



International Crane Foundation

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INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

Cranes of the World
Festival



– More Information on Page 4 –



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The International Crane Foundation is a Travel Green destination.

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Newsletter is also available in electronic format.

Whooping Crane Chick Update



Eleven Whooping Crane chicks that hatched at ICF will head up to Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in late July for the Direct Autumn Release (DAR) project. A genetically important chick is being raised at ICF's Crane City by our best foster parents Woody and Stella. Pictured above is a newly hatched chick receiving a health exam at ICF's Felburn/Leidigh Isolation Rearing Facility. ICF provides veterinary services for Whooping Cranes at ICF, and also for the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP) reintroduction project. Photo by Christoph Mans



A total of seven chicks hatched in the wild this year at Necedah NWR in central Wisconsin. Currently, two survive. Eleven chicks will participate in the 2010 WCEP ultralight-led migration. Visit ICF's website www.savingcranes.org for more information and to sign up for Whooping Crane email updates. Photos by Matt Strausser



INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

The ICF Bugle

Inspiring a Global Community

Volume 36, Number 3

August 2010

A Global Approach ACTIVATING THE CRANE SPECIALIST GROUP

By Jim Harris, Senior Vice President



Fifteen cranes on five continents. For crane people, these words are important. They define our global vision. They define the challenges we must care about and solve.

I like to walk around the Exhibit Pod at ICF, with all its cranes, when I need to think. Each of the fifteen is unique, and yet they share many traits. Most problems for crane conservation are repeated the world over.

On all those continents and countries, people have responded. Scientists, government officials, film makers, poets, farmers, students have all somehow become involved in a task much longer than any of our own lives, safeguarding the world's cranes.

Among ICF's greatest assets are the networks of crane conservationists, and the experience and lessons they can share.

Cranes, for example, have almost everywhere been crowded by agriculture.

In response, almost all the cranes – except the Siberian Crane – have learned to use the farming landscapes for foraging and even (in most species) for nesting if wetlands remain among the crop fields. Mostly, this co-habitation with farmers benefits both (the cranes do bring good fortune!), but conflicts arise. The crane people have been working to solve these conflicts. *Continued on page 2*



Red-crowned Cranes, shown here at Zhalong Marsh in northeast China, have been significantly affected by agriculture and changing climates. From May 29 to June 3, ICF and Muraviovka Park convened the workshop, "Cranes – Climates – People." Thirty crane specialists from five continents gathered in far eastern Russia to examine these worldwide challenges to crane conservation. Photo by Wang Keju



Whooping Crane Challenge Grant!

See page 5

in diverse ways. While ICF has committed 20 years to solving the problem of Sandhill Crane damage to seedling corn, others have developed different strategies involving where to plant crops, or different mixes of crops, or lure crops or even artificial feeding. While ICF develops its own model projects, and disseminates our results, we can only do a few projects ourselves.

On May 29 to June 3, ICF cooperated with Muraviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use to bring together 30 crane activists, from 14 countries, and 5 continents. Unlike any other international crane “workshop” I have attended, only half the workshop consisted of presentations. We had two themes that are critical for the future of cranes across the world: the relationship between cranes and agriculture, and how to respond to the impacts of changing climates on cranes and the wetlands they depend upon. We heard presentations on these two themes for two days. Then for two days, we worked together on the action steps our networks should take in response. On one day, we shared results of our workshop with local officials, the media, and interested public.

The third focus of the workshop concerned how to make the global crane network more active and more effective. Numerous regional groups exist – for example, the North American Crane Working Group, or the International Red-crowned Crane Network. The global network, that now includes over 250 people from more than 50 countries, is called the Crane Specialist Group and operates in affiliation with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as part of its Species Survival Commission (SSC), and with Wetlands International. The Crane Specialist Group has long been led by ICF’s George Archibald although Specialist Groups (there are dozens of them) must be independent of any organization like ICF.

