

THE ICF

# BUGLE

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May 2001

World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

## Conservation Technology:

*How computers are helping to save crane species around the world.*

By Dorn Moore, GIS Analyst



1960

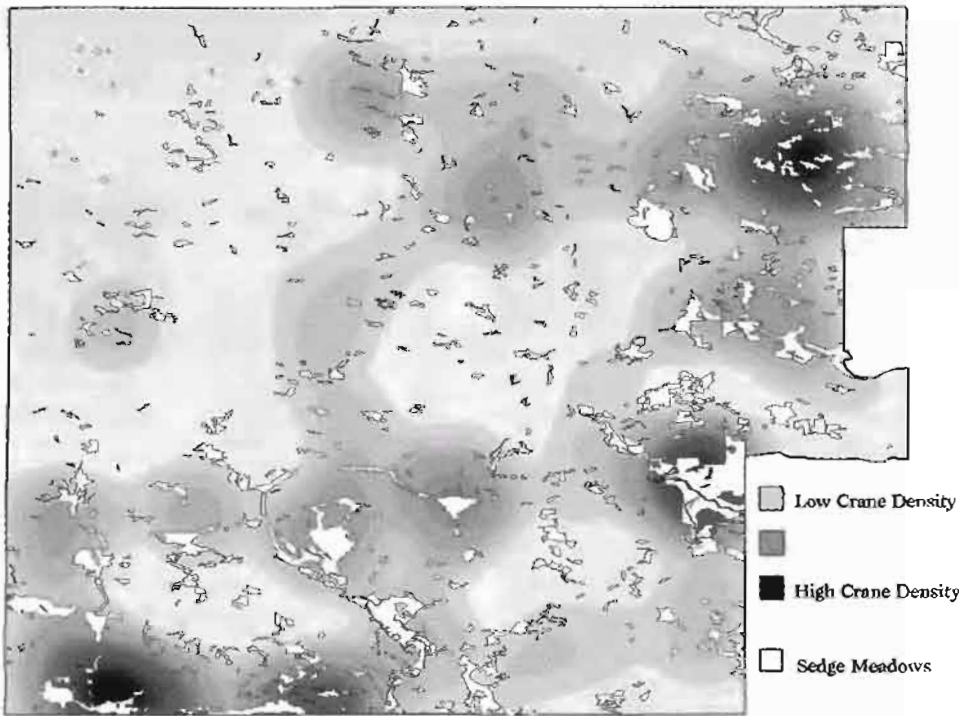


2000

Whenever I tell people that I'm the GIS Analyst for the International Crane Foundation (ICF), I am invariably asked, "What does that mean?" My usual response is that I make maps with computers. Although this answer gives most people a basic idea of my job, it fails to express the more important aspects of what I do every day. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) integrate data and geography to help us understand how disparate information interacts in space and time. Maps are often the most illustrative way to explain these complicated relationships, and at ICF, GIS allows us to focus on three things. We can measure land use over a broad area and integrate this information with other data. Secondly, using things like satellite imagery, we can use GIS to measure change over time. Finally, mapping facilitates education and understanding of complex information by helping us to recognize spatial patterns, something our human brains recognize well but express with difficulty. Here are some examples of how we are using GIS at ICF.

In southern Africa, we are interested in how large dams have affected the vegetation communities of the Zambezi Delta, especially the wetland habitats of endangered Wattled Cranes and other wetland species. In order to study the whole delta, satellite images and aerial photographs easily provide coverage of an area that would not be possible using traditional methods from the ground. GIS also enables us to

Satellite images, like this one of the Zambezi River Delta, describe the distribution of vegetation and land forms over large areas. They can also quantify ecological and morphological changes over time. Examine the changes in coastal dunes and mangrove where the river channel has shifted its course from 1960 (aerial photo inset) to 2000 (detailed satellite inset). Over 40 years this change has been dramatic even though alterations between any two consecutive years would not likely be measurable.



