



IAIN NICOLSON Audubon CENTER AT ROWE SANCTUARY

Crane River **CHRONICLES**

SUMMER 2016



Message from the Director *Bill Taddicken*



The mission of Audubon's 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. To accomplish this conservation work we use an extensive tool box, provided by our supporters, to directly impact the land now, and conservation of the Platte River in the future.

To directly improve and restore the habitat we pull a variety of tools from the kit. We use prescribed fire each spring along with grazing and haying in the summer and fall. River channels must be cleared of vegetation with machinery. Invasive plants must be removed using biological controls, by hand, with chemicals, and other methods to ensure native plants have a chance to thrive.

Tools such as breeding bird surveys and plant monitoring using GIS technology are also used to ensure our management efforts are having a positive effect on the habitat and the animals.

Education is another important conservation tool. Our Education programs provide learning experiences in nature, so the future of the Platte River will be bright. These personal experiences are what connects people to the land, which drives people to take action to protect it. These programs include the educational crane viewing experience, the volunteer program, school programs, summer camps, our Stewardship Board, and all of the community outreach conducted each year, as well as much more.

In addition to the tools used here on the land that we own and manage we are also using collaborative leadership tools on the entire Platte River Basin. Audubon staff play leadership roles with the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program and the Platte Valley Weed Management Area as well as many others in order to improve the entire Platte River system.

In the following news articles, you will see many of the tools that you have provided in order to protect, improve and restore the river for wildlife and future generations of people. It truly is our supporters and volunteers that gives Audubon the ability to make this all happen.

Sincerely,

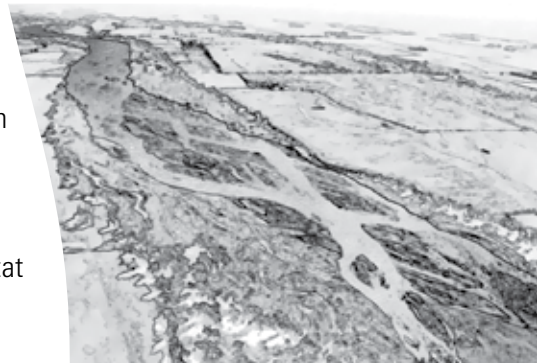
Bill Taddicken

Calendar of Events
p.2

Stewardship Board
p.3

Habitat
p.4

Outreach
p.7



Save the Date

River Runs Through It

**Saturday
October 8, 2016**

Join us for a Platte River
sunset and a sustainable meal
paired with fine wines and
great company.
Featuring a gourmet menu
provided by Dario Schicke
of Avoli Osteria.

MESSAGE FROM STATE DIRECTOR *Marian Langan*



What a year! Summer may be a relaxing time for many - school is out, vacations are planned, and many use this time to recharge our batteries. For Audubon, summer brings the end of one fiscal year and the start of the next. It also brings the start of our nature camps,

summer bird monitoring, and many more habitat management activities.

I am always amazed at everything you help us do! You've read about the great work you brought to life at Rowe Sanctuary, but did you know you also had a larger impact across our state?

- You helped us partner with the Sandhills Task Force, Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, Center for Rural Affairs,

and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to host the Summer Grazing and Birding Tour in the Sandhills.

- You helped us build partnerships to protect the Niobrara Scenic River.
- You helped us protect native tallgrass prairie in eastern Nebraska.
- And, of course, you helped protect the Platte River for birds, wildlife, and our communities.

Your support makes all the difference and we deeply appreciate it!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marian Langan".

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer is a great time to explore the natural world and there is no better place to do that but here at Rowe Sanctuary. Our conservation education programs help people of all ages discover, connect, and take care of nature by encouraging direct personal experiences out on the land and in the river. As people develop a connection, they learn that they too play an important role in our conservation efforts. Want to learn more how these programs work? Then come join us!

Rowe Nature Walks WEDNESDAY – 8:00 AM

Beginning June 8, come and join our expert staff on weekly hour-long walks to discover the natural treasures Rowe Sanctuary has to offer. Whether it is the Platte River, the wetlands, or the prairie, this is the perfect place to discover the birds, animals, and plants of the Sanctuary.

