

THE ICF BUGLE

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World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

Choices for Wisconsin:

The Crane Hunting Proposal

*By Jim Harris, Deputy Director, and
George Archibald, Director*

Over the past 26 years, the International Crane Foundation (ICF) has based both thought and action on the belief that people must work together. The cranes — these elegant, ancient ambassadors of goodwill — have helped us address the threats of a modern world. In distant regions, we have sought common ground and built alliances for conservation among diverse groups. . . across the Russian-China border, along the crane flyways through Pakistan, and where the cranes winter in the Demilitarized Zone of Korea.

The April 12th vote of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, 2,465 to 1,162 in favor of a limited Sandhill Crane hunt, is advisory in nature and an expression of interest by one constituency in the state. The vote highlights a growing conflict close to home. How does one apply the lessons and values of 26 years?

The simplest answer is that ICF has a special responsibility as a source of reliable information. ICF has studied cranes in Wisconsin for over 20 years, in large part with the help of thousands of volunteers in the annual Sandhill



Sandhill Cranes are now a common sight in Wisconsin. The recent proposal to hunt cranes, unfortunately, threatens to provoke a bitter dispute involving hunters, farmers, and many others who care about cranes. Over the long-term, loss of habitat poses the greatest threat to cranes in the state. Most crane marshes are privately owned, and most cranes feed on farmlands. Therefore farmers and other landowners, many of them hunters, play a critical role for conservation. ICF can best fulfill its mission — to protect cranes and their habitats for the future — by continuing to welcome all people involved in conservation. We will use our 20+ years of crane research in Wisconsin to support informed participation in policy decisions by as many people as possible. Photo by Mark Romesser.

Crane Count. Our research provides the best available means of evaluating the status of this population and the likely impacts of a hunt. Our expertise and objectivity on this issue have enabled us to inform and interact with all the diverse groups involved in crane issues. As scientists who believe that hunting and other conservation choices should be made by society as a whole, based upon the best science, we need to retain our objectivity.

ICF is also a conservation organization. Conservation action arises out of strong values. We believe that threats to cranes and their ecosystems are accelerated as people become sharply divided. In Wisconsin, and most other parts of the world, the chief threat to cranes is loss of wetland habitat. Certainly the decision for Wisconsin, whether or not to hunt cranes, will depend on expression of deeply personal beliefs and choices. But the long-term survival of cranes, and people, depends on nurturing our shared values and a vision that can bridge even strong differences. There is real danger that a bitter dispute about crane hunting in Wisconsin could alienate farmers and many other landowners, who have a primary role in safeguarding the habitats that cranes and many other birds need to survive. ICF is actively engaged as advocates for the long-term needs of the cranes and for the rural landscape on which they depend.

First, we are committed to obtaining accurate scientific information about cranes. Beginning in 1991, we started studying cranes in central Wisconsin because we realized that increasing crane numbers could eventually lead to conflicts with farmers. Our research has helped to define the problem — when damage occurs, where, and to what extent - and to develop preventive measures.

Fall surveys, coordinated by government agencies, provide a rough estimate of the overall size of the midwest crane population, and thus provide a basis for the hunting proposal. But the ICF-spon-



These Sarus Cranes in India, and many other cranes throughout the world, live in farm areas. Cranes often forage on waste grain after the harvest, but in some areas cranes damage growing crops. North America, where most crane habitats occur on private lands, has an unusual tradition of conservation leadership by sports hunters. The issue of crane hunting in America, where many farmers and conservationists enjoy hunting, poses policy choices very different from many parts of the world. ICF photo.

sored Midwest Crane Count has yielded a much more detailed record of changes in crane distribution and numbers. Crane Count data have therefore allowed scientists critically to evaluate one of the alleged reasons for a crane hunt, the need to control a rapidly growing crane population. Our data indicate, in two ways, that crane numbers in the state are not likely to keep growing. First, crane populations in the eight most densely populated counties of

damage issue. The worst crop damage by cranes occurs to corn just after it germinates in spring. A fall hunt would not solve the crop damage problem unless the crane population was dramatically reduced. To be effective, a spring hunt would need to occur at the time that cranes and many other wetland birds are nesting; even so, hunting might merely shift foraging cranes from one farm to another. Our research points to a more di-



Right: Cranes have greatly benefited from the mix of farms and wetlands through much of Wisconsin. ICF's active, scientific role - without declaring for or against a hunt — has allowed us to work effectively with landowners to solve the problem of crane damage to crops. Our research indicates that hunting is not likely to reduce crop damage. As Wisconsin decides whether or not its cranes should be hunted, the deep affection many people feel for cranes must be part of the discussion. Photo by Jim Harris.

rect solution to crop damage: use of a repellent on the seed corn that effectively stops cranes from eating young corn.

