



# ZHURAYL

A Newsletter of Friends of Muraviovka Park

## The Year of the Flood

Dr. Sergei and Elena Smirenski

Updates from Muraviovka Park

Many FOMP members already know about the highly unusual weather throughout this year that brought historic 150-year flooding to the Amur River Basin. Here is the full story of how it developed and how it affected the Park, its wildlife, and people.

### Historic Flooding

Highly unusual deep and late snow cover from January – April, combined with frequent and abundant rains in May, July and August, created the most severe flooding situation in the Amur River Basin on record. From 1 May through 16 August, 2013, 608 mm (24 in) of precipitation fell in the Blagoveshchensk area. By mid-August, 127 towns and villages in the Amur River Basin were under water, 80 of which were in the Amur Region. By 18 August, the Amur River water level had exceeded its historic maximum by 54 cm (21 in) (696 cm (23 feet) compared to 642 cm (21 feet) in 1897). The flooding greatly affected both wildlife and the economy of the region. Even the tiny upper stream of the Giltchin River turned into a powerful water flow. Vast wetland areas that remained very dry during the last decade now have standing water. Rising waters in July and August resulted in extensive losses of wildlife and crops.

In August, due to continued rains and flooding of the Amur River, watersheds of the Amur and Zeya Rivers, and their tributaries were mostly under water. A



Road was covered by deep snow and for weeks was closed even for tractors.  
Photo by S.Yakovenko



Above left: The Park and surrounding areas were flooded.



Above right: Road near the Park in July flooded by rain water. Photo by V. Dugintsov

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## Muraviovka Park Rocks!

*Ivan Chernichkin, Student in the 10 A (Senior) class at Tambovka Public High School, participant in the Linguistic – Ecological Session at Muraviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use*

There are 102 nature reserves and 45 national parks in Russia today,

most of them in Siberia and the Far East. The people who work at these reserves and parks are dedicated to protecting, conserving and studying our country's nature and to educating children about ecology. These are genuine enthusiasts, committed to their work; they selflessly do whatever they can to conserve Russia's natural and cultural heritage.

Muraviovka Park is a most remarkable place, not only of the Amur Region, but of Tambovka District, where I was born and where I live. I know this not only from hearsay; I've already been at the Park three times myself. Beautiful birds live at this park – White-naped and Red-crowned Cranes, geese, Mandarin Ducks, wrynecks, and storks along with over 280 other species of birds, some of which, tragically, are becoming more and more rare.

Each year, teachers come to the Park from America to help us. Russian children learn to understand and ethically relate to nature; these people become our good mentors and our friends.

In 2013 we were doubly fortunate to also have scholars from Germany and Spain at the Park. Together we observed rare birds and plants that are listed in the Red Data Book. This year, together with our German friends, we banded rare birds. Last but not least, the opportunity to simply spend time with foreigners

was great practice for our English. From every lesson and every chance to talk to our foreign friends we learned something new, and those new things were always interesting.

Today the Park is in great need of help, both in terms of labor (for example, helping the Park teach a little crane to live free in the wild) and monetary support. I want to appeal to all residents, young and old: People, do not allow yourselves to be indifferent! These rare animals need our help to survive! I'm positive that if you have the chance to visit Muraviovka Park, you will fall in love with it once and for all, as profoundly as I did!

On June 1st, 2014, Muraviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use will celebrate its 20-year anniversary. I would like to express profound gratitude, from the bottom of my heart, to the founders of this beautiful corner of the natural world, remarkable people who put their hearts and souls into caring for the natural heritage of the Park, who have boundless love for the mission of this natural sanctuary, and to all those who support the survival of rare, beautiful birds and plants.

*I thank you for how hard you strive*

*To safeguard Nature's life -- so all*

*The sounding calls of birds may thrive,*

*And insects through the grass may crawl.*

*May your labor -- needed, splendid,  
bright --*

*Be held, like children's laughter, dear;*

*May your companions all your life*

*Find fortune, wealth, success, good  
cheer!*

## Park's Victory in Court

On 17 February 2014, the Presidium of the Amur Province Court (Russia) ruled that the County Prosecutor's warning to Muraviovka Park issued in April 2013 contradicts the Russian laws, and therefore is annulled. The prosecutor's warning requested the Park to register with the Russian government as a "foreign agent" as a Russian NGO that receives funds from abroad (mostly through the International Crane Foundation) and at the same time is involved in "political activities." The prosecutor could only come up with one such activity -- collecting signatures under petition to the Amur Governor to ban the barbaric spring hunt of waterbirds – but the Court stated that, according to the Russian law, it is not political but a nature protection activity required from each Russian citizen by the Russian constitution. The court's ruling says that the Park does not conduct political activities, therefore does not have to register as "foreign agent." (Registering as such would mean the end to this unique project because registered "foreign agents" are subjected to special governmental scrutiny and extra audits, for which the Park does not have the funds and would have to shut down – not even speaking of the perception by local people of an NGO labeled as a foreign agent.) Thank you for all your support during this challenging time!