These free weekly walks will begin at 8:00 am every Wednesday. All ages are welcome. All walks will be on dirt trails and participants are urged to wear comfortable close-toed shoes, and bring sunscreen, insect repellent and water. Sorry, pets are not allowed. For more information, call (308) 468-5282 or email Keanna at kleonard@audubon.org.

Platte River Safari Camps JUNE 20-23 AND JUNE 27-30

Come celebrate twenty years of camp on the river! Platte River Safari (formally known as SOAR) is a get-dirty camp for second through fifth graders. Campers explore the prairie and river discovering the great diversity of life that exists just beyond their own backyards. For more information, call (308) 468-5282 or email Tess at tbruner@audubon.org.

Are you a former camper, peer leader, or educator? You are invited to join the twenty-year celebration on Wednesday June 22 or 29 at 7:30 pm at our family program. Please RSVP by June 15 to Tess at tbruner@audubon.org. Not able to join us, send Tess your favorite camp memories.

Butterfly Monitoring JULY 7 - 8:00 AM

Join us in this citizen science project and help monitor Regal Fritillaries and Monarch Butterflies. For more information, call (308) 468-5282 or email Anne at awinkel@audubon.org.

Firefly Picnic JULY 8 - 7:30 PM

The Firefly Picnic is a naturally good time for all ages! Bring a snack picnic and experience the sunset on the Platte River. Then spend a relaxing evening investigating fireflies and other nighttime insects. You are welcome to bring a plastic jar or container to observe these night creatures up close! For more information, call (308) 468-5282 or email Keanna at kleonard@audubon.org.

Prairie Seed Harvesting JULY 11- 7:00 PM

Interested in prairie restoration? Then this is the program for you. The Nature Conservancy has restored many acres of cropland back to prairie through seed harvesting efforts in the Platte River Valley. Mardell Jasnowski, Operations Assistant at the Nature Conservancy Eastern Nebraska Program Office, will discuss and demonstrate the strategies they use for prairie seed harvesting. For more information, call (308) 468-5282 or email Anne at awinkel@audubon.org.

Prairie Walk AUGUST 4 - 7:00 PM

Join State Botanist Gerry Steinauer on a walk through Rowe Sanctuary's prairies to explore the native prairie plants that are in bloom. For more information, call (308) 468-5282 or email Anne at awinkel@audubon.org.

MESSAGE FROM STEWARDSHIP BOARD



Kate Benzel

In many ways I've always liked being an explorer and adventurer, and working with Rowe Sanctuary provides me that experience, not only imaginatively but also literally by walking the trails and offering programs for others to experience Platte River nature. The Rowe Sanctuary mission 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. And when I read this, I thought back 210 years ago in 1806 when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark returned from their expedition up the Mississippi River exploring America's New West. When President Thomas Jefferson, the third U.S. President, commissioned the Expedition in 1803, the goal was to observe, collect, document, and classify the findings along the way of their Expedition to the Pacific Ocean.



Lewis & Clark Expedition with Sacagawea

Those are essentially the same goals we have at Rowe Sanctuary today and it's incredibly rewarding still to have organizations like Rowe Sanctuary protecting the vitally important Platte River community. I feel honored and privileged to be part of their Stewardship Board and to carry on a longstanding American tradition to preserve our natural treasures and to pass along those amazing experiences.

Sincerely,

Kate Benzel



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

Rowe Sanctuary Kids' Expedition

CALENDAR OF EVENTS *continued*

Blues on the Banks AUGUST 26 – 6:30 PM

Come to Rowe Sanctuary and enjoy a late summer evening on the banks of the Platte River. There will be burgers and brats and Platte Valley Brewery's specially made brews, evening walks through the prairie, and of course, blues music by the OK Sisters with Marty Tilley. Admission is \$15 per person and participants must be 21 years of age to attend. Space is limited, so make your reservations early by calling Rowe Sanctuary at (308) 468-5282 or email Keanna at kleonard@audubon.org. Reservations must be made by Wednesday, August 17.