From a scientist's perspective, a crane hunt could not be compatible with conservation in many parts of the world. Most cranes are rare or declining, and their habitats deeply threatened. Most countries have very limited capacity to monitor impacts of hunting, or to control a hunt once legalized. None of these conditions apply to Wisconsin.

Second, we are committed to ensuring that public discussion of crane hunting is based on accurate information. The resolution presented by the Wisconsin Conservation Congress was inaccurate, offering the crane hunt as a solution to crop damage by cranes. Our research indicates that a crane hunt, as proposed, will not solve the damage problem. Alternatives to hunting are more promising. ICF researchers have been meeting with state policy makers and the media to explain our research. Our researchers are speaking often to farming groups as well as other organizations involved in conservation. Our mailings and website are placing our research results in the hands of members, crane counters, and the general public.

Third, we believe that the best decision on crane hunting will occur with maximum involvement of an informed public. We will make sure our members, and the public, know the key steps in the public process for discussion and decision on a crane hunt for Wisconsin. We urge our members to be active in this process.

Our fourth commitment is to work with farmers, and other individuals and organizations, to find an effective strategy for preventing crop damage by cranes. Given the dependence of Sandhill Cranes on Wisconsin farmlands, crane conservationists need to work with and for farmers. Thus, ICF must remain objective and fair. We can hardly expect farmers to trust or rely upon our proposals for solving crop damage if our main agenda is to oppose hunting of Sandhill Cranes. Our stance has enabled us to work on cranes with more than 50 farming families in central Wisconsin. The collaboration has taught us much, not only about the localized but significant damage cranes cause to some farmers, but about

land-use issues and the pressures upon wetlands in agricultural areas.

Solutions for damage in Wisconsin will be important for crane-farmer conflicts elsewhere in the United States and abroad. Most of the world's crane populations depend significantly on farmlands.

Our fifth commitment echoes our work of the past 26 years: we will strive to unite people on behalf of the cranes, because we believe the combined efforts of everyone are needed to ensure a place for wildlife. Today in Wisconsin, most cranes live on private lands, often farmlands. The decisions these land owners make about their wetlands, meadows, and croplands — about conservation of cranes and other wildlife — will shape the future of the state's crane population. It is imperative that crane conservationists build a vision sensitive to and inclusive of landowners, many of them farmers and hunters, so that we work effectively together.

ICF, in fulfilling its mission, needs to welcome everyone interested in cranes. Landowners and hunters have often been at the forefront of efforts to conserve America's waterbirds and wetland habitats. Cranes cannot afford the message that hunters are not crane conservationists. We will continue to nurture alliances among hunters, farmers, and other conservationists for wildlife.

The hunting issue is highly important to Wisconsin, because of the spectacular presence of cranes and their comeback from near extinction in the state. Our choice at ICF is to do our best to facilitate an informed decision by the public and a strong, inclusive process. We hope, through this process, that diverse groups will choose to understand each other and, whatever the individual differences, to respect and build upon our common love for wildlife. ↘

Visit ICF's website to learn more about ICF's Sandhill Crane research and its implications for crop damage control and crane hunting in Wisconsin. Or see articles in the November 1997 and August 1996 issues of The ICF Bugle. Or, write or call ICF and ask Kate Fitzwilliams for a copy of our special mailing to Wisconsin members in April 1999. P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913 or kate.icf@baraboo.com or 608-356-9462 ext. 147

What Happens Next?

How ICF Members Can Stay Involved

The vote by the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is an early step in a long process. Approval of a crane hunt, should it ever happen, will take several years.

The Conservation Congress has been active since the mid 1930s, providing citizen input on conservation issues concerning wildlife. Conservation Congress meetings are open to all state residents, but most participants are people who hunt or fish. Though the Congress has an important advisory role, actual policy about hunting is determined by state government.

Because the Sandhill Crane is migratory, Wisconsin cannot authorize a hunt without approval from both the Mississippi and Atlantic Flyway Councils (our cranes cross from one flyway to another as they migrate to Florida). The Flyway Councils consist of representatives of the states and provinces in the flyway and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Their proposals must await the preparation of a crane management plan that covers status, trends, and objectives for the midwest population, and evaluates impacts and harvest levels for a hunt.

Even if permitted by the Flyway Councils (a process that will likely take 1-2 years), a decision for hunting in Wisconsin depends on approval by the Natural Resources Board, the Department of Natural Resources, and the State Legislature. ICF will keep members informed of public hearings and also times when letters to state officials or legislators can be most effective.

