

Small size projects of Muraviovka Park for 2009

Dear Carol,

Thank you for remembering the Park and our needs. Financial situation is difficult for everybody but we continue to search for ways that will help to accomplish our initial plans. Long-term drought highlighted the weak sites in our activities – shortage of our knowledge about cranes' habitat preferences, impact of drought and related factors, like grass fires, harassment, predators, competitors on cranes and their habitats, shortage of trained personnel. The Board of Directors decided that research and testing of new approaches to maintaining of crane habitats should be the top priority for the Park in 2009-2012.

We already began monitoring water level in lakes and purchased automatic weather station. We also planned to buy a computer and GIS programs to begin mapping cranes, their habitats, fires, etc. Galya Nosachenko, a doctorate student from the Amur Region Agriculture University, began studying impact of fires on plant communities in breeding habitats of cranes. She has no financial support from the University and we are able to pay her only a minimal wage for her work as the Park's Bird Keeper. Adam Stein, a Ph.D. candidate from the Syracuse University, is planning to come to the Park this spring, to study crane behavior. He wants to stay at the Park from early March to November, this and next year. We get some support for his plane ticket to Moscow and he raised some money to travel from Moscow to Blagoveshchensk and for some equipment. But we still did not locate funds for his living expenses as well as for local transportation. Both Galya and Adam need helpers, and students from local university are eager to be our interns, but again we need to provide them with some support

Please see in attachment my brief notes on several relatively small projects. All are designed for one field season (4-6 months). I am ready to provide more details if needed.

This coming summer we will be celebrating the 15th anniversary of the land lease and the 15th anniversary of the first International summer camp. Time is running fast. We accomplished some of our plans but there is still a long way to go.

Please use my new address sms08mp@gmail.com My old one sergei@savingcranes.org over flooded with spam and junk messages.

My very best,

Sergei

1. Mapping crane habitats

Land surveys to collect data for mapping nests, roosting and feeding sites of Red-crowned and White-naped Cranes in the Park and in surrounding wetlands. **1,600** USD will cover lease of vehicle, stipends and accommodations for two interns, salary for GIS specialist.

2. Habitat use by cranes

Mapping habitat use by cranes with description of hydrology, plant and wildlife communities will help to develop different zones and better management plan. **1,800** USD will cover local transportation, stipends and living accommodation for field researcher and 3 interns.

3. Impact of fires on cranes and their habitats

Develop maps of the park areas affected by grass fires; conduct land surveys of birds and plants; compare density of cranes, their feeding objects, competitors and predators in burnt and untouched areas. **2,600** USD will cover local transportation, stipends and living accommodations for doctorate student and 2 interns. 2 two-way radios, diesel fuel for tractor and truck and meals for fire fighters.

4. Prescribed burning

A mosaic of burnt and untouched patches will be developed. It is the most efficient method to protect nests of cranes and storks from wild grass fires. **1,500** USD will cover purchase of 2 water back packs, 2 two-way radios, diesel fuel for tractor and truck, clothes and meals for five fire fighters.

5. Diminish conflict between farmers and cranes

Keep flocks of migratory Hooded and White-naped Cranes inside the Park border on the lure crop fields. It will help diminish crop damage to our neighbors and harassment of cranes by farmers. **3,000** USD will cover expenses for seeds, diesel fuel and labor to develop 60 acres of lure corn field.

6. To be ready for chicks

Our captive pair of Red-crowned Cranes is mature enough for the first breeding season. Both birds were raised in captivity and it is not clear how adequate their breeding behavior will be in the pens. Most likely, we will need to collect their eggs for artificial incubation. **2,500** USD will help to build and to equip facilities for incubation.

7. Stop fires – save lives

Organize and conduct children art contest “Stop Fires – Save Lives“ and print a poster by the winner of the contest, to be distributed throughout the Amur Region to

raise public awareness about negative impact of wildfires on cranes and other endangered birds. **2,200** USD will cover organizational expenses, gifts for participants and printing of the poster of the best art work.

8. Special events

Annual crane festivals - one in June of Russian folk songs ("Crane Dawns") and one in September ("Crane Celebration") will provide opportunities to hundreds of people from the region capital as well as from the remote villages of the Amur Region watch close and learn about cranes and enjoy beautiful Russian songs about cranes and beauty of the nature. **800** USD will cover expenses to bring and provide beverages and snacks to folk choirs, and to bring a group of orphans to the events.

“Crane Dawn” festival of Russian folk songs in June and “Crane” festival in September will give opportunity to hundreds of people from the capital as well as from remote villages of the Amur Region watch close and learn about cranes and enjoy Russian songs. 700 USD will cover expenses to bring and provide beverages and snacks to folk choirs, and orphans.

9. Interpretive materials

Develop signs and other interpretive materials about cranes and wetlands along nature trails and near the Park’s demonstration pen with Red-crowned Cranes. **1,600** USD will cover expenses for materials, design and paintings.