Rowe Nature Retreat SEPTEMBER 17

Adults, are you looking for a nature camp experience of your own? If so, watch for details on our next Rowe Nature Retreat coming this fall. This camp focuses on exploring the Platte River ecosystem as a naturalist does - with our senses. You will learn fundamental skills of observation, identification, and recording field notes and reflections. For more information, call (308) 468-5282 or email Cindy at choulden@audubon.org.

River Runs Through It OCTOBER 8 – 5:00 PM

Join us for a Platte River sunset and a sustainable meal paired with fine wines and great company celebrating the conservation efforts of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. For more information, call (308) 468-5282 or email Cindy at choulden@audubon.org.



HABITAT

Grant Funds Restore Important Habitat

When Rowe Sanctuary expanded its protection of one of the most important habitat complexes for migrating Sandhill and Whooping Cranes through the purchase of the 590 acres in 2014, a clear vision emerged for reconnecting Platte River and adjacent wet meadow habitat at a larger scale.

A recent grant award from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, along with matching funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, will quickly bring that vision into focus. In April the Trust Board announced that the "Integrating New Core Habitat at Rowe Sanctuary" project would be one of the 118 projects across the state receiving grant awards this year.

The activities made possible through the grant, center around restoring the property's farm field back to native prairie. This will contribute to continuity of a large wet meadow block and bring that natural habitat back to the river's edge. By eliminating the need to irrigate farm fields at the site, we are able to bury and remove nearly a mile of above-ground power lines which are a significant hazard running adjacent to one of the largest crane roosts in the world. Tree clearing on the banks of the river will remove more than a mile of obstructions between the wet meadows and the river bringing back that historical connection. Matching funds will provide improved infrastructure for managing the meadows with rotational grazing and other activities.



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

Ring Necked Pheasant Counts

This spring Rowe Sanctuary staff conducted a Ring-necked Pheasant survey in order to estimate the population in the area. The survey includes 20 stops along a set route on the county roads surrounding the Sanctuary with each stop one mile apart. At each stop staff counted how many male Ring-necked Pheasant crow calls they heard over a two minute period to get a rough population count. The results of this year's counts were an average of 164 pheasant crows heard each morning with the most heard right outside of the center with 44 pheasant crows heard on average in that location. While Rowe Sanctuary does not manage directly for Ring-necked Pheasants, they benefit from the management of natural habitats at the Sanctuary and a robust population can serve as an indicator of quality grassland habitat. There is also a lot of funding that is available for pheasant habitat work that provides benefits for declining grassland birds as well. These surveys will be useful when applying for these funds.

Breeding Bird Surveys Help Improve Management

In early June, staff and volunteers will begin a third season collecting information about birds that nest in the Sanctuary's grasslands. More than half of the area at Rowe Sanctuary is native grasslands and the birds that nest in those habitats are, as a group, declining in numbers faster than any other on the continent. The annual surveys take place in repeated locations throughout the property and utilize GIS technology to record actual locations of birds on the landscape. The resulting data from year to year, and over time, gives us clear information about how our management activities are affecting these birds. In just two years we've seen how projects, prescribed fire and tree clearing specifically, have increased the number of birds using a site and increased the percentage of those birds that are target species, such as Bobolinks.



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

Rowe Gets New Tractor

Sometimes the tools that we need in our "conservation toolbox" are very literally...tools. Thanks to targeted support from Mike and Jan Smith as well as the Theodore G. Baldwin Foundation and general support from all of you, we were recently able to purchase a new tractor. The bright blue New Holland tractor will be used to mow trails, build and demolish fence, disk sandbars, cut trees, move dirt, pull hayrack rides, and a hundred other jobs around the Sanctuary.



EDUCATION

Twenty Years of Rowe Sanctuary Summer Camps

Twenty Years of Nature Education

It's a tradition! Rowe Sanctuary's summer camp program, formerly known as SOAR and now called Platte River Safari, has been getting kids out on the land and in the river for twenty years this summer.

