



IAIN NICOLSON Audubon CENTER AT ROWE SANCTUARY

Crane River **CHRONICLES**

SPRING 2016



ROWE HAPPENINGS/NEWS



photo by John Feikema

Each year when winter has hung on much too long, all you can think about is green grass and warm sunshine. Spring seems so far away as the bare trees wave in the wind seemingly taunting you with their long brown branches. The darn groundhog tells you there will be six more weeks of winter. At that point it is easy to feel down. Just as you are about to abandon all hope of spring,

you hear the sound of a crane. You peer into the blank white sky, sure you must have imagined the sound, and suddenly tiny black specks appear out of the nothingness. Those specks slowly become cranes as they descend from nearly a mile high calling out to the river. The migration has begun and the promise of spring along with it!



The crane migration brings with it much more than the promise of spring and warm winds. It brings with it people bringing hope for the future of the Platte River and America's Greatest Migration. The sounds of the cranes and all of the waterfowl have given this quiet unassuming prairie river a voice that says stop, look, pay attention, this river is special. With the help of Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, that voice has been heard and people like you from all over the world now take action to help protect and improve the Platte River for the cranes. You are what hope looks like to the cranes and the river! Thank you for caring enough to take action to save this amazing place.

Sincerely,

Bill Taddicken

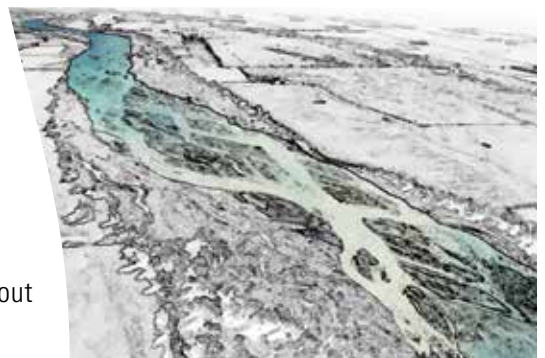
Bill Taddicken

Calendar of Events
p.2

Habitat
p.4

Education/Outreach
p.5

Donor List
p.6-7



Mark your Calendars:

River Runs Through It

**"You are What Hope
Looks Like to the River"**

**Saturday
October 8, 2016**

5 pm cocktails, 6 pm dinner



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Crane Behavior Basics – Rowe Sanctuary

DAILY - MARCH 13 – APRIL 10, 4:30 PM, \$5.00 PER PERSON

Want to make your crane viewing experience more enjoyable? Join us in this fun interactive class. You will be introduced to several crane behaviors easily observed in the fields and viewing blinds. You will also learn about crane biology, the Central Flyway, and Platte River conservation. Call 308-468-5282 to make reservations.

Habitat Tour – Rowe Sanctuary

SATURDAYS MARCH 26, APRIL 2, AND APRIL 9, 1:00 PM, \$5.00 PER PERSON

Join our knowledgeable staff and naturalists on a hayrack ride to learn about the Platte River ecosystem and Audubon's management role. This program is dependent on the weather. Please call 308-468-5282 for more information or to make your reservations.

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary and the Platte River: Forty Years of Conservation, Education, and Celebration – Rowe Sanctuary

SATURDAY MARCH 26, 9:30 AM, \$5.00 PER PERSON

Doreen Pfost will discuss the work done by Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, other organizations, and individuals to protect habitat along the Platte River and to educate the public about the river's importance to wildlife. She will examine conservation efforts in the context of numerous proposed water development projects that threatened the river's flows. In addition, she will talk about the process of uncovering this history and some of the research that remains to be done. Doreen is a freelance writer, amateur naturalist, and has recently published *This River Beneath the Sky: A Year on the Platte* (University of Nebraska Press, 2016). Now living in Wisconsin, she makes frequent visits to south-central Nebraska, and in the past four years has spent many hours researching Platte River conservation and the history of Rowe Sanctuary.

Rowe Celebration – Rowe Sanctuary

THURSDAY APRIL 7, 5:30 PM, \$50.00 PER PERSON

Join us for a celebration of the incredible sights and sounds of the 2016 Sandhill Crane Migration. You will enjoy a crane blind tour followed by hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and wine inside Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. Please call Cindy at 308-468-5282 or email choulden@audubon.org with questions or to RSVP.



LETTER FROM STATE DIRECTOR *Marian Langan*



Greetings! As you well know, the work to help protect and promote nature wears a lot of different faces. It can include everything from fixing fences to writing articles, from prescribed burns to bird surveys, and from sandbar clearing to helping a child look through an insect viewer. Every single one of these is important.