When IUCN and Wetlands International each undertook strategic planning, they realized that the Specialist Groups should play a more active and focused role within the larger conservation endeavors – specifically, each should track the status of its species, each should be identifying and assessing the threats, and each should be developing and disseminating conservation solutions.

When I became chair of the Crane Specialist Group last year, we developed the workshop in response to the new mandate from IUCN and Wetlands International. As part of the workshop, we have drafted an action plan for the next 3-4 years. Key objectives will be to prepare and publish small books on the two themes of the workshop – summarizing the experience of crane work in the many countries and providing practical guidance for solving problems at local and regional scales.

Actually, the climate change group at the workshop realized their task needed adjustment. The primary consequence of long-term climate change will be changes in hydrology and, for some regions, less water for wetlands. In addition, the conservation response to long-term climate changes in water supply are the same measures we must be using to respond now to immediate threats – caused by short-term shifts in climate (years of drought, for example) and the transformations humanity is bringing to the waters of all five continents. This publication will therefore address water issues as they affect cranes and wetlands, and develop guidance to land managers and practicing conservationists on how to work with other stakeholders to manage water at the watershed and regional levels – all necessary to provide favorable conditions for safeguarding individual crane sites, the topic that will occupy the remainder of the book.

We also made decisions about functioning of the Crane Specialist Group. All members – who must be invited to join, based upon their current work directly relevant to crane conservation – will receive electronic copies of *The ICF Bugle* and two publications from IUCN. We welcome many members to become involved in the publications we will prepare during the next 3-4 years. A steering committee representing different

regions and types of expertise will advise me regarding decisions for the Specialist Group.

For more information or for updates on the Wetlands International – IUCN SSC Crane Specialist Forum, visit the ICF website at www.savingcranes.org/crane-specialists.html.

My own objective through the Crane Specialist Group is to facilitate more creative and effective work by the hundreds of professionals who have become involved with cranes. ICF benefits hugely from the energies and perspectives of these volunteers. And through the Specialist Group, ICF has access to the larger networks, diverse expertise, and the strong relationships that IUCN and Wetlands International have developed in almost all countries where cranes occur.

Muraviovka Park has simple amenities, but the buildings where we worked, slept and ate overlook a remarkable wetland where we could watch four species of cranes. We would stand on the terrace – talking, watching – while the sun slanted across wet meadows and the hills of China rose behind. Our own voices and languages mingled with songs of reed warblers.

The Trust for Mutual Understanding, Lufthansa Airlines, The Fifth Age of Man Foundation, Oklahoma City Zoo, and ICF member contributions as well as the Amur Region (Russia) Government supported this workshop.



Lufthansa provided major support to the workshop "Cranes – Climates – People." Lufthansa also has printed and donated copies of a Chinese version of ICF Director Carl von Treuenfels' book, *The Magic of Cranes*. Here Sergei Smirenski, President of Muraviovka Park, presents *The Magic of Cranes* to Vasilii Oficerov, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources for Amur Region, Russia. Two weeks later, Lufthansa flew five ICF staff members to Germany for the 7th Meeting of the MoU concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane. Photos by Jim Harris.

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The ICF Bugle is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation. ICF was founded in 1973 by Ronald Sauey, Ph.D. (1948 - 1987) and George Archibald, Ph.D.

Editor: Betsy Didrickson
Bugle comments or questions? Please write Betsy at Bugle@savingcranes.org or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913

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

Student or Senior Citizen.....	\$25
Individual.....	\$35
Family.....	\$50
Associate.....	\$100
Sustaining.....	\$250
Sponsor.....	\$500
Patron.....	\$1,000
Benefactor.....	\$2,000
CraneMaker.....	\$10,000

New CEO Strengthens ICF's Global Reach

By Joe Branch, Chair of the ICF Board of Directors

On behalf of ICF's Board of Directors, I am very pleased to announce our selection of Dr. Richard Beilfuss, a hydrologist and wetland ecologist, as the organization's new President and CEO.