## From Volunteer to Manager

*Svetlana M. Yakovenko, Muraviovka Park Interim Director*

My association with Muraviovka Park began a long time ago, when I was a sophomore at the Blagoveshchensk Campus of the Moscow Entrepreneurship Academy. Students in my class actively participated in all kinds of conferences and after one of those, held in May 2000 at the local Teachers' University, we were treated to a field trip to Muraviovka Park. We did not have any luck with the weather – it was a foggy day, the rain was drizzling, and the roads were horrible. We left our lunches on the bus and took a long and difficult walk on the muddy road, until our desired destination, the vast Muraviovka wetlands, had finally opened up before us.

As students, we designed class projects, and an idea was hovering in the air to create a campground/cultural center that could host a variety of workshops, conferences, youth symposia and other events. And of course we saw ourselves as future attendees, taking advantage of these exciting events.

The rain drizzled on, there were no cranes, but we got very excited when we spotted a “duck” on the lake. To see the bird better we passed along binoculars, and I even tried to take a photo of the bird through the Park's telescope. The “duck” turned out to be a Great Crested Grebe. We were told about the Park, its importance for endangered and rare birds such as cranes and storks, and about field research conducted in the Park by scientists from Russia, Japan, the USA and other countries. To us, residents of the land's end, international collaboration was a very abstract idea, far removed from our real life – and still here, in the middle of swampy nowhere, far away from the city and all the advantages of civilization, these fantastic joint projects studying and preserving

birds had become a part of everyday life!

After my graduation from the Academy I began working at the Amur Trade and Industries Chamber, but pristine nature was calling me, so during my summer vacation in 2005 I went to Khinganski Nature Reserve as a volunteer. I helped restore trails, catch small rodents for surveys, and create a computer database for their bird data. I liked this work and would have loved to get a full-time job with the reserve, but there were no vacancies. Someone advised me to speak with Yuri Darman, staff of the Far-eastern Russia Branch of Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), and he told me to contact Muraviovka Park. In August I attended an international meeting at the Park dedicated to the endangered Red-crowned Crane. I got to know the Park staff – Sergei Smirenski, Marina Kolodina, Galina Nosachenko and met with Nastya Shapoval, participant of many summer camps at the Park. When I first met with Elena Smirenski, one of the organizers of the Park and the meeting, I got a feeling that she and I had been close friends for a long time. When I found out about the Park's plans, I offered my assistance in preparing a children's book about cranes for publication and helped organize the traditional festival “See You Next Spring, Cranes!”

Life in the Park was very different from city life; even during the busiest days the friendly and good-natured atmosphere prevailed, there was always time for fun. That was exactly what I dreamed of during my student years! So when I was asked if I would like to join the Park staff, I instantly agreed.

During my first winter at Muraviovka, I set up a website for the Park and updated it regularly, so I



*Svetlana, Interim Director, and Vanya, her son. Photo taken in 2012.*

learned about all the wonderful programs run by the Park. With great anticipation I looked forward to the international summer camps that have been held at the Park from the time of its birth in 1994. But little did I know about the enormous amount of work and resources that had to be put into organizing, coordinating, and carrying out these outdoor classes about wildlife and wetlands that are so loved by their participants.

Any of numerous “minor” details could thwart the implementation of the project and spoil the participants' spirit. I was especially worried about the cooks for the camp. The Park invited students from the local Trade and Economy College as cooks, so almost every summer there were new recruits. To my relief, two male students, who cooked for the Park during the previous summer, had agreed to come back. They did a marvelous job. Working together with Andrei Yakovenko eventually led to our marriage, and in 2008 our son Vanya was born. Although my workload had doubled and my family became my first priority, I still lived the Park life and participated in it as much as I could. Even as a 6-month-old baby our son began accompanying me on my errands for the Park. Now Vanya also shares our concerns and cares about the Park and he knows about our birds and