*We can compare data from our annual crane count with wetland maps created by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to correlate how different wetland communities influence nesting cranes. Pictured here is the density of breeding crane pairs throughout Marquette County, Wisconsin as they relate to sedge meadows. These data were compiled and analyzed by Kathleen Fullin, an ICF intern in 1998.*

study ecosystem change over time. Using archival aerial photographs and recent satellite images, Rich Beilfuss and I created historic and current land cover maps. The historic map provides a base for restoring the Zambezi Delta through improved water management. Whereas current satellite imagery allows us to assess the present environmental conditions in the delta, satellite images may be used in the future to evaluate our restoration efforts.

Research Associate, Su Liying, has used GIS to integrate Wisconsin land cover with Crane Count data. Her work identifies how various environmental factors benefit Sandhill Cranes. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources shares their land cover data that classifies the amount of different

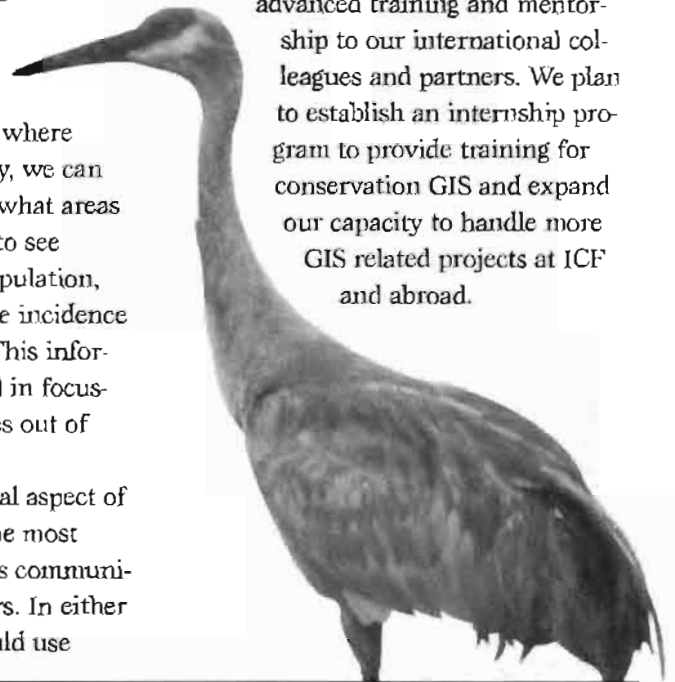
land uses (i.e., agriculture, urban, wetland) across the state. Liying's research has identified Sandhill preference for wetlands in close association with agricultural areas where forests are rare. Significantly, we can use these data to recognize what areas of the state are more likely to see increases in the Sandhill population, which in turn influences the incidence of crop damage by cranes. This information will be instrumental in focusing deterrents to keep cranes out of crops in the future.

Perhaps the least technical aspect of GIS, mapping often plays the most important role by helping us communicate complex issues to others. In either of the examples above, I could use

charts and graphs to analyze and explain our conclusions. A myriad of graphs, however, fails to demonstrate the complicated spatial patterns that you see. A map is one of the best tools we can use to communicate the actual relationships among birds, water, and plants.

The future of GIS at ICF is set to integrate this evolving technology into more of our research than ever before. At Poyang Lake (China) we hope to use satellite imagery and land cover mapping to identify potential impacts on aquatic vegetation due to development. The health of this vegetation, food for wintering Siberian Cranes, will determine whether Siberian Cranes will survive in our more crowded future. Also in China, we obtained a grant for GIS software to be used at Cao Hai where significant efforts have been made to protect wetlands through community participation. We also hope to develop our capacity to provide

advanced training and mentorship to our international colleagues and partners. We plan to establish an internship program to provide training for conservation GIS and expand our capacity to handle more GIS related projects at ICF and abroad.