From its beginning, ICF has exemplified leadership and excellence in the study and conservation of cranes, and Rich brings over 20 years of professional experience with cranes. His major contribution, however, has been to the emerging field of “environmental flows.” Rich's work blends science and policy, and considerable people skills, to ensure that our water resources – rivers, lakes and wetlands – continue to sustain cranes, other wildlife and humanity.

ICF recognizes that the remarkable charisma of cranes brings diverse people and new allies together to solve problems vital for us all. The long-term future of cranes depends in large part on the decisions that people make for water and wetlands as human demand soars and variable climates threaten the security of water supplies. Thus ICF's campaign for 2010-2011 is again focusing on water – expanding conservation action for cranes and seven rivers on three continents. ICF has invested heavily in promoting healthy wildlife and wetlands in diverse landscapes such as farmlands in Wisconsin, as well as far eastern Russia and the valleys of Uganda. Crane projects now alleviate poverty through the sustainable use of water and wetlands in the Mekong Basin of Southeast Asia and the Drakensberg Mountains of South Africa among other places.

“Cranes will not survive unless we tackle the big issues,” explains Rich Beilfuss. “Yet the same measures that safeguard landscapes nurturing cranes are effective at addressing human needs. I learned this first in Vietnam, where we searched for creative solutions to

save the vanishing wetlands of the Mekong Delta for threatened Sarus Cranes and the impoverished people there. Later, our work to save vulnerable Wattled Cranes and other wildlife on the enormous floodplains of southern Africa led to a unique partnership with the Zambezi River authorities and dam operators for sustainable water management that will greatly benefit local fishing and farming communities.”

Rich recently returned to ICF after serving four years as Director of Scientific Services for the Gorongosa Restoration Project in Mozambique, where he lived with his wife Katie and their two children. From 1992-2005, he served as ICF's Director of Africa Programs, cultivating and supervising conservation efforts in more than a dozen African nations.

Rich's academic background and training reflect the breadth of thinking ICF seeks in its leadership—he has a Ph.D. in Land Resources, two Master's degrees (Civil and Environmental Engineering and Water Resources Management), and a Bachelor's degree in International Economics. Rich is also an Adjunct Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he advises graduate students and teaches a course on environmental flows.

From the end of March through June 2010, an *ad hoc* Transition Committee of ICF's Board of Directors conducted a thorough search for a new President and CEO. The Committee sought someone who could guide ICF's strategic development with vision, discipline, and passion.

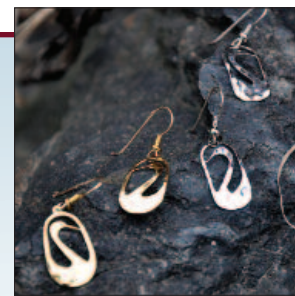
Rich exemplifies ICF's commitment to serving this remarkable, and highly endangered, family of birds while improving the lives of the people whose support and energies are essential to creating a long term future for the cranes. We look forward to Rich's leadership of this world class conservation organization.



The majestic Sarus? The beautiful Blue? Now you don't have to choose – take all 15 species wherever you go! Our sturdy canvas tote with nylon handles has portraits of each crane found around the world. This exclusive design created for ICF's *Cranes of the World* festival is also available on t-shirts in adult S – 2XL and youth L and XL. Totebag \$9.99

Which Crane is Your Favorite?

The delicate Demoiselle?



Simply Elegant

Silhouette crane earrings are casual enough to be worn with your favorite jeans yet elegant enough for your best

dress. Available in silver tone or gold filled, they are light-weight for comfort and won't tarnish. Earrings \$19.99

To order, or for more information about these products or anything else in the ICF gift shop, please call 608-356-9462 ext. 121. You can also shop online at www.craneshop.org

INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION
Cranes of the World
Festival



Friday, September 24 and Saturday, September 25, 2010

Cranes of the World festivities will kick off on September 24th with a theatrical performance benefiting ICF and the historic Al. Ringling Theatre in downtown Baraboo. Saturday's festivities will be at our world headquarters and will conclude in the evening with the Annual Member Banquet at Ho-Chunk Casino Hotel and Convention Center.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

6:30 pm: Wine Reception for ICF Members at the historic Al. Ringling Theatre, Baraboo.
7:30 pm: Heather Henson's "Panther and Crane" Benefit Performance.