*Manager...continued on pages 6*

# An Overwhelming Response to a Call for Help

*Sergei and Elena Smirenski*

In the southern Amur Region snowfalls are rare and disappear long before the arrival of spring under the powerful forces of sunshine, cold, and wind. So no one expected the frequent and abundant snowfalls that lasted throughout this winter and two months into spring. No wonder the arrival of migratory birds was significantly delayed. Cranes and storks arrived 12 days behind schedule. Not waiting any longer for milder weather, the birds began their journey home – as if they didn't wish to return to their nesting site and find it taken over by squatters! A couple of warmer April days gave flickers of hope, but starting 13

April blizzards buried the wetlands, meadows, and crop fields under a thick white blanket, depriving wildlife of food for over 10 days. Food for returning birds is always scarce in the Muraviovka area in early spring, and in good years Park staff plant corn to lure birds and spread up to 20 tons of wheat and barley in the fields, stored for this purpose in the Park's barns. Lower yields in 2012 left little grain to spread at feeding sites, not enough to feed the hungry birds.

Through the Russian Bird Conservation Union website, TV stations, and newspapers we made a

passionate appeal to the friends of birds in the Amur Region and beyond. The same day much needed help began to arrive! People started buying and delivering corn, wheat, and small fish that our staff and volunteers immediately brought to the fields. The roads were a muddy mess and tractors could not go far, so our wonderful volunteers carried heavy bags of food on their backs for several hundred yards. We were very happy to see that the cranes and storks spotted



*Snow makes finding food difficult for cranes.*  
Photo by A. Isaev

the food right away, were not shy of people, and by no means waited for a special invitation to the feast! The help kept coming. A neighboring co-op provided a truck and driver to help with shipping. Concerned people from the Amur Region, other parts of

Russia, Armenia, and USA began wiring money to the Park's bank so we could buy and spread more fish and grain. The birds were saved.

The snow finally melted but Nature kept sending us new surprises. Typically, spring is dry, but this year frequent and abundant rains began pouring in April over melting snow and lasted through early June. Huge areas of cropland flooded and

turned into wetlands; as a result, shore birds, ducks and grebes began building their nests in the crop fields. The water kept coming and flooded numerous nests of waterbirds. Once again our volunteers came to the

rescue. We managed to save a White-naped Crane nest by bringing bundles of old grass and elevating the nest above the water level, and a few

days later two chicks hatched.

Such prompt and overwhelming responses to our calls for help provide strong hope for the future for both birds and people of the Amur Land!



*Park's staff and volunteers deliver and distribute corn to the fields for cranes.*  
Photo by V. Dugintsov



# Not by Bread Alone

By Natalia Gromova, Deputy Principal, Kuropatino School, Amur Region and  
a member of the Muraviovka Park Board of Trustees

I have participated in Muraviovka Park's programs since 1994. At first, I attended the international summer camps on hands-on and outdoor environmental education. In summer 1994 we stayed in old army tents, but since then a good infrastructure has been developed that allows camps, field research, and other activities to be conducted from April through October. I believe that the direct interaction between school students and teachers from different countries in a natural setting that occurs at the Park has been highly successful. Many participants travel many miles not just to receive knowledge and skills but also to fulfill their longing for this fellowship, for which the Park has created truly unique conditions.

I need and cherish my involvement with the Park for several reasons:

1. For my soul, for a human being lives not by bread alone.
2. To improve my teaching skills. Many years of collaboration with teachers from different countries have furthered my formation as a teacher and wildlife biologist. I have been learning new, better ways to create both my lessons and my relationships with my students.
3. My direct association with scientists helps me to become more confident as a teacher, who can deliver more information and better explain complex concepts to her students.
4. Training visits to the USA, organized by the Park and

its friends, helped me to understand that there are differences among countries but people – not governments – create their own living conditions. I

have come to understand that the better the conditions are that we ourselves have created in our homeland, the more diverse and interesting our lives will be. This I always tell to my students.

5. Participation in international environmental education camps in China convinced me that knowledge is among the most precious values of modern life. What is academic or practical knowledge today will tomorrow be transformed into convictions, needs, and activities. The Park helped me understand this and created conditions to conduct types of activities that are rarely conducted in our schools today.
6. The Park helped me believe in my own strengths and abilities and gain more confidence in my work and my daily life. In 2010, this helped me become one of the Best Teachers of Russia, when I won the All-Russia Presidential Contest.
7. I learned to communicate freely and confidently with people of all ranks, positions,



and education, because I learned to value people not by their rank or wealth, but by the quality of their soul and knowledge.