## Making it happen...

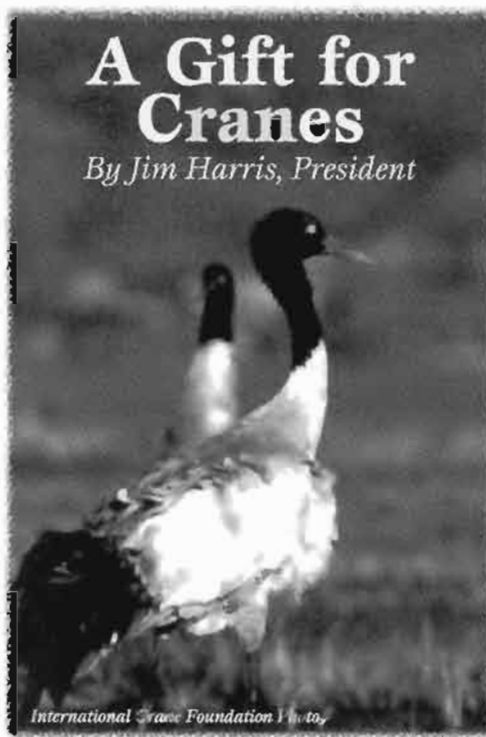
In 1995, ICF developed a GIS program with the help of the Conservation Technology Support Program (CTSP) and support from the Sand County Foundation. We started with one part-time associate and some basic computer equipment. Today, both our facilities and staff have evolved greatly. The technology and globally available data has also expanded, forcing us to continually update our software and hardware. Luckily, we have survived with generous donations from companies and organizations that recognize the value of our work. Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), the company

responsible for one of the best and most popular GIS software packages, supports a significant discount program for organizations like ICF. ESRI has supported our work since 1995. Hewlett Packard, Trimble and other hardware providers have donated their equipment to keep our lab going over the past six years through the CTSP. Finally in 1999, ERDAS, the maker of one of the most robust satellite imagery processing software packages, made a significant grant. All of these organizations have been instrumental in allowing us to integrate GIS as a tool for ecosystem conservation wherever cranes occur.

*Not long ago, Bob and Susan Bishop of Connecticut gave ICF \$33,500 to begin an endowment for Black-necked Cranes.* This donation has been invested with our other endowment funds, professionally managed by Hotchkiss & Associates. ICF will be able to draw 5% (\$1,675) per year income from this gift to support field conservation programs.

How much money is that really? Questions of money no longer seem simple to me, not after traveling so frequently between continents, cultures, and economies. Money should be valued for what it can do. In Baraboo, I know how much electricity \$1,675 can buy, or how many weeks of staff time. Yet in Black-necked Crane country – the arid grasslands of Tibet with air so thin one gasps walking up a small hill, or the mountain valleys with slightly thicker air in Bhutan where the cranes descend in winter – the value of money is magnified.

With the Bishop's kind donation, ICF each year can support a Chinese or Tibetan scientist in the field for months. Yet even within central Asia, ICF finds different economies. When we began our project at Cao Hai Nature Reserve seven years ago, we proposed to give village families \$100 grants to start businesses compatible with nature conservation. Chinese officials and biologists, all living in cities not so far away, claimed that nothing could be changed for \$100. No doubt true in the Chinese cities. We Americans, trying to work utterly outside of our own context, had no response. But fortunately we asked the farmers what they thought. For a poor villager at Cao Hai, \$100 represented an immense opportunity. Our entire project at Cao Hai – that has turned the conflicts over wetland resources vital to people and to wintering Black-necked Cranes into cooperation, prospering farmers, and growing numbers of cranes – began with \$100 grants provided by the Trickle Up Program of New York.