Henson's theatrical spectacle uses innovative puppets, dancers, kites and colored lights to tell the story of the endangered Whooping Crane, Florida panther and the urgent need to preserve freshwater ecosystems. Heather Henson is the daughter of Jim Henson, creator of The Muppets and the leading source behind Sesame Street. Ms. Henson produces the annual Orlando Puppet Festival curates and distributes the Handmade Puppet Dreams film series, and is a devoted ICF member and friend to cranes. For advance tickets (\$16, \$10, \$6), call the Al. Ringling Theater: 608-356-8864 or email info@alringling.com.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
Cranes of the World Festival at ICF

9:00 – 10:00: Birding Hike.
9:00 – 5:00: Muraviovka Park. Learn about sustainable land use and crane conservation in Russia.
9:00 – 3:00: FOR MEMBERS ONLY: Guided tours of Crane City, ICF's Breeding Center. Enjoy this once-a-year opportunity made available only to current members! Space is limited, advance registration is strongly recommended! To pre-register call 608-356-9462 ext. 127 or email events@savingcranes.org.

10:00, 12:00, and 2:00: Experience renowned wildlife humorist David Stokes. Described as Jack Hanna meeting Robin Williams, David, along with his live animals, songs and stories will delight you while learning about the natural world!
10:00 and 1:00: *Cranes of the World* guided tours.
10:00 – 2:00: Meet Heather Henson, creator of *Panther and Crane*. She will share her enthusiasm for puppetry and conservation while children have the opportunity to create their own puppet!
10:00 – 2:00: Children/Adult Activities.
11:00 – 1:30: Bag lunches available for purchase.
2:30: Opening Reception for the "George and Tex" Exhibit. George Archibald will tell the fascinating story of his life with "Tex" the female Whooping Crane he danced with to bring into reproductive condition. This exhibit will be on display at ICF through 2011.
3:00: *Spirit of Africa* guided tour.
3:30: Prairie Restoration Hike. Jeb Barzen, Director of ICF Field Ecology Department
4:00-5:00: Learn about birds, people and wetlands in Far East Russia.
5:00: GATES CLOSE.

ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING AND BANQUET

Registration is required for the Annual Member Banquet activities held at Ho-Chunk Casino

5:30 pm: Cash Bar Reception in Lower Dells Ballroom at Ho-Chunk Casino Hotel and Conference Center.

6:30 pm: Welcome Remarks and Dinner
Entrée choices: 1) Prime Rib of Beef served with au jus and twice baked potato, 2) Filet of Salmon served with dill hollandaise on a bed of confetti rice, 3) Vegetarian Pasta served with seasonal vegetables. Dinners include spinach salad with hot bacon dressing, accompanied by fresh rolls and butter, seasonal vegetables, dessert and beverage choices. (Please indicate your main entrée choice on the registration form below).

7:30 pm: Annual Member Meeting
 Joseph Branch, Chair, Board of Directors; Rich Beilfuss, President and CEO; and George Archibald, Co-Founder and Senior Conservationist.

Program: Good Egg Awards will be followed by a dynamic presentation from ICF Research Scientist in India, K.S. Gopi Sundar.

For additional details, please visit the September Calendar of Events on the ICF website at www.savingcranes.org.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Ho-Chunk Casino Hotel and Convention Center, S3214 Highway 12, Baraboo, WI. Guest rooms: \$85 (+ tax). Please book under the "ICF Member" block. Upgrade available.
Rate deadline: September 17, 2010. 800-746-2486 or www.ho-chunk.com.