8. My deep convictions about the importance of caring for nature and my protective attitude toward all living things are shared by many of my current and former students. Some of them have become teachers of biology and geography, doctors and nurses, foresters and game wardens. At our reunions we often remember Muraviovka Park as something that we share and treasure, that links and unites us, something that played a significant role in our lives.
9. I believe the educational potential of the Park is far from being exhausted and we still have many plans to implement in the future. Many schools in our Tambovka District, where the Park is located, as well as of the entire Amur Region are using extracurricular educational opportunities offered by Muraviovka Park and are actively collaborating on many educational projects with the Park.

## Help them Grow with Adopt-a-Nest!

Adopt-A-Nest is a great way to help protect nest sites for Red-crowned Cranes, White-naped Cranes, Oriental White Storks, and all the other species that raise their young at Muraviotka Park.

For a minimum "adoption fee" of \$50, those who adopt a nest (or receive it as a gift) will be acknowledged with a certificate, crane photo, and a book about cranes, their habits, and habitats. This package comes complete with postcards from the Park and a one-year membership in the Friends of Muraviotka Park. Repeat participants in the Adopt-a-Nest program receive a



*For more information or to request an adoption brochure, contact Elena Smirenski at [elena@savingcranes.org](mailto:elena@savingcranes.org).*

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wildfires from his own experience. Last year my 5-year-old began helping me take care of our captive cranes (I had to do it on weekends when our bird keeper took his days off). Not every grown-up can perform this work properly and responsibly!

The years have passed but the same atmosphere reigns in the Park – one of light humor, big ideas and accomplishments, happiness from meetings with old and new friends, experts who participate in the Park's research and education program. I am permanently busy running the Park's daily operations, so when once in a while I manage to get away and just roam across the Park's vast expanses, listening to the quiet music of rustling grasses, trees, and birds, once again marveling at the beautiful ugliness of the water plant Euryale, I experience indescribable feelings of liberty, delight, and free flight. From year to year the amount of work and

challenges never declines, but more and more often I find myself thinking that it is time to look around and back and understand what all the efforts of the Park's staff and its many friends and volunteers have gone toward, what we have achieved and where we failed, and why.

Time flies by imperceptibly, giving us subtle hints of its passing in most unusual ways. A pine tree that one day we planted as a seedling – whose shadow can now be used to hide from the scorching rays of the July sun. The pair of captive cranes, who started their romance at the Park the same year I joined it – are now raising their chicks for the third summer in a row. Wow, wait – how many years have passed?!! But we still know what we want to achieve, and there are still precipices that we will be able to conquer. I am grateful that my fate has lead me to Muraviotka Park.

## Why I Became a Biology Teacher

*Ksenia Savos'ko, Biologi Teacher, Selednga District, Amur Region, Russia*

When I first visited Muraviotka Park I was a middle school student and I still have very pleasant memories of my time at the Park.

I decided a long time ago that I wanted to be a teacher but could not decide on a specialty. Thanks to the summer camps that I attended at Muraviotka Park I was able to choose the direction of my future profession. I decided to become a biology teacher.

During the camp classes at the Park we were told and shown much more, and much more visually and hands-on than at school, about animals and plants of our area, about human impact on wildlife, etc. Besides, most of the classes were held in the form of games and activities, plus mostly outdoors, in nature where we could see with our own eyes the things that our teachers just told us about.

In my school I teach ecology to elementary school children. During my classes we play, talk, work with books from the library, act out short skits from the lives of animals, and as soon as the weather warms up a bit, we go outside and have outdoor classes.

I want to give my big thanks to Muraviotka Park for helping me choose my profession and teaching me to diversify my classes.



# A Door into Abundant Life

By Nastya Shapoval

The first time I visited Muraviovka Park I was very little; I wasn't even in school yet. I went there with my dad. The Park was taking its first steps, just as I myself was. My dad was fixing an old trailer and I wanted to help out. Dad found me a little wrench and I started to help him. My help, of course, was childishly make-believe, but it was also childishly sincere. I had no idea at the time what an important role that place would come to play in my life.

I'm now living and working in Moscow. I recently graduated from the acting department of the Russian State Institute of Cinematography. People often ask me where I learned such good English and how it was that I managed to go to school in the U.S. I always start answering these questions the same way: "Near my village, there's this place..." As soon as they hear these first words, you can see the surprise on my interlocutors' faces.