*ICF will put income from the new Black-necked Crane Conservation Fund directly to work for these cranes in China and Bhutan. Endowment gifts can generate dramatic ongoing results overseas, because ICF supports local level activities in Asia and Africa where small amounts of money go a long way.*

Conservation must operate on a global scale. Yet only in some confused way do I understand the immensity of the modern world where time and distance have been transformed by technology and money. I do understand that the face of earth seems to be changing faster and faster, and that part of the reason for vanishing wetlands and falling forests is the economic reach of my own country. Even in tiny restaurants beside the road to Cao Hai, I find cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon, one of the beers that made Milwaukee famous. Every time I see them, I gain an odd, quick feeling of home. And I remember that the ease of my travels to China, and the opportunity ICF and others have to help balance preserving the wild with enhancing human lives, are also thanks to the global economy.

I like working at ICF because our mission – safeguarding “just” 15 crane species and the places where they live – inspires understanding and connection in a world that can feel over-

whelming. The global economy makes my head spin, and global biodiversity (to be honest) sometimes spins my head too. But the fortunes and fates of 15 species of cranes have a human scale, even though these birds inhabit five continents and countless threatened ecosystems.

I think most of us work at ICF because we have never given up hoping to change the world. I suspect that spark of hope likewise motivates most of our members, who love to hear the stories of cranes and our efforts to save them. We see the impact of ICF programs for Black-necked Cranes at Cao Hai, in Bhutan, on the Tibetan Plateau. These stories of cranes measure our success at making the world a better place. ICF offers each member direct participation in events on the other side of earth.

That disconnect between global and village economies provides a small organization like ICF a wonderful opportunity. At present, ICF is working directly in 21 countries, while our network of colleagues is active in dozens more countries. Via our own projects and the efforts of our colleagues, a donation mailed to Baraboo, Wisconsin can go to work directly in one of those village economies. ICF reports results back to the donors. Indeed, reflecting that impact back to you is one of ICF's most important commitments.

As a one-time gift, \$1,675 is important. An endowment gift, like the Bishops' for Black-necked Cranes, will go on making a difference year after year. Better still, the Bishops intend to add to their endowment fund for Black-necked Cranes over the next two years.

ICF is all about the cranes. At the same time, ICF is all about connecting people who care, via the network radiating out from Baraboo, to the cranes and those special crane places where small investments now can make a world of difference. Just ask any farmer at Cao Hai.

gentle breezes and embracing rays of sun at sunrise, our anticipatory whispers of conversation my ears tilted toward the east, eyes fixed on the Sandhill Crane is equaled only by the awe ins

## Saving la Gr

By Korie M. Klink,  
Visitor Programs Coordinator

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) has actively supported crane conservation, education and research activities on the island of Cuba and the neighboring Isle of Youth since 1995. The first studies of the Cuban Sandhill Crane were conducted in the early 1950's by an American doctor, Lawrence Walkinshaw. His work on the Isle of Youth resulted in preliminary documentation of the birds' ecology.

Although the Sandhill Crane is the most abundant crane species (population estimated at over 500,000 birds), the Cuban Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis nesiotis*) is classified as critically endangered. Endemic to Cuba, the Cuban Sandhill Crane, or *la grulla cubana*, depends upon open grasslands and savannas for survival. While other crane species around the globe are threatened by the loss of wetland areas, it appears the Cuban Sandhills are primarily threatened by the loss of these dry, upland habitats.

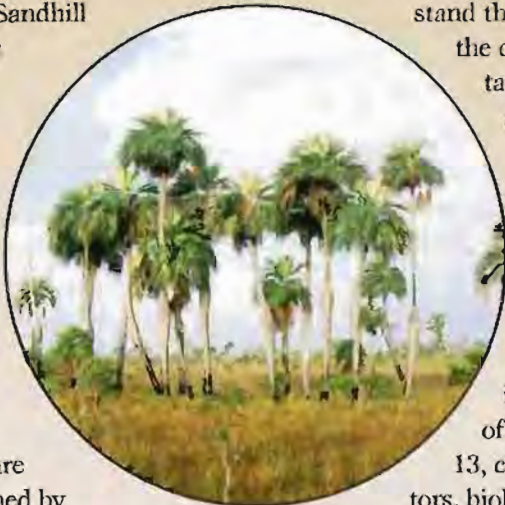
In the past six years, ICF has sponsored five expeditions to Cuba to help our Cuban colleagues with their crane research and educational efforts. Mrs. Xiomara Galves, who is currently pursuing her PhD, has led these efforts. Xiomara remembers hosting ICF Trustees George Archibald and Sam