Over the past twenty years thousands of children have had an incredible outdoor learning experience while having the time of their lives in nature. Each camp is a fun and intensive week of hands-on, get-wet activities where campers along with their high school and college peer leaders explore the great diversity of life in the prairie and the river.

One of the remarkable parts of the Safari camps is the dedicated team of educators who make this all happen. In fact, Lisa Clapper, Minden Middle School Science Teacher, has been an indispensable member of the team for all twenty years. Her wealth of knowledge and passion for getting kids outdoors has helped make the camps the success they are today.

Besides the education team, Rowe Sanctuary could not offer these camps without the many presenters and adult leaders who take the time to come out and educate our campers. It is also all of our wonderful supporters who have made this possible over the years. Thank you all for your support these past twenty years.

If you missed this year's camps and want to be a part of the tradition, don't worry! You can get on our mailing list for or 2017 camps by contacting Keanna Leonard at kleonard@audubon.org.



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

CITIZEN SCIENCE



Whooping Crane Cooperative Recovery Initiative Project

During spring migration, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture and partner staff conducted 24 aerial Whooping Crane surveys in the western basins. The flight survey period began at the end of February, a week ahead of schedule, due to an uncharacteristically early

migration. During a flight in early April, four Whooping Cranes were observed on a Waterfowl Production Area, although they quickly continued their northward trek later that same day. This is the final year of 4-year long effort and the remaining flight surveys will be conducted in October and November 2016.

These Whooping Crane monitoring surveys are one small part of a larger USFWS Cooperative Recovery Initiative (CRI) project. The CRI was established to fund conservation projects that directly benefit endangered species on or near national wildlife refuges. The results of these efforts will be used to better inform future Whooping Crane conservation actions in the RWB.

The RWBJV would like to thank Alex Engel, Heather Johnson, Andrew Pierson, and Alyx Vogel, as well as the pilot crew and staff at Kearney Aviation Center, for assistance with the flight surveys. Additionally, Jeff Drahota and Matt Rabbe provided ground support. This project would not be possible without the support and dedication of our partners.

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

Charitable Giving Made Easy!

The IRA Charitable Rollover enables individuals age 70½ and older to make outright gifts up to \$100,000 total from their IRAs to charities, without claiming the distribution as income. In December 2015, this legislation was made a permanent part of the tax code.

All donations must be completed before December 31 to be eligible for the IRA Charitable Rollover in the current tax year. Gifts must be made directly from the qualified IRA administrator to the charity.



Melissa Filipi

If you are interested, please contact Melissa Filipi, Director of Philanthropy, Audubon Nebraska, (402) 797-2301 or mfilipi@audubon.org. You can also contact Shari Kolding, Director of Gift Planning, National Audubon Society, (512) 236-9076; skolding@audubon.org.

Please have your IRA plan administrator send a check to: Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary, 44450 Elm Island Rd Gibbon, NE 68840 (308) 468-5282

Important points to consider:

- You must be at least age 70½.
- The gift must come directly to Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary from your IRA account administrator, in the form of a check.
- The Rollover gift may come from a Traditional or a Roth IRA (special exclusions may apply to other types of IRA accounts).
- There is NO income tax on the withdrawal, there is also no tax deduction.

What are the advantages?

- Benefit Rowe Sanctuary's work in a meaningful way today.
- Meet your Minimum Required Distribution (MRD).
- Pay no income tax on the amount withdrawn for your gift.
- Give above your deductible limit of 50% of adjusted gross income.

Did you know, if you include Audubon in your estate plans you become part of a great legacy! You join with others who have made a commitment to our shared vision and become part of the Grinnell Legacy Society. This is our way of recognizing friends like you who have provided for the future of birds and their habitat. Membership in the Grinnell Legacy Society involves no dues or obligations. It simply allows us to thank you and, with your permission, to recognize you for the plans you have made.

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.