And near my village there really is this place where they protect cranes. And once upon a time, an extraordinary American girl, Melinda Herrold, came to our remote Muraviovka and, hearing that there was no English teacher in the Muraviovka school, she stayed for an entire year, living and working in that simple Russian village. For us children, this person was a genuine miracle. She always entered our classroom with a brilliant smile and... a real notebook! Yes, yes, at that time a notebook was also a genuine miracle to us. Melinda taught us to type on the computer so we could correspond with American school kids; that's how I learned to type on a keyboard. But probably the most important thing Melinda taught us was to face life with an open heart and smile, no matter what difficulties we encountered.

Everything that had to do with the Park was always interesting and educational, whether an ecological or linguistic camp or just planting trees; it was all so fascinating and made so much sense. I'll never forget how several classmates and I went out with Sergei Mikhailovich Smirenski into the field to protect the stork nests from fires. We had to remove all dry branches and dry grass from the areas around trees on which the storks had built their enormous nests so that fire couldn't reach them. That was a remarkable expedition, since, as we crossed the fields to those trees, Sergei Mikhailovich told us fascinating stories, not only expanding the borders of our knowledge but guiding the course of our thinking in some very necessary and correct direction. And in general, each and every meeting with Sergei Mikhailovich was priceless. He is a wellspring of knowledge in so many areas, from ornithology to cinematography, because it is all based on the purest motivation – a genuine striving towards the light.

And then I met... Barb Thompson. If you visit Muraviovka Park in the summer and ask where you can find Barb, don't be surprised if they tell you that she's in the garden, weeding the vegetable patch. I could describe Barb for hours. This diminutive woman is such a spiritually strong, industrious, wise, intellectually curious, smart individual! One can

learn so much from her. In fact, it was with Barb Thompson's family that I lived when I came to the United States. I studied at an average school, West Salem High School. I was 16 years old then and, of course, there were times when I was incredibly homesick. You may have heard about the inexplicable "Russian blues" we fall prey to when we travel, but Barb always supported me. I also recovered quickly from my "Russian blues" after Barb and I went to visit Sergei Mikhailovich and Elena Mikhailovna Smirenski. After speaking Russian and watching beloved films like "The Captivating Star of Happiness" and the comedies of Gaidai, Barb and I returned home happy.

Barb and her husband Jeff were always sincerely delighted with my successes in school. In the evenings, after a delicious supper, we would drink tea, wash the dishes, and have long conversations. I would describe everything that had happened at school and Barb would give me her opinions about everything. She did everything in her power to make my time in America bright and unforgettable. Barb introduced me to her friends, remarkable people. I



*Nastya in first grade*



*Nastya, 2013 in Moscow*

## TASTES FROM RUSSIA

### Fermented Armenian Cabbage

This is a delicious, colorful, diverse, and vitamin-filled winter preserve. I usually make a couple of 6-gallon enameled pots that last us all winter.

Let not the title of this recipe confuse you – as you will see, this richly flavored preserve has much more in it than just cabbage!

#### Ingredients:

3-4 medium size heads of cabbage per one 6-gallon enameled pot.  
 10 carrots  
 4-5 beets  
 3 large white onions  
 4 large green pepper  
 12 celery stems  
 I-2 garlic heads  
 bunches of your favorite greens (I put all of my three favorites – cilantro, dill, and parsley)  
 3-5 (optional; depending how spicy you want it to be) dry pods of hot red pepper

1. Wash, peel, cut and slice (except the garlic and the greens!) all the ingredients.

2. Cut cabbage into large (~3x4") wedges; carrots– into big chunks (1"-2" long), beets and onions – into thick slices (~1/4"); celery stems – into 3" long sticks; green peppers – into thick wedges (~1/4" wide and 3" long); peel garlic cloves but do not cut them!

*Continued on next page*



*Nastya raising her hand in Melinda's class*

remember how we went camping together with kids from school, slept in tents, got up early in the morning and went out into the fields. The fields were draped in frost, sparkling in the rising sun – it was late autumn, and we watched as white Trumpeter Swans sailed out into the foggy mist on the lakes and as hundreds of cranes woke up in the fields and, with a din, took off into the sky. It was breathtaking. Now, when Barb flies to the Far East in the summer, to the Park, she stops over for a day or two in Moscow and we spend time together – usually over tea, in endless conversations that stretch out into the night because we have so many new things to tell each other...