Now is a good time for members to write and express their views to:

Mr. George Meyer, Secretary,
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921,
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Mr. Trygve Solberg, Chair,
Wisconsin Natural Resources Board
P. O. Box 7921,
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Your State Senator
P. O. Box 782,
Madison, WI 53707

Your State Representative
P. O. Box 8952 (if last name is A-L)
P. O. Box 8953 (if last name is M-Z)
Madison, WI 53708,



Building Community and Conservation

ON THE PRAIRIE

Curt Metne, Research Associate and Active CCSP Member

Just a few miles south of ICF, in the rolling countryside of southern Wisconsin, a 7,350-acre industrial facility rests anomalously upon the rural landscape. This is the Badger Army Ammunition Plant, one of many arms production facilities that were quickly built in the days following the United States' entry into World War II. The plant was constructed on lands once occupied by the Sauk Prairie, a large expanse of tallgrass prairie and oak savanna. Prior to European settlement, native Sauk, Fox, and Ho-Chunk people lived on and near the prairie. Beginning in the 1830s, farmers arrived to work its rich soils. Now only tiny isolated remnants of the prairie vegetation remain.

Following the opening of the Badger Plant in 1942, the facility remained active or on stand-by status, prepared to respond to the nation's defense needs. Recently, however, the U.S. Army determined that the plant was no longer required. ICF is now one of many organizations in the area seeking to develop a shared vision for these lands, based on their outstanding conservation value. As members of the Community Conservation Coalition for the Sauk Prairie, these organizations are working to involve local citizens in the decision-making process and, ultimately, in ecological restoration and other conservation activities on the land.

Situated amid some of Wisconsin's most critical natural areas, and harboring important populations of rare and declining plant and animal species, the Badger lands provide a one-time-only opportunity for innovative conservation partnerships. By combining large-scale prairie and savanna restoration, research, education, sustainable agriculture, and recreation, the coalition's vision seeks to integrate many components of land-use in the same place at the same time. In so doing, we can honor the site's rich natural and cultural history in the process.

To achieve that vision, the coalition has worked over the last two years to help shape a community consensus for conservation. Members of the coalition have undertaken scientific surveys of the lands to provide a stronger foundation of knowledge about the site. We have helped to build bridges of understanding between different interests and potential partners. We have provided information on the challenges of prairie restoration and conservation planning. We have sponsored public forums designed to bring information to citizens and decision-makers, and to stimulate



discussion of options for the future. We have undertaken a broad range of public education activities, including the commissioning and displaying of Victor Bakhtin's remarkable painting "Sauk Prairie Remembered: A Vision for the Future." We have involved an ever-broadening circle of citizens in a decision that will help determine the quality of life for themselves and for future generations.

The future of the Badger lands has yet to be determined. The coalition's vision for the site is not the only one being put forward. Competing interests recognize other values in the property and hope to redevelop the site based on those values. Are these future scenarios compatible? Are there ways to work through differences in the long-term public interest? Can creative solutions help to build new bonds between people, as well as between people and the land?

There are, of course, no easy answers to these questions. In this respect, the challenge of conservation on Wisconsin's Sauk Prairie is not so different from the challenge in other parts of the world where ICF works. Effective conservation in any setting requires the involvement of local communities. Now, close to home, we are working with our own neighbors to bring back some of the beauty, wildness, and diversity of Wisconsin's native landscape. 🐾

Previous page (L-R): Prairie Smoke evokes prairie fires that help maintain a healthy ecosystem. Restoration at ICF includes returning both species and ecological processes that ecosystems require. Photo by Barb Barzen. / "What a thousand acres of Silphiums looked like when they tickled the bellies of the Buffalo is a question never again to be answered, and perhaps not even asked." Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*. After almost 20 years of restoration efforts, ICF's prairie landscape now inspires visitors to consider this question. Come see for yourself this summer. Photo by Charles C. Bradley. / Autumn-blooming Downy Gentians require the entire growing season to flower and seed. The diversity of plants at ICF occurs over both time and space. Photo by Scott Weber.

Below: *Sauk Prairie Remembered*, by Victor Bakhtin, represents a vision of Sauk Prairie that can unite us in a process that reflects upon our past and guides our future. This painting was made possible through the generous contributions of Virginia Metcalf and Mary Yeakel.





Herfy nest building. At the Amoco Whooping Crane Exhibit, visitors have the rare and exciting opportunity to observe nesting Whooping Cranes. Photo by Gordon Dietzman.

An Eggsellent Start!