OUTREACH

Volunteers Give Special Donation

David Yarnold, National Audubon's President and CEO, was recently interviewed in Audubon's magazine and gave everyone a sneak peek into Audubon's new strategic plan. He explained the plan as trying to answer the question, "If Audubon truly lived up to its potential, how much good could we do?"

There are many components to realizing our potential as an Audubon network but one that is vital here at Rowe Sanctuary and all over the country is continuing to cultivate and grow our most valuable network; our volunteers. Volunteers give us a voice that reaches far beyond our small staff and can enlist hundreds of people to work on behalf of Audubon.

We're very lucky at Rowe Sanctuary to have such a committed volunteer corps. During this last crane season we had an incredible response from our volunteers. Our volunteers donated 7,414 hours! According to the Federal Government, volunteer hours are valued at \$23.56/hour which equates to \$174,673 that can be used as match on grants.

What makes volunteer hours such a special donation is that everyone comes to us on a level playing field. Everyone has the same 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days in a year.



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

Time is a finite resource and volunteers are busy people. Many of our volunteers travel long distances, work, have families, and other civic responsibilities. Our volunteers illustrate something more powerful than staff can ever show. Staff is paid for their time but our volunteers do this strictly out of dedication and love of the resource. What better way to show their dedication to conservation than by the precious hours that are donated to Rowe Sanctuary. Thanks to all of you that volunteer your time for a cause that's important in your life.

Summer Projects Focus on Butterflies and Prairies



Photo by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

This summer the volunteer program is focusing on our prairies. Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary has a wide variety of prairies. These

tracts of land vary from high-diversity prairie restorations to remnant native prairies.

Two new projects will begin this fall that will utilize volunteers as scientists on the prairie. In June and July we will start formal monitoring of Monarch and Regal Fritillary butterflies. The Monarch butterfly is a popular butterfly, easy to recognize and well known for its reliance on milkweed. Regal Fritillaries are lesser known butterflies and rely on prairie plants, especially Prairie Violets, and require large tracts of grassland to survive. We chose each of these species because of their declining numbers. Both these species could soon be listed under the endangered species act. It's well-known that butterflies need nectar from flowers to survive so by learning about how our butterfly populations are doing can teach us a lot about the quality of our habitat.

A second new volunteer opportunity this summer is a prairie seed harvesting project. Plants and birds surviving in a fragmented landscape need all the help they can get. By harvesting local ecotype seed we can continue to enhance our habitat where grassland birds thrive and people of all ages come to enjoy all the wildlife on the Platte River.

For more information on how you can be a part of these exciting projects please contact Anne Winkle at 308-468-5282 or awinkel@audubon.org.

Crane River
CHRONICLES

Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary
44450 Elm Island Road
Gibbon, NE 68840-4019

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 22
GIBBON, NE 68840

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

Bill Taddicken – Director
Keanna Leonard – Education Director
Andrew Pierson – Director of Conservation
Kent Skaggs – Operations Manager
Anne Winkel – Outreach Coordinator
Sharon Ingram – Nature Store Manager
Autumn Taddicken – Projects Manager
Tess Bruner – Temporary Education Coordinator
Cody Wagner – Temporary Habitat Technician

Audubon Nebraska

Marian Langan – Executive Director
Melissa Filipi – Director of Philanthropy
Carey Collingham – Corporate and Foundation Coordinator
Cindy Houlden – Donor Relations Coordinator

Stewardship Advisory Board

Leslie Abegglen	Becky Evers	Brian Moody
Rob Ahlschwede	Ben Hirschfeld	Margery Nicolson
Susan Ahlschwede	Jeni Homan	Carol Wahl
Kate Benzel	Roger Jones	Greg Williams
Ed Berglund	Carol Lindstrom	
Charles Bicak	Janice MacGregor	
Stan Dart	Jenni Martin	

Rowe Wish List

SP1 Professional Backpack Sprayer,
4 Gallon - \$150

Chain saw chaps 2 pair - \$125 each

3-point post hole digger - \$800

2 -Flat Screen TV's 40" for display use -
\$300 each

6- Binoculars for public use. - \$150 each



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.