And of course I must mention the International Crane Foundation, where I was fortunate enough to work as a volunteer. A place where all fifteen species of crane have been brought together!!! At first I helped care for the cranes; I was allowed to bring them food and water. Later on I was given an enormous folder of information in English about each species of crane. I had to study it all, learn it. Then came my first tour – with me as the guide. It was a fantastic experience.

When I returned from the U.S. I had to finish Russian school, and to make sure I didn't lose my English skills I studied at the lyceum of the Blagoveshchensk State Pedagogical University. After that, although I was admitted to the International



*Nastya in 2004 playing at the Crane Festival at the Park*

Relations Department at Amur State University, I only stayed there for two sessions, because ever since I was a child, I had cherished only one dream – to become an actress. And I became one. I finished a four-year program at the Russian State Institute of Cinematography, studying under an extraordinary master, People's Artist of Russia Aleksandr Yakovlevich Mikhailov. God blessed me with the opportunity to meet actors such as Aleksei Vladimirovich Batalov, Georgii Georgievich Taratorkin, Elena Vsevolodovna Safonova and many, many others... splendid, luminous individuals. I am now taking my first steps in this new profession, but that's not the most important thing. Real wealth and happiness come when you encounter something bright, beautiful and genuine. And when I think carefully about it, I can see that the chain stretches back to that old trailer where my dad and I tightened bolts, and, more precisely, to that man who, twenty years ago, walked down the road to Muraviovka with a backpack on his shoulder. That was Sergei Mikhailovich Smirenski. He was going to look for cranes.

I bow down to you in profoundest gratitude.



# An Eye-Opening Trip to Russia

By Kayla Hedtke, Biology Teacher, Milwaukee High School of the Arts, Milwaukee, WI



Although jetlagged and exhausted, the 2013 Milwaukee teachers, sponsored by Erica P. John Foundation, arrived in the Amur Region ready to teach and learn all about the students and people of this gorgeous region. What we did not expect was the remarkable similarity between two such distant lands. Not only were the people and students similar, but the land itself housed similar species and ecosystems to our Wisconsin wetlands. I was amazed by the preservation and research that has gone into protecting Muraviovka Park and the birds of this area. In addition, working with the German Ornithologists was a highlight for both the students and the staff.

It's very difficult to find someone who does not find some part of science interesting, science truly is a universal study. My Muraviovka students often got excited about the same types of things that my Milwaukee students would. A major highlight for our class was my water studies lesson. We ended up finding a lot of tadpoles at various stages of their metamorphic development. I have never experienced this in Wisconsin but I was able to make a lot of comparisons between the ecosystems. Being in the wetlands every day and observing the wild life around us opened our eyes to the regularity of the environment. In addition, I learned what type of activities the students like to do in their free time. Our evenings usually ended in a very competitive game of volleyball.

In addition the teacher workshop really opened my eyes to the fact that teachers are also the same everywhere you go. As a teacher, we

are always looking for new ideas, concepts and methods for teaching our content in engaging and enriching ways. I have always worked in inner-city schools where good teachers are not only teachers but also parents, mentors, friends and often time guardians. The Russian teachers also shared a passion for learning and their student's needs. The activities that we presented in the workshop included higher-level thinking problems and inquiry based skills. The Russian teachers absorbed everything that we had to say and often times reflected back on how to better the lessons.

Lastly the German Scientists were able to create a significant depth to our understanding of Muraviovka Park. The students, teachers and staff were all amazed by their ability to band, track and care for the birds in such a scientific way. We all learned so much about the various birds and their breeding and feeding habits. Overall the birders taught us all so much more than we ever could have learned on our own or in a classroom. A great science lesson always has a direct application and in Muraviovka there is always a new topic to cover and an animal to observe. My only regret is not being able to spend more time in this park as the seasons change and the animals rotate through this magnificent land.

## TASTES FROM RUSSIA

*Continued*

3. Make the brine by boiling two gallons of water (you may need more or less water, depending on the size of the pot with vegetables) and adding 2.5 tbsp (no heap!) of salt and 2 tbsp of vinegar per 1 gallon of water. Take the pot off the stove burner as soon as the salt and vinegar are added. Stir.

4. While waiting for water to boil, begin laying out the veggies in tight layers in the large enamel pot in this order: cabbage, carrots, beets, onion, green pepper, celery; then add some garlic cloves (use your taste and judgment on how many – I love garlic and put a lot; it is also a great protector from flu and colds during the long Russian and Mid-Western winters!), greens (do not chop these!) and a pod of hot pepper. Press the finished layer with your fists and start the next one. Repeat these layers until the pot is almost full.

