 known species of orchids living within the Ridges Sanctuary; to restore these orchids in larger numbers within the sanctuary; and to publish a guide of the protocols necessary to propagate orchids from the wild. This will be no simple task.

I had a nice talk and walk with a past high school student of mine from Sevastopol, Brian Forest. Brian was Door County’s geologist for a number of years and now is the land management specialist for the Ridges. We met at the Ridges’ new nature center, the Cook-Albert Fuller Center, a wonderful building that is now the new welcoming center for visitors to the sanctuary. There Brian filled me in on the status of their orchid restoration project. Orchids are one of the largest families of plants on the planet, and they are like the miners’ canary warning us of environmental changes. This project has caught the eye of a number of interested groups that wish to participate in this great endeavor. They include: The Smithsonian’s North American Orchid Conservation Center, Illinois College, Wabash College, UW-GB, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chicago Botanic Gardens, Kew Gardens of England, Stantec Engineering of Canada, as well as the Ridges staff. The efforts and collaboration of these groups, it is hoped, will be the model for other regional groups in North America to follow.

The Ridges model, in part, came from the Atlanta Botanic Garden Orchid Conservation Model of the Southeast. The Ridges model is unique because there are so many orchids concentrated in a relatively small area of



Ridges Sactuary

Photo by Paul Leline

the Ridges Sanctuary. Also, it has a new boardwalk along which the orchid restoration efforts will be located and easily accessible to scientists and visitors alike. Brian took me for a walk along the new 1,800 foot boardwalk and showed me some of the plantings of the 1,400 orchids that they propagated to start their investigation. The efforts and manpower required seems daunting to me. However, there are many scientists eager to do the work and volunteers to help out, including graduate students from colleges and scientists from other organizations.

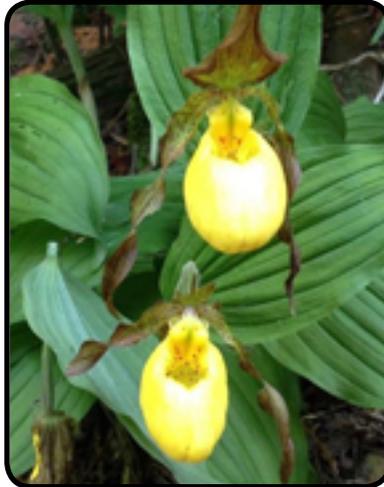
The orchid restoration project is structured into 10 basic groupings: 1) the orchid survey, 2) creating a seed bank, 3) mycorrhizal fungi associations, 4) pollinators, 5) propagation, 6) creating germinated seedling greenhouses, 7) orchid restoration on 16 acres of a “living

laboratory,” 8) creating a best management plan, 9) creating an educational program along the boardwalk and the sanctuary, and 10) student involvement, including a student exchange program with Kew Gardens of England.

The orchid survey requires finding and mapping where orchids are living within the Ridges right now. Creating a seed bank requires collecting seedpods, which hold thousands of seeds, and drying and freezing them in three different places including the Ridges, Kew Gardens and the Smithsonian.

Mycorrhizal fungi are unique to each species of orchid and are necessary for the orchids to germinate and grow. Workers will be setting fungi traps in the ground which will contain orchid seeds in a fine mesh housing. If the seeds germinate they will be sent to labs for analysis to discover what kind of fungus is associated with the seedling’s germination. To discover who the pollinators are they will set up cameras that will show any insects or other pollinators that appear on the flowers. The DNR is now doing a similar study with the Dwarf Lake Iris within the Ridges and Toft’s Point Natural Area.

Propagating orchids will be a big challenge, but so far they have germinated over 1400 seeds, including seeds from the Ram’s head orchid, showy lady’s slipper, grass pink, and yellow lady’s slipper. These orchids are being used because we have the most knowledge about them to date, and that sets the stage for a successful model



Yellow Lady's Slipper
Photo by Mike Bahrke

for the future study of the other lesser known orchids. Creating greenhouses is important because space is needed for several years as the propagated seedlings grow until they are ready for outplanting.