By Marianne Wellington,
ICF's Assistant Curator

Terrific news arrived at ICF on Friday, April 9. A pair of eggs was discovered in a Whooping Crane nest in Florida. This is the first egg production since the Florida Whooping Crane Reintroduction project began in 1993. The four-year-old parents were isolation reared at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in 1995. The location of the nest was being kept secret to prevent disturbance. Nine days later we were sorry to learn that the nest was found abandoned and the eggs missing. The reason is unknown, but declining water levels may have made the nest vulnerable to predators. Let's hope this pair lays again. The latest news from Florida is that a second pair has lain. Way to go Florida Whoopers!

Love is definitely in the air. Herfy and Kohler, a pair of nine-year-old Whooping Cranes, experienced their

first time egg production after their second season in the Amoco Whooping Crane Exhibit at ICF. These birds were moved to the exhibit in hopes that the beautiful wetland surroundings would enrich their courtship and potentially lead to egg production and it has. From the time they were released into the exhibit they showed signs of breeding. Jeff Gerencser, ICF's behavior specialist and Jaymi LeBrun, an ICF intern, observed the pair during early morning hours. After a few days, both birds began nest building and sitting on the nest. On April 27, an egg was discovered in their nest. Staff collected the real egg and left a *dummy* egg in the nest for the pair to incubate. Allowing the birds to practice incubating creates a stronger pair bond. They accepted this duty and sat tight even when tours filed through to watch the birds. Three days later Herfy, the female, laid her second egg. The Whooping Crane Exhibit is not only a wonderful educational display, but also a great place for the Whooping Cranes to re-capture the magic of being newlyweds! 🐦

Coming Soon to the ICF Gift Shop!

This summer, you'll see prairie plants inside and outside ICF. In July, the ICF Gift Shop will introduce its first Collector's Pin. The 1999 pin will feature the Compass Plant, a native Wisconsin prairie plant that can reach heights of 3 - 7 ft. with giant green



leaves and boisterous yellow flowers. Of course, this special pin will not be 7 ft. tall in order for you to wear it on your lapel, hat, or blouse! This pin is only available at ICF's Gift Shop during the open season so hurry in. As an ICF member you always get a 10% discount at ICF's Gift Shop.

Contributions

January 1 - March 31, 1999

GRANTS & AWARDS:

Anonymous;
Alma Doten Fund;
Aylward Family Foundation;
Betty Bamforth;
Robert Bishop;
Sara Bolz;
Brehm Fund for International Bird Conservation;
Chapman Foundation;
J. Reed & Ann Coleman;
Detroit Zoological Park;
Thomas E. II & Barbara C. Donnelley Family Fund;
Eugenie Mayer Bolz Family Foundation;
Nina Criswold;
J. French Family Foundation;
Reinhardt H. & Shirley R. Jahn Foundation;
Lux Foundation;
Mary E. Griffith Revocable Trust;
Ernst Mourmans;
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation;
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Oak Lodge Foundation;
Eric Rattering;
Jim Rogers;
Edmund A. Stanley, Jr.;
The Armand G. Erpf Fund;
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The John D. & Catherine Y. MacArthur Foundation;
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U.S. Fish &

Wildlife Service;
Bernard Wesding;
Windway Foundation;
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Lois Sluga;
St. Lucie Audubon Society.



Lufthansa
ICF's Official Airline

Attend ICF's ANNUAL MEETING September 18, 1999

Daytime and evening activities will be announced in the August Bugle.

The **ICF Bugle** is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Bugle comments or questions? Please write me at kate.icf@baraboo.com or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913

Editor: Kate Fitzwilliams

Memberships are vital to ICF. Please join or give a membership to a friend at the following annual rates:

Student or	Associate	\$100
Senior Citizen ...	Sustaining	\$250
Individual	Sponsor	\$500
Foreign	Patron	\$1,000
Family	Benefactor ...	\$2,000

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

June 19 to October 31

ICF's Art Gallery

Enjoy this year's exhibit, "The International Crane Foundation in Watercolor," by Baraboo's own Janet Flynn, award-winning watercolorist. Discover the International Crane Foundation through the eyes of an artist. The exhibit is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Meet the artist at an open house June 19 from 2:30 to 4 p.m. at ICF's Art Gallery in the lower level of the library.

Saturday, July 17

Insect Architects

From 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. you will be fascinated with the bugs that build. Join Debbie Nieuwenhuis, ICF's Seasonal Naturalist, for a presentation about bugs that make their homes on our prairie and in our wetlands. Limit: 20 participants.

Sunday, July 25

Gone Birdin'

From 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. join Korie Harder, ICF's Visitor Program Coordinator, and Jim Marrari, international birding expedition leader, for a morning program celebrating the incredibly popular hobby of birding. Don't forget to bring your binoculars and bird field guides if you have them. Limit: 30 participants.