5. Pour the hot brine on top of the veggies until just covered; place a plate on top and a stone (or any other weight) on top of the plate. Cover with a clean cloth and leave under the weight in the warm kitchen for 3 days; then move to refrigerator or some cold place for the winter (e.g., garage). You can also put it in several glass jars, if you wish, but this would ruin your carefully built layered architecture!

*Priyatnogo appetita!  
(Bon appetite!)*

*Updates... continued from page 1*

number of dams, dikes, and bridges collapsed making roads impassable. Huge areas of crop fields and vegetable gardens were flooded for the second time this growing season. Hundreds of private homes, apartment complexes, and public buildings in the capital city of the region and in towns and villages were damaged by flood, many irreparably.

It is obvious that short and long-term impacts of the 2013 flooding on natural habitats, wildlife, and the economy of the entire Amur Basin are enormous but it is too early to estimate them. Rains washed huge amounts of organic matter and all kinds of litter into rivers. At the same time stagnant waters in artificial reservoirs were flushed and diluted. Flood waters broke through dams on some rivers, and these reservoirs were refilled with rain water, which should improve their water quality. The combined impact of local precipitation and basin-wide flooding brought most of the Amur River flood-lands under water and connected old river channels that had been isolated from each other since 1984, contributing to restocking and exchange of fish.

Remaining wetlands in the watersheds of the Amur and Zeya Rivers and their major tributaries served as natural buffers (storage areas) during this disastrous flood, absorbing much of the excess water and reducing the speed and volume of water flow, thereby limiting the scale of its destructive forces and consequences. Existing development projects in the Amur and Zeya floodplains, especially at the confluence of these two major rivers, are attributed to disregard or ignorance of natural water cycles and blind faith in human omnipotence on the part of developers. Major damages were incurred by buildings

and other structures, crop fields, and gardens in the flood plain.

### **Watershed Research**

Although our field studies were interrupted and affected in July by the flooding in the Amur River Basin, we were able to collect some valuable data. In May-June, our scientists started taking water samples (for water quality) in the Giltchin River and prepared descriptions of plants in different parts of the watershed.



*Above: Dr. V. Kashina and her students take water samples*

*Below: G. Darman describes flora*



But because of the emergency situation they had to put their Giltchin River watershed water quality surveys on hold. All members of our team of experts (hydrologists, hydro chemists, botanists) were mobilized by governmental agencies to conduct research and monitoring in the flooded areas.

From March-November, the team of zoologists, however, collected data on fishes, birds, mammals and

beetles, banded over 7,500 birds of 134 species, and recaptured over 1500 birds. They also conducted counts and collected ecological data on birds, registering new breeding species for the Park (the White-eye, the Ashy Minivet, and the Pale-legged Leaf Warbler) and even one new species for Russia - the Yellow-bellied Tit that is native to eastern China about 1000 km (621 miles) south of the Park. The team captured, banded, and released the young bird and spotted and photographed the two adults hanging out near the net with the captured chick. Also exciting was the sighting of the Common Coot that was a very common waterbird until the mid-1980s but since then rather quickly vanished from the Amur Region.

We hope that studies on the recently common but now threatened Yellow-breasted Bunting, Amur Falcon, and small falcons will raise public awareness about the impact of mist nets used to catch birds for food in East Asia.

Cranes and storks arrived from the wintering grounds 10 days behind their normal schedule. During the first 10-12 days on their breeding grounds they were unable to find food due to deep snow and wetlands covered with ice, so the Park organized supplemental feeding (see "An Overwhelming Response to a Call for Help" on page 4).

In spring, a record number of nesting White-naped Cranes was recorded at the Park (25 pairs); for the first time in the last 15 years White-winged Black Terns returned the Park; Garganeys, Little Grebes, and Marsh Sandpipers built nests on the lower part of flooded crop fields on the river terrace. At the same time, many birds and mammals had to leave flooded areas of the Amur River valley. Huge volumes of fast moving flood waters in the Amur and Giltchin River watersheds in mid-May caused losses of many nests (15 out of 25 White-naped Crane nests

and 200 nests of White-winged Black Terns). Park staff built up one White-naped Crane nest, that was about to go under water, with bundles of old grass, and just two days later two chicks hatched in it. In June, the level of surface water and volume of water flow in the wetlands began decreasing, but almost



*Lifting the nest above water with bundles of dead grass*

daily pouring rains in July caused many small rivers, including the Giltchin, to overflow and flood the area. Seven of 10 productive families of White-naped Cranes lost their flightless chicks to drowning.