This time of the year brings a special focus on another face of conservation: working with our Nebraska legislature. The short session this year brings about a flurry of activity with senators working hard to get their prioritized bills to move forward. As is

usual, it is a mixed bag of bills on which we are working both for and against. Our priorities this year include the protection of the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the right to have conservation easements. In addition, we are supporting a variety of efforts for the Niobrara River and Niobrara Council.

Thanks for support you have given toward this work and feel free to call me if you have any questions, 402-797-2301.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marian Langan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

BEYOND ROWE SANCTUARY

Since 1997, Audubon staff at Rowe Sanctuary has been working with partners from the headwaters of the Platte River to its mouth to create and implement a management plan for the entire Platte River.

It has been apparent since Audubon first came to the Platte River in 1971 that in order to protect this great migration, it was imperative that the river be managed as a whole. In 2007, Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, and the Federal Government adopted the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program. There has been great success

in the first ten years with the protection of 10,000 acres for Whooping Cranes as well as progress towards water goals for other threatened and endangered species on the Platte.

Audubon staff from Rowe Sanctuary and the state office continue to help lead this effort serving on the Governance Committee and various other committees. This plan is our best hope at this time for a long-range sustainable plan for the Platte River that balances the needs of nature and people.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary has the most amazing volunteer force imaginable. These volunteers make the work we do here possible and are more of a family than a volunteer group. More than 75 volunteers from the local area come to help and another 35 from all around the country. Our volunteers gave over 10,000 hours last year, and they also give so much more than time. They connect with people from around the world and share their passion for Rowe Sanctuary, the river, and the cranes. They make everyone feel welcome and teach our guests about why it is important to care about this great migration. You too can be part of this amazing group. If you are interested, please contact Anne Winkel at awinkel@audubon.org or call 308-468-5282.



HABITAT

Restoring the Platte River Ecosystem

When Audubon added nearly 600 acres of land at Rowe Sanctuary in 2014, a vision for how it would increase the benefit to birds on the Platte River was long in place. That vision is taking shape in restoration plans for that land and the surrounding area. Central to the work that will take place during the next couple of years is the restoration of 75 acres of irrigated cropland back to native grassland. This will tie together our grassland to the south and west to create one wet meadow of more than 900 acres. Once the grassland is complete, Audubon will manage it to benefit Sandhill and Whooping Cranes as well as grassland birds on one of the largest blocks of wet meadow in the Central Platte River Valley.

Another great part of this plan is removing some power lines, trees, and a few buildings. This will increase land that birds can use, protect wildlife, and connect the grasslands to the river channel. This is important to migrating Sandhill and Whooping Cranes. The Platte Valley has only ten percent of its original wet meadows remaining. This project results in a cross-section of river channel and wetlands connected to wet meadows on either side, at a scale unique to the modern Platte River. Your support makes a real difference to the wildlife at Rowe Sanctuary. None of this could be done without you.



photo by Verdon Tomajko

Wood Ducks Get Homes

This spring, Rowe Sanctuary's Volunteer Committee will build, install, and monitor nesting boxes for Wood Ducks on the Sanctuary. With funding from Ducks Unlimited for materials and help from Minden and Gibbon high school students with construction and monitoring, the project will bring in a new, younger group of volunteers. Once the boxes are in place, staff and volunteers will monitor the nests for success.

Wood Ducks are beautiful and native to Nebraska. Their numbers are believed to be limited in many areas because there are not enough natural nesting cavities. This project will help ensure Wood Ducks a place to raise their young right here on Rowe Sanctuary as well as connect a group of students to nature.



photo by Vaughn Cottman

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

Leaving a gift to support a cause that has been important in your life is easier than you may think! Many of our supporters like to leave money to Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary in their wills or estate plans. This is a simple way to provide for your heirs and include Audubon in your plans as well.

You can also name Rowe Sanctuary as a beneficiary of a retirement plan, life insurance policy, or other financial account. These gifts cost you nothing now, require no minimum contribution, and allow you the option to change your beneficiaries at any time.

For more information, request our free guide today by contacting Melissa Filipi at 402-797-2301 / mfilipi@audubon.org, or Shari Kolding at 512-236-9076 / skolding@audubon.org. You may also download our guides and other information at www.audubon.org/legacy.



Melissa Filipi

EDUCATION/OUTREACH

New This Year: Crane Behavior Basics

It happens nowhere else on earth. But it does happen right here in Nebraska. To be more specific, it is happening right now in central Nebraska along the Platte River.