Evans on their first trip to Cuba in the 1990s and showing them the only signs of the cranes she could find – their footprints. Today, management of much of ICF's work in Cuba has been a product of the remarkable efforts of ICF Trustee, Tom Hoffmann.

Because of the extensive and continuing work of Xiomara and her colleagues, 13 crane populations and over 600 individuals have been surveyed and identified. In early April of 2001 her team captured ten Cuban Sandhill Cranes at their watering areas, and fitted them with radio transmitters. This breakthrough is allowing Xiomara to follow the movements and activities of these elusive birds to under-

stand the relationships of the cranes to their habitats throughout their annual cycle.

ICF's 2001 Cuban Expedition took place from February 4-14, and provided a small group of Americans new insight into the heart of Cuba. The group of 13, comprised of educators, biologists, photographers, a veterinarian, and a GIS/mapping specialist, spent most of the trip on the Isle of Youth, near the Los Indios Ecological Reserve. Because the largest known population of Cuban Sandhills (about 170 birds) makes this 3500 hectare reserve their home, it is an excellent location for extensive crane observations, research and environmental education programs.



With ICF's help, the Sandhill Crane is surviving.



Art by

Temporary crane tattoos adorned bodies of the young and old Cuban Sandhill Crane at the Los Indios Ecological Reserve.

Since 1995, an international art exchange, *Las Grullas... Cranes... Bird of Peace... Connecting Peoples and Countries*™ has individuals taking part in the 2001 exchange.

If you are a teacher or naturalist interested in contact Korie at 608-356-9462 ext. 127.

Research so far has focused on habitat use and preferences of the Cuban Sandhill. An extensive mapping effort to characterize the habitat is being done using satellite imagery and maps developed by Cuban biologists. The next step is to take

enveloping us, our small group ventures into the pristine silence of a Cuban  
 sation soon hushed by the distant music of crane bugles. I stand stationary,  
 the horizon. On this trip- my second to Cuba- my eagerness to see the Cuban  
 vired in me by the beauty of my surroundings.

# ulla Cubana



birds, the Los Indios Ecological Reserve on the Isle of  
 come to the largest population of the elusive Cuban  
 Crane. Spotting these cranes, like the one in the middle of  
 graph, can be a challenge because they blend in with the  
 trees.  
 Photos far left and above by Michael Forsick, 17



anly Vicra, age 13, Cuba  
 like, celebrating the Crane Festival and the presence of the  
 es de la Paz... Juntande Los Pueblos y Los Paises, or  
 s flourished, with nine American schools and several indi-

in joining future Cuban expeditions,

these maps and create a comprehensive dig-  
 ital map of Cuba and the Isle of Youth. The  
 digital map will allow biologists to identify  
 vegetation types and cover, as well as criti-  
 cal areas of crane habitat. The information  
 provided in these maps will aid in nest site

characterization, analysis of telemetry  
 data, territory delineation, prescribed  
 burn mapping, endemic species man-  
 agement, and potential habitat restora-  
 tion work. These mapping techniques  
 will help many other species as well,  
 including the endangered Cuban  
 crocodile and the  
 Cuban parrot.