Please clip and send with check payable to the International Crane Foundation, Attn: Annual Member Meeting and Banquet, P.O. Box 351, Baraboo, WI 53913 **RSVP by 9/17/10**

Name (1): _____
 Name (2): _____
Please print name as you wish it to appear on your nametag(s)
 Mailing Address: _____ City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____ Email: _____
 I would like to purchase _____ tickets to the Annual Member Meeting and Banquet @ \$45 each
 Total number of tickets _____ @ \$45 for a total of \$ _____
Please enclose check or pay by credit card.
 Credit card (Visa/Mastercard/Discover) # _____
 Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____ (3 digits on back of card)
 Name as it appears on card: _____
 Entrée selections (please indicate number of each):
 _____ Prime Rib of Beef _____ Filet of Salmon _____ Vegetarian Pasta



Photo by Emily Hill

Double Your Gift for Whooping Cranes!

The International Crane Foundation makes priority investments for the protection and recovery of the world's rarest crane – the Whooping Crane. The last natural flock of endangered Whooping Cranes, numbering approximately 270 birds, breeds in Wood Buffalo National Park in Canada and spends winters along the Gulf Coast of Texas in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The gulf marshes essential to these birds are now threatened by drought, excessive diversions of water and man-made disasters. ICF and partners continue to study and protect the lands and waters that are vital parts of the Whooping Crane migratory flyway. Together, we are taking action to secure the minimum flows of freshwater needed to maintain the health of Gulf Coast marshes, for cranes and scores of other wildlife, fisheries and people.

To help ensure global stability for these imperiled birds, ICF and partners continue our ten-year effort to reintroduce a second, distinct population of Whooping Cranes that breeds in central Wisconsin and spends winters in southeastern states. With over 100 birds now successfully migrating in the new flock, we were thrilled to observe seven chicks hatch in the wild this past spring. Two of these birds are thriving with the flock at Necedah and we hope they will fledge this fall. Meanwhile, at ICF's campus in Wisconsin, 11 additional chicks – bred and raised in captivity – are scheduled for release in the coming months to learn the migration south following older birds in the flock. ICF continues to prioritize this "direct release" technique and field research to ensure the project's ultimate goal – to establish a self-sustaining population and reduce the likelihood of extinction for Whooping Cranes.

These priority actions rely on significant annual investments from ICF's supporters. **Thanks to an anonymous individual donor, until we reach our challenge goal of \$50,000, ICF will earn dollar-for-dollar (100%) matches for your gifts to help Whooping Cranes!** Please act now to double your impact to save these endangered birds!

Become a "Whooper Keeper." All gifts of \$1,000 or more will be recognized by a plate bearing your special message or tribute affixed to a bench in our celebrated Whooping Crane exhibit in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Sponsor a Future Conservation Hero

Some of today's leading conservationists credit a summer internship at ICF for launching their career in the field. Make a difference in the life of one talented next-generation conservation hero by sponsoring an ICF intern this summer and fall. Each year, ICF competitively hires 15 young college graduates from around the world to serve as interns at our World Headquarters in the fields of Aviculture, Veterinary Medicine, Conservation Education and Field Ecology. ICF interns receive hands-on skills training and valuable field experiences with a world-class conservation organization. The interns provide essential husbandry for our resident cranes, host and educate visitors, help restore natural habitats, conduct field research, and assist in breeding, reintroducing, and tracking endangered Whooping Cranes. ICF interns are integral contributors to our many conservation programs.

With a gift of \$5,000 to sponsor one intern, you can invest in tomorrow's conservation leaders by offering invaluable career and personal growth opportunities to a young individual seeking to make a difference in the world.

Sponsor Benefits

- Letters and updates from your sponsored intern throughout the course of their employment;
- A hosted visit to ICF to meet your sponsored intern (enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour and lunch at our campus in Baraboo, WI);
- Knowing your support has provided a defining life experience for a future conservation hero.

To learn more about internship sponsorship opportunities for you or your company, please contact David Koehler, Vice President for Advancement, or Kari Oeltjen, Senior Development Officer, by phone: 608-356-9462 or email: supportICF@savingcranes.org.