Saturday, July 31

20,000 Bugs Under the Wetland

From 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. Debbie Nieuwenhuis will introduce you to the bugs that live both on and below the surface of Wisconsin's wetlands. Find out what really goes on in a wetland! Limit: 20 participants.

Saturday, August 28 Nature Photography Workshop

From 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. join Gordon Dietzman, ICF's Education Manager and wildlife photographer, for a Nature Photography Workshop. This hands-on workshop will help people develop their own photographic style while learning tricks to capture images of nature on film. Please call Gordon at 608-356-9462 ext. 140 for details and to register for the program.



Family Fun Day. Photo by Gordon Dietzman.

NEW FIELD ECOLOGISTS FLEDGE

This May, two ICF-supported students have completed their graduate degrees. Steven Swenson, an intern

GO TO BHUTAN WITH ICF

Experience Bhutan with George Archibald, founder and active director of ICF as your guide. Bhutan's beauty is unmatched. Known as the Cloud Kingdom, Bhutan is perched on top of the eastern Himalayas and is a refuge for both wildlife and culture. Each autumn about 400 Black-necked Cranes migrate from Tibet to spend the winter in Bhutan. This November, you have the opportunity to share the remarkable wildlife, scenery and people of Bhutan with George and two groups of ICF members. The First Group will spend one magical week in Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park and the Lumbini Crane Sanctuary at the birthplace of Buddha, and then one week in Bhutan. The Second Group will spend one week in Bhutan followed by a week in India at the famed bird sanctuary Keoladeo National Park, and the tiger sanctuary Ranthambhore National Park.

For more information about these exciting expeditions, please visit our website at www.baraboo.com/bus/icf/whowhat.htm, or contact Susan Finn, Assistant to George Archibald at 608-356-9462 ext. 118.



Crane Festival in Bhutan.

Saturday, September 11

Family Fun Day

You won't want to miss this day! Children age 11 and under are admitted free. From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. you and your family can explore ICF's site to find creepy, crawly wetland critters; learn how to make origami cranes; design your own T-shirt; create sidewalk art; and take on the challenge of a scavenger hunt. Win prizes and meet the world's cranes. No pre-registration is required!

from 1996 has obtained a Master of Science degree at Ohio State University where he examined the importance of light in shaping species abundance and distribution in savanna plant communities. Steve will return to ICF to guide our restoration work this year.

Tran Triet has just completed his Ph.D. in the Land Resources Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As if that were not challenge enough, Triet also received a Master of Science degree in Biometry (the biological application of statistics)! Triet plans to return to Viet Nam in June and initiate a joint position with ICF and the University of Ho Chi Minh City. This step will allow Triet to supervise Vietnamese graduate students, teach, and supervise ICF field projects in southeast Asia. 🐦

To pre-register or to find out more about our on-site events, check out our website or call the education department at 608-356-9462, ext. 127.



Always Welcome by Janet Flynn

PURE PRAIRIE!

It's a Prairie Party to dedicate our new trail - and you're invited!

Do you love native plants, rolling landscapes and scenic strolls on the prairie path? If so, join us on Saturday July 31st for an exclusive event at ICF. You'll help us dedicate a new prairie trail, walk the trail with prairie experts, peruse the artwork of artist Janet Flynn, enjoy a reading at the Whooping Crane amphitheater and top the evening off with a casual dinner at twilight. Space is limited so reserve your spot today!

Date & Time: July 31, 1999 at 4 p.m.

Dress: Casual & sturdy walking shoes

Cost: \$30. per person (includes guided walk, dinner & ICF collector pin)

For more information, contact Betsy Didrickson at 608-356-9462 ext. 124 or e-mail library.icf@baraboo.com

Name: _____

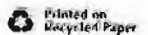
Mailing address: _____

I would like to purchase _____ tickets to the Prairie Picnic @ \$30. each for a total of \$ _____. I am enclosing a check made payable to: International Crane Foundation.

Mail to: International Crane Foundation, E-11376 Shady Lane Rd., P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913.

The name tags for my party should read:

Janet Flynn, an accomplished watercolorist from Baraboo, WI, spent last summer painting at ICF for her 1999 show, "The International Crane Foundation in Watercolor." Janet has captured the pure prairie with her brush and the true characters of the cranes with her colors. Meet the artist on Saturday, June 19 from 2:30 - 4 p.m. for an open house in ICF's Art Gallery in the lower level of the Ron Sauvey Memorial Library.



International Crane Foundation

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Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913-0447 cranes@baraboo.com
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