**The environmen-  
 tal education  
 program has also  
 developed into an  
 extensive and inspi-  
 rational interaction  
 between American  
 and Cuban educa-  
 tors.** The education

work is centered  
 around a week long  
 Crane Festival, where  
 communities, govern-  
 ment officials and schools surrounding  
 significant crane areas celebrate the  
 presence of cranes and other endan-  
 gered and endemic species. The festival  
 also spotlights student and teacher  
 workshops, presentations, and an inter-  
 national art exchange. In 2001, nine  
 American schools contributed crane  
 artwork that was transported to their  
 Cuban counterparts. Likewise, Cuban  
 school children on the Isle of Youth cre-  
 ated artwork, which was presented to  
 the participating American schools.

**This year, our group was able to  
 visit grades K - 9 in five schools.**

Our team of four educators shared  
 resources, donations of school supplies,  
 and information on the cranes.  
 Likewise, Cuban school children and  
 educators shared many activities and  
 performances with us. The children's

grasp of civic responsibility and stew-  
 ardship towards natural resources was  
 evident in the costumed theatrical pro-  
 ductions each school performed for us.  
 Presentations and moderated discus-  
 sions referenced threats to populations,  
 ecology, stewardship and the family-

community connec-  
 tion to their sur-  
 rounding environ-  
 ment.

**ICF's efforts in  
 Cuba are another  
 example of how  
 cranes bring togeth-  
 er diverse groups of  
 people.** The language  
 of the cranes and the  
 hope that they bring is  
 universally under-  
 stood. I believe I may  
 speak for our entire

group when I say that one's life is  
 forever changed by the hospitality,  
 generosity, kindness, and hope that the  
 Cuban communities have brought to us.  
 There is an old saying, "Some people  
 come into our lives and quickly go.  
 Others stay awhile, leave footprints on  
 our hearts, and we are never the same."  
 Just as George, Sam and Xiomara first  
 experienced the lonely footprints of the  
 Cuban Sandhill Crane on the open palm  
 savannas, those footprints, as well as  
 those of every kindred spirit we met,  
 will forever be imprinted in our hearts.

*With permission secured from the  
 U.S. Government, George Archibald  
 hopes to bring a group of ICF supporters  
 to Cuba in Feb., 2002. Please contact  
 George's assistant, Julie Zajicek, if you  
 are interested. 608-356-9462 ext. 156*



Photo by  
 Tom Hoffmann

*Dalia, one of the two captive Cuban Sandhill  
 Cranes, lives at the National Zoo in Havana.  
 Seeing the cranes and visiting with school  
 children at the National Zoo is a beloved part  
 of the ICF Cuba expeditions.*

## Contributions

October 2000 - December 2000

### GRANTS

Dr. Betty Bamforth,  
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**Lufthansa**

# Scott Swengel, friend of the cranes



*Scott served ICF and the cranes for 18 years, most recently as Curator of Birds. He left ICF in April to pursue field research interests. We miss Scott and send him our best wishes and gratitude. His knowledge, caring, and hard work for the cranes were extraordinary!*

## Nest Search Successful

*By Tammy Miller, Field Ecology Research Associate*

On May 3, 2001 ICF's crew of biologists, Jeb Barzen, Tammy Miller, Kristin Lucas, and Terry Kohler of the Windway Corporation conducted a helicopter search for Sandhill Crane nests in sections of Marquette and Columbia counties. Sixty nests were found during the one-day search.

We knew this breeding population had saturated the area but had no idea of the extent until the flight. It was



amazing to see how these breeding birds packed themselves into the wetlands. For example, in Widow Green Marsh we found 15 nests. There were several cases in this wetland where some nests were only 10 meters apart. Searching for nests by helicopter is the most efficient method with the least amount of disturbance for the incubating birds. All of the birds returned within minutes of our leaving the area.

## WISH LIST

- EPSON Expression 1640XL-Special Edition Wide format scanner (NEW) for the GIS Lab in Field Ecology.

- Tram Chim National Park in Vietnam is seeking a donation of a computer in order to better communicate with the world.