What is it? It is the largest gathering of Sandhill Cranes...no...let's rephrase that. It is the largest gathering of any type of crane in the world. Many call this one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on the planet.

It is incredible to see the masses of cranes, but it is also fascinating to watch cranes interact with each other. Cranes have complex, human-like social behaviors that have long touched people's souls. Because of this emotional connection, many cultures throughout history have given these tall, beautiful birds human attributes.

Learn to recognize some of these behaviors by joining one of Rowe Sanctuary's fun interactive Crane Behavior Basics workshops. The workshops are being offered daily from March 13 through April 10. Be sure to look at our Calendar of Events on page 2 and check our new website for dates and time.



photo by Martin Knippel

*Look for our Rowe-ing Naturalists wearing ASK ME buttons. They will be roaming the Center and on the trails ready and willing to answer your questions with their wealth of knowledge about the river, the cranes, and Rowe Sanctuary's conservation efforts.



Tess Bruner—Education Coordinator

Entering her second year as the summer camp coordinator in 2016, Tess Bruner is adding to her responsibilities. This year she will also assist with all aspects of the Education and Outreach Program.

Tess grew up in Shelton, Nebraska, attended Shelton Public schools, graduating in 2010. Tess was a camp Peer Leader in the summer of 2008 at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, and has helped with the camp ever since. Spending time working with kids at Rowe Sanctuary was one reason she decided to pursue an elementary education degree at Hastings College. Tess graduated from Hastings College in 2014, and has been a substitute elementary teacher for the Hastings Public School district, as well as an educator for Prairie Loft Center for Outdoor and Agricultural Learning prior to joining the Rowe Sanctuary staff. When Tess is not teaching or coordinating camps, she enjoys reading, playing the piano, and spending time outside.

NEW WAYS TO CONNECT TO AUDUBON'S ROWE SANCTUARY

There are many ways to keep up with Rowe Sanctuary on social media. Like and follow our Facebook page, follow us on Twitter (@rowesanctuary), and follow rowesanctuary on Instagram.

Don't forget to post your experiences using #RoweSanctuary #SandhillCranes #Cranes #Audubon. You can also download our new app by scanning the QR code, or by using your tablet or phone's internet and go to audubonsrowesanctuary.appsme.com



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many ways that you can help us fulfill our mission of conserving the Platte River and the birds that rely on it. Support of all types makes such a difference, with your help we can make the world a better place!

- Become a volunteer. Our volunteers are an important part of our successes. There are many opportunities available that can fit in to any schedule. We're happy to play "matchmaker" and find the perfect volunteer opportunity for your interests, skills, and time!
- Tell your friends and family about us! Raising awareness of our work opens many doors, and introduces a new group of volunteers, donors, and supporters to our mission.
- Include us in your estate plans. Several simple, flexible, tax-advantaged options can benefit your heirs and Rowe Sanctuary at the same time.
- Donate. We rely on the generous support of our donors for the work that we do. We do not receive funding from any national organization. All money raised here, stays here. You can return a gift in the envelope provided, visit our website to donate online, or stop by our Education Center to make a gift in person.
- Commemorate a life event with a gift in honor or memory of friends, family, or occasions.
- Take a look at our wish list on page 8 for additional gift ideas.
- Become a monthly donor. You can provide regular, ongoing support for our work by visiting our website, rowe.audubon.org.

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Crane River
CHRONICLES

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CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

*Crane Cam - To watch the river, please
go to <http://rowe.audubon.org/crane-cam>.*

*The mission of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary is
"to conserve and restore the Platte River ecosystem, focusing on cranes, other wildlife, and their
habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."*



100% POST CONSUMER WASTE


IAIN NICOLSON Audubon
CENTER AT ROWE SANCTUARY

44450 Elm Island Road
Gibbon, NE 68840
Phone: (308) 468-5282
rowe.audubon.org

Open Monday - Friday 9 - 5; Sunday 1 - 4
Open 7 days a week Feb. 15 - April 15

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Tess Bruner - Education Coordinator
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Rowe Wish List

Snow blade for Honda ATV

Small ATV trailer

4 new game/trail cameras,
8-8GB or larger SD memory cards
SD card reader for iPad

Drone and GoPro camera,
and training to use it

New medium to large-size chainsaw

Two pair chainsaw chaps
(smaller and larger)

1-2 good backpack sprayers
See: <http://www.minnesotawanner.com/SP1-BACKPACK-SPRAYER-p/sp1.htm>

\$5 million endowment



Thanks to all of you who have liked us on Facebook. Be sure to check out our page to see what's happening throughout the year.