ICF Interns Maureen Durkin and Julie Oesper releasing a banded Sandhill Crane. Photo by Tom Lynn



A Note from the President By Rich Beilfuss

A wonderful spirit of hope and commitment pervades ICF as we further align ourselves to the global challenges of conserving cranes and the biologically diverse wetlands and grasslands that sustain cranes and human livelihoods. I am honored to serve as ICF's new President and CEO. We are thrilled also to welcome new staff members Marie Ruetten, Vice President of Administration & Finance, Kari Oeltjen, Senior Development Officer, and long-term volunteer Darcy Love, who is now Visitor Center Manager. ICF's work is being widely recognized: colleague Jimmy Muheebwa received the prestigious Whitley Fund for Nature Award for his work with cranes, wetlands, and communities in Uganda, our crane research coordinator Anne Lacy was named a Community Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, and all ICF staff were honored as Endangered Species Recovery Champions by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Despite all this good news, the Gulf Coast oil spill weighs very heavily. As I write, tar balls are invading the coastal waters of Texas for the first time since the Deepwater Horizon explosion, and scientists report the devastation of a major waterbird colony in Louisiana. Journalists wonder aloud if the coastal way of life will ever return to the hardest-hit communities and ecosystems, many still recovering from Hurricane Katrina.

Throughout the disaster, we have been grateful for your concerns

and desire to help our threatened cranes. The oil spill indeed is a somber reminder of the vulnerability of vital crane areas along the Gulf Coast, and throughout the world. The brackish marshes of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge support the entire wintering population of the last naturally occurring population of endangered Whooping Cranes. Even without the oil, these coastal marshes are threatened by the upstream diversion of freshwater inflows, which increase salinity levels during dry years and reduce the availability of the crane's primary food source, blue crabs. The Chassahowitzka and St. Marks National Wildlife Refuges provide winter homes for some of the Whooping Cranes in the new eastern population that migrate south to Florida's Gulf Coast each autumn from Wisconsin. And the Mississippi Sandhill National Wildlife Refuge – only a short distance inland – supports the only population of a threatened subspecies, the Mississippi Sandhill Crane, currently numbering only about 110 birds.

We have all seen the shocking images of pelicans, terns, and other plunge-diving waterbirds coated in oil. The habits of cranes leave them less directly at risk. We remain very concerned, however, about the impact of the oil spill on foods for cranes due to the contamination of the marine food chain—the same web of life that supports much of the regional coastal economy. Our long-term conservation efforts in Asia and Africa have taught us well that human livelihoods, as with cranes, are inextricably linked to the health of ecosystems.

Once the flow of oil ceases and the tropical storm season passes, we may fully grasp the scale of impact to the Gulf Coast. I am confident that if vital crane areas are affected, ICF's global experience and expertise with restoring wetlands and water resources for cranes, other wildlife, and people will prove invaluable for bringing the coastal marshes back to life.



Special Thanks to Conservation Champions James C. and Valerie Cummings

For over 60 years, James C. Cummings farmed the fertile lands around Oakdale and Chico, California. James enjoyed working the land, and along

with his wife Valerie, shared a love of animals and the outdoors with their children. James passed away in 2009 leaving Valerie to make gifts to support the conservation of nature in his memory. Although helping charities was a regular part of life for the Cummings, James wanted these gifts to be larger, representing the good success he experienced through farming. In the early part of this year, Valerie began investigating opportunities to help

organizations she felt were making a difference in today's world. She recalled an enjoyable visit to International Crane Foundation several years earlier, and reached out. On behalf of her husband, Valerie chose to support ICF's work in Vietnam where we help improve economic opportunities for villagers while protecting wetlands of the Mekong Delta essential to Sarus Cranes, other wildlife and people. She also chose to help ICF expand its chick rearing facility and related program to reintroduce endangered Whooping Cranes to the eastern United States. We are extremely grateful to Valerie for choosing ICF to receive these important gifts and honored to carry on our work in memory of her beloved husband, James.