The computer must have a 17" monitor, 10 Gig hard drive, 600 Mhz processor, 128 MB of RAM and a 56 K modem. ICF staff will be traveling to Tram Chim in mid-August, so donated

equipment can be hand delivered. Please contact Dorn Moore ([dorn@savingcranes.org](mailto:dorn@savingcranes.org)) if you have any questions.

THANK YOU Ron Windingstad for donating a pair of Eagle Optics 10 x 42 Ranger binoculars to our Veterinary Services unit. The binoculars will be used when viewing birds in our exhibits, breeding pens and during the ultralight aircraft migration project with Whooping Cranes.

Please call Vice President Peter Murray at 608-356-9462 ext. 153 if you have any questions.

*The ICF Bugle is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Bugle comments or questions? Please write me at [kate@savingcranes.org](mailto:kate@savingcranes.org) 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 Senior Citizen . . . \$20	Family . . . . . \$35	Sponsor . . . . . \$500
Individual . . . . . \$25	Associate . . . . . \$100	Patron . . . . . \$1,000
Foreign . . . . . \$30	Sustaining . . . . . \$250	Benefactor . . . . . \$2,000

# The Call That Has Taken Me Around the World

By Jean Skaife, ICF member

I am often asked how I got so involved with cranes. My introduction to the International Crane Foundation (ICF) was in 1973 when I stopped in at the old barn on the edge of Baraboo, my ancestral hometown. There I met Dr. George Archibald who appeared with three baby Red Crowned Cranes following along behind him. I was "hooked", but I never dreamed that cranes, and their calls would take me around the world. My trips abroad with ICF have all been brought back to the school in my winter residence of Cedar Key, Florida. As a volunteer it has been fun for me to tell the kids about cranes and cultures around the world.

My first ICF trip was in 1994 to Southwest China to visit the Cao Hai Nature Reserve to see Black-necked Cranes. Our school exchanged art-work with a school in

Weining, China and we had a lot of time to learn about each other.

In 1995, I went to South Africa and Botswana and saw Wattled Cranes, Crowned Cranes, Blue Cranes, and other exotic animals in the Okavango Delta. The kids in my community loved that journey!

In 1998, my photographic journal of the Bhutan/Nepal trip was used as a school semester project. Black-Necked Cranes fly over the Himalayas from Tibet to Bhutan - the cranes know no boundaries; and the students learned about seasonal migrations, geography, and customs of far away places.

This spring I visited Japan, and finally saw the "Tancho" the majestic

Red Crowned Cranes of Hokkaido in the wild. In my senior years it has been my pleasure and satisfaction to spread the word about cranes and ICF, especially to children - even kindergarteners in Tokyo.

One of my favorite crane connections happened on May 1, 1999 when I was asked to give a slide presentation "Cranes Around the World" to the Audubon Club of Lexington, Kentucky. I really thought I had done a poor job of it, until Janet James a teacher from West Jessamine High School (WJHS) in Nicholasville, Kentucky, picked up on the idea of involving her class in learning about cranes. She decided to visit



*Jean Skaife never misses a field trip. This year's Crane Fest took her on a tour of our Sandhill Crane project in Briggsville, Wisconsin.*

ICF on her summer vacation and even brought three other teachers. They met briefly with George and told him they wanted their school to become involved with crane conservation. They were true con-

servationists, and their school had even saved an area in Kentucky called Black Mountain from strip mining.

Then in September of 1999, they came back to Wisconsin for ICF's Annual Meeting and brought four WJHS students. George took time to visit with them and told them that to save cranes you must begin by saving their habitat - wetlands. They were impressed. Later that fall, 100 students and chaperones from West Jessamine Elementary School visited ICF. They went home so inspired that teachers Peggy Welch and Barb Greenlief applied for a grant to save a natural wetland area in front of their school from becoming a parking lot. It is now

Peggy's outdoor science classroom. A sign in front of the school reads *West Jessamine High School Science Project* a wetland for the whole community to see.