The restoration efforts for the orchids are some of the most ambitious in North America. Monitoring the protocols, measuring the success rates, studying the canopy cover, measuring the lighting, soil moisture, pH, fungal associations, air quality, and other factors all have to be part of the repopulating process. All of this is being used to develop and teach others about best management practices as well as monitoring the health of an ever-changing environment.

The new Ridges boardwalk is definitely worth taking a stroll along and seeing the tremendous effort that is being applied to this natural area in Bailey’s Harbor. Students will learn valuable information for the future of orchids and land management practices. The Ridges plans to work with teachers and students at the high school and college levels to establish educational and exchange programs both locally and internationally.

The Ridges Orchid Restoration Project is an important undertaking with important information to be discovered. If you would like to get involved with this project you can donate time, housing, materials for a library, or financial support by contacting the Ridges or visiting their website at RidgesSanctuary.org.

Paul Leline

If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically, please email us at adm.dcec@gmail.com.

Impressions of a Twelve-Year-Old

Hello, my name is Mathew Floyd. I am 12 years old, and my favorite class in school is everything. When I grow up I want to live in a house with a barn in the back. In the barn I want a pig named Bob and a cow named Moo. I want to have a metal shed to weld and blow glass in with my father. My mom and dad would live in a cabin by our house, which I would pay for with my Marian biologist money, and I would never have to sleep. In the world called “reality,” I just want to be a welder and have a cow named Moo.

One of my concerns is that the people are starving in Africa, yet people are dying of obesity in America. People don’t even think what some people would give for food. We also use so much electricity that the polar ice cap is melting, causing the adorable polar bear to die off!

On a more local level, my main concern is the invasive species called Tall Manna Grass. It steals the nutrients from other plants, the ground, and the water. This causes it to grow quite fast, which lets it overtake streams and small rivers. Its shoots and seedlings are also toxic to all animals, including humans. If we drink water that has tall manna grass in it we can get sick as well.

I would say I worry more about things like animals, plants, and people rather than water and air problems. I say that because we can purify water and extract pollution from air. Also people and animals have feelings unlike air and water.

If plants went extinct, then we would all die of oxygen loss. If all the animals died, we would not have any meat to eat which would cause us to eat plants which would cause fewer plants. Plants couldn’t grow as fast

because of less fertilizer from animals, which would cause people to die and go crazy from starvation and oxygen loss. If humans went extinct then some animals that have become reliant on humans for food and shelter would become extinct. So if all humans, animals, or plants died from diseases, then the world would be destroyed or changed forever.

Asian carp are a serious problem. They are a fish from, of course, Asia. They were brought by people to clean pond algae. A flood came and swept them into the Mississippi River. They bred rapidly and are currently trying to get into Lake Michigan. The government put up an electric barrier to keep them out. Still, they get past sometimes. If too many get past, they will take over and destroy the ecosystem. They lower the water quality and kill sensitive fish.

When they get startled, Asian carp jump out of the water. They have thick skulls and do



Jumping Asian carp Photo by Jim Weber

attack people. One report was a guy that saw something in the water. He looked at it over the side of his boat but it was gone. He started his boat and he saw it again, so he looked over the boat again. Then a monster 4 foot Asian silver head carp jumped out and hit the guy in the face. His skull shattered and a fragment got stuck in his head and killed him. I don’t know about you, but I think that would be pretty terrifying if Asian carp were in Lake Michigan. They are right at our back doorstep in Chicago.

For me, the hard part is trying to find what

to do for the environment. Some of the younger community has grown expectations for getting rewards. So raising money to help the environment is boring because there's no reward, even though they know it's good for the community. But remember, just telling someone is one more inch to success.

Mathew Floyd

Mathew is a student in Door County who is dedicated to learning about environmental issues and performing community service.