A Crane Hunt?

By Christina Skasa, ICF Volunteer, and Jeb Barzen, Director of Field Ecology

Long-term ICF research on Sandhill Cranes provides information relevant to making informed decisions about controversial issues such as hunting. Photo by Steve Patterson/Illini Images.

This year the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyway Councils completed a new management plan for the Eastern Population of Greater Sandhill Cranes, the cranes breeding in the Midwest and eastern Canada. This plan has many important crane conservation aspects. Of note, the plan includes an objective to develop hunting seasons for this population, an action likely to attract the attention of many. The flyway councils consist of representatives from government agencies within the general migratory pathways of birds and coordinate the management of hunted, migratory bird species. Therefore, release of this plan is a significant step. The plan makes it possible for individual states to propose a hunting season.

For many crane conservationists, the Sandhill Crane is a source of pride and a symbol of endurance. Subspecies like the Greater Sandhill Crane suffered severe population declines due to over-hunting prior to the mid-20th century. Since then, most migratory Sandhill Crane populations have recovered dramatically, prompting some states to legalize crane hunting again. Current hunting seasons have been conducted in North America without apparent declines in the populations involved. Now that states or provinces of eastern North America may propose crane hunting seasons, people will want to know whether crane hunting is legal in Wisconsin or in other states, why individuals would want to hunt cranes, and whether ICF maintains a formal position regarding crane hunting.

Currently, no hunting season exists for the Eastern Population of Greater Sandhill Cranes. Sandhill Cranes may, however, be legally hunted in Alaska, Arizona, and Utah, as well as in 9 of the 10 states in the Central Flyway – a migration route that runs from the arctic to the Gulf of Mexico. Nebraska is the only state in the Central Flyway that does not allow crane hunting. In Wisconsin, crane hunting remains a highly contentious topic. Those who support a hunt argue that a legalized hunting season could reduce damage to agricultural crops by cranes, as well as control the Sandhill Crane population. Some people believe that, like any other natural resource, cranes can be harvested sustainably. Yet others feel that cranes should never be hunted.

ICF engages in research and conservation to protect cranes, people, and the environs they share. ICF research, however, cannot decide arguments about whether hunting cranes is right or wrong, an important ethical but non-scientific debate. One of ICF's core goals is to forge alliances among groups committed to conservation. Hunters, farmers, and environmentalists have done a great deal for wetland and wildlife conservation, and still do. As a source of scientific expertise, ICF can host discussions among diverse conservation groups whose disparate agendas and opinions prevent them from



collaborating in other social and political settings. This is a unique role that ICF can fill for cranes.

From a scientific perspective, ICF data can inform society on a variety of important, sometimes divisive, conservation issues. To assure that our science is unbiased and that we can continue to work with all interest groups, ICF does not endorse or oppose hunting. We do, however, maintain three strong positions relative to hunting. First, the cranes need help from everyone – including hunters, wildlife enthusiasts, farmers, and other landowners – to conserve wetlands that cranes and other waterbirds depend upon for survival. Second, any decisions about hunting should be based on the best scientific information available. ICF makes information available and seeks solutions where conflicts between cranes and people occur. Third, it is crucial for individuals to participate in public discussions on the subject.

That said, it is important to note that ICF's research suggests that a regular hunting season would not deter cranes from eating crops. ICF has developed effective solutions to crane damage of seedling corn and other crops. These solutions are working in the marketplace without using up conservation dollars. Our research suggests that crane populations stop growing without the need for hunting. However, it also implies that the Eastern Population of Sandhill Cranes is large enough for a sustainable harvest to occur. Finally, it should be noted that hunting has been and remains a serious threat to many crane populations elsewhere in the world.

By focusing on how ICF's research informs crane management and conservation actions, we invite open dialogue about the future not only of cranes, but of healthy ecosystems. With better clarity on the science behind issues of crane management and hunting, we hope that public engagement in ethical questions, such as whether or not cranes should be hunted, can be more effective.