Hurray for those great teachers who inspire kids to carry on with action for conservation. How pleased we all should be with their great example. As ICF members, may we all share our passion for cranes with everyone. You just never know how far a few words and slides will reach.

## Time to Travel

**Join ICF on two tours to Asia this November with Dr. George Archibald.** Both trips are two weeks long and will explore Nepal and Bhutan. ICF has active crane conservation programs in both countries and our experienced hosts are dedicated conservationists and excellent managers. These expeditions will provide vivid experiences with the wildlife and the cultures of each spectacular country at a time of year when the weather is usually excellent. Don't miss the opportunity to experience breathtaking views of the Himalayas, go on an elephant-back safari to look for rhinos and tigers, and enjoy excellent birding, sightseeing, photography and shopping in two unforgettable areas of the world. For more information, please contact Susan Finn at: (608) 356-9462, ext. 118 or email [sfinn@savingcranes.org](mailto:sfinn@savingcranes.org)

**ICF members also have an opportunity** to experience more cranes and cultures by joining George on a late February through mid-March, 2002 expedition to Hokkaido, Japan and to the valleys of southern Tibet. Japan and Tibet are respectively home to two magnificent species of cranes, the Red-crowned and the Black-necked. Japanese and Tibetans have revered cranes for centuries. Close range views of hundreds of cranes are promised. For more information, contact Julie Zajicek at 608-356-9462 ext. 156 or email [zajicek@savingcranes.org](mailto:zajicek@savingcranes.org)

# SPRING HAS SPRUNG AT ICF!

This year, ICF's spring was greeted by the first-ever bloom of many Pasque Flowers in our planting from fall, 1996.

Ecosystem restoration is a complicated endeavor and requires patience. Our blooming Pasques, after a 5-year wait, not only remind us of renewed life amidst winter vestiges but also represent our faith and hope in future conservation efforts.



Thanks to the funding from the Reinhardt H. and Shirley R. Jahn Foundation, ICF has recently installed an alternative energy system, which uses the sun's energy to provide most



of the hot water needs for the ICF Guest House. This system will save ICF

hundreds of dollars in annual energy costs and makes a valuable global contribution toward reducing fossil fuel consumption. These solar collector panels are used, yet function as new and exemplify the best way to recycle and REUSE! Putting the finishing

touches on the panels from left to right are Steve Krug of Next Step Energy Systems and ICF's Site Manager Dave Chesky.

Another gorgeous day kicked off Crane Fest 2001 on May 12. Over 300 people celebrated International Migratory Bird Day at ICF. Crane Fest 2001 was sponsored by Dance Unlimited, Little Village Café, Wal Mart, Pierce's Pick 'n Save, Janet Flynn, Senger Lumber, Eagle Optics, Econoprint, Operation Migration and Baraboo Rotary Club.



Each spring sisters and long-time ICF members Ireene Sullivan and Karen McFadyen make ICF's site beautiful for visitors and staff by donating and planting hundreds of



colorful annuals. Ireene and Karen always have time to visit and laugh with staff as they dig in the dirt. Their smiles are as pretty as the flowers!

The Wattled Crane Family were moved to their public exhibit this spring. The Wattled Crane Species Survival Plan requests that offspring are parent reared when possible. This is the second year Chaka and Nandi are rearing a chick on display. Sprout (the chick) is doing great! Sprout is named after Professor Sprout, a character in the popular Harry Potter books.



## MEMBERS ONLY

**ICF's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 15, 2001.**

It will be held at the Kalahari Resort in Lake Delton, Wisconsin, just minutes from ICF. We plan a diverse banquet program, as well as afternoon presentations and a special members only tour of the cranes. Please call the Kalahari at 1-877-253-5466 by August 15 to reserve a room at a special group rate. For other hotel accommodations you can call The Baraboo Area Chamber at 1 800 Baraboo or the Wisconsin Dells Visitor and Convention Bureau 1-800-223-3557.



## International Crane Foundation

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