The Administrator's Introduction

It is mind boggling to me that three months have already passed since I joined DCEC as the organization's administrator. It has been a busy time getting to know our board members, attending our currently scheduled programs, catching up on past meeting minutes and newsletters, as well as looking at the board's future vision and seeing ways of implementing it. For some of you there is no need for introductions, and for some I am sure the question comes to mind, "Who is this new person joining DCEC?" Since beginnings are a good place to start, I was born in Chicago, Highland Park, IL to be exact. I lived there until I was ten and my family moved to Lincolnshire, IL. I have been coming to Door

County since I was five and spent the majority of my summers as a youth living in Fish Creek while my parents ran the Blue Willow, now known as the Cookery. I returned to DC briefly to run a business in 1988 and came back permanently in 1991 to open my own businesses in Egg Harbor, Sister Bay and Highland Park, IL. Jump forward 19 years and you would have found me at Habitat for Humanity. After six years developing and managing the ReStore I am now here, at DCEC, meeting the challenges of our environmental issues while preserving our natural resources.

We all, at some point, take stock of our lives, where we are, and where we are going. In that reflection I have also looked at the things that matter most to me, and what are the most important things I want for my son, Alexander. You could say his consciousness of our planet and environment drew me to



A visit with Nature Cat

DCEC. He has influenced my decision to take an active role in being a part of the change we wish to see in the world. With that come the challenges many parents face in trying to raise environmentally conscious children in an ever changing world, focused in many wrong directions. It is frustrating to have to tell him he shouldn't play on the grass or has to be sure to keep his shoes on when we visit Granny's condo or the park because they have pesticide flags on the lawns. The answer to "Why?" then creates more questions. Why would people want to put poison on their lawns that is unsafe for children and pets? As he would say,

“That’s just silly.” The bees agree. I also feel *Impressions of a Twelve-Year-Old* by Mathew Floyd brings a telling snapshot of how our young people perceive our environment and their understanding of the pitfalls in the reward systems of a throwaway society.

It is because we are here “fostering the preservation of Door County...not only of its inhabitants, but for generations to come,” that some of the priorities I see for our organization are to develop it into a resource for environmental education for our young people, to be a place for people and communities to voice their environmental concerns in Door County, and together work to find ways to advocate and solve them. I hope to accomplish these goals by continuing programs that enlighten, educate, and advocate the preservation of Door County’s natural resources and perform advocacy work to support these goals.

We are currently examining light pollution in Door County and have been working on “A Dark Sky” program for later this month. We are excited to have some of our schools involved with this event. I hope it is just the beginning of many programs we can bring to children to plant the seeds that will foster the preservation of our county. I encourage you to write us with your thoughts and environmental issues, or to share your ideas and solutions. Keep the conversation going, be the example, and together we can achieve our goals.

Leslie Boden

*Write Leslie at adm.dcec@gmail.com
or visit us at www.dcec-wi.org.*

Thank You, Roy, for Your Legacy

When I think of Roy Lukes, I am reminded of a saying I used to have on my computer monitor for years, “Please think about your legacy, because you’re writing it every



Roy Lukes Photo courtesy of the Peninsula Pulse

day” (Gary Vanderchuck). The sad reality is, most of us, in our busy lives, find ourselves needing such reminders. Roy just lived his legacy.

Roy’s contributions to Door County through his environmental advocacy, teachings as a Southern Door science teacher, and writings for numerous publications and newspapers are endless. He was the fiber that wove the tapestry of people who have made the preservation of and education about nature in Door County their life calling. For those so fortunate to have known him, his presence will be forever felt in all the places he touched, like the Ridges Sanctuary, The Clearing, and Toft Point.

We wish to thank Roy, not only for all of the contributions and education he has given us, but also for setting the bar. We are building our legacies each day. What will our contributions be to the future generations in Door County in carrying on such a legacy?

Leslie Boden

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