Frequent pouring rains and low air temperatures caused low breeding success of birds that nested in the southern part of the Amur Region outside of the flood zone. The Park wetlands, however, became much more attractive as staging areas for the migratory flocks of ducks and geese, even more so due to large areas of unharvested crop fields in and around the Park. At the same time, for the first time since 1981, there were no autumn pre-migratory crane gatherings in the Park area. The reason for this phenomenon was a shortage of food in and around the Park and an abundance of safe roosting sites created by the flood. In previous years, the Park and its neighbors planted large fields of wheat and barley. In addition, we planted corn as lure fields for cranes, but in 2013 this was not possible due to weather conditions. We could plant only oats that are not so attractive for birds; the wheat fields near the Park were flooded by rain. Our team discovered a large gathering of cranes (over 1,400 Hooded and several hundred White-naped Cranes) 50 km (31 miles) east of the Park, where the wetlands were filled with water; corn in nearby fields provided a food source of choice for the cranes.

For the first time in years Siberian Cranes made a stopover at the Park during the fall migration. Although the water level dropped significantly by mid-September, in spring 2014 we anticipate vast wetland areas with surface water that will create favorable nesting conditions for many waterbirds. The rainy summer resulted, however, in unusually low breeding success even for birds that inhabited the terraces above the flooded area.

### **Captive breeding program**

The one year-old male Red-crowned Crane raised in our pen was released into the wild; his brother, who has wing tip damage and cannot be released, was shipped to Zoo Gallery in Irkutsk. In 2013, our captive pair Oka and Kivili bred again and raised one chick. For the first time the pair of Grayleg Geese in the demonstration pen laid eggs and raised five goslings. The new and better insulated pen built by the Sophia Foundation helps reduce expenses for heating significantly. Schools in Blagoveshchensk and Shimanovsk once again donated squashes and pumpkins – excellent soft food for captive birds during the winter.

### **Reforestation Program**

Over 200 volunteers, including Mr. O. Kozhemyako, the Governor of the Amur Region, Mr. Diakonov, the Chairman of the Amur Legislative Assembly, and Mr. A. Venglinsky, the Chief of the Amur Forest Administration, planted over 6000 tree seedlings at the Park.

### **Agriculture and Wood Work**

Most of the crop fields in the Amur River valley were flooded. Due to excessive water, crop planting was delayed by 3-6 weeks. Some fields on the river terrace were too wet and



*Mr. O. Kozhemyako, the Governor of the Amur Region, Mr. Diakonov, the Chairman of the Amur Legislative Assembly, and Mr. A. Venglinsky, the Chief of the Amur Forest Administration participated in tree planting at the Park*

muddy even for tractors so about 50% of these fields were not only not used for crop production in 2013 but it was not possible to prepare them for the next growing season. Unusually low air temperatures in July and August, scarce days with sunshine, excessive precipitation and soil humidity caused delayed development of crops. Even in late September there were no fields in the region with ripened soybeans that usually ripen by September. In spite of considerable losses, our yield of oats was better than we expected. Even though we lost over one third of it, we successfully harvested and put in the barn over 150 metric tons of oats and 120 tons of soybean. To

compensate for crop loss our staff found and purchased a used grain crusher and sold to local people feed for their cattle and pigs. It also produced another task for our farmhands during the winter.

Woodshop staff made good income selling beams and boards ordered by a co-op in Kuropatino to build a barn for their milk cows, and by making beehives and stools ordered by many locals.



*Team of Wisconsin teachers*

### Education and public awareness

During the World Wetlands Day the Park organized an Internet-conference between students and teachers of the Amur Region and Singapore. The Institute for Advanced Teacher Education in Blagoveshchensk provided a conference hall and telecommunication equipment.

A very successful summer camp for local middle school students (43 attendees) and a workshop for school teachers of biology and English language (11 attendees) were held from 20 June – 2 July. They were supported by a grant from the Erica P. John Foundation in Milwaukee, ICF, and Muraviovka Park. The events were led by a team of five teachers from Wisconsin and three local teachers trained at Muraviovka Park camps since 1995. (One unexpected

and wonderful outcome of this summer camp was a donation of a truck load of top-of-the-line roofing material by a local businessman whose granddaughter attended the camp and fell in love with the Park (see section *"Help, Participation, and Investment"* below for more details).

Earlier in June, we provided living facilities and gave outdoor classes to two groups of middle and high school students (total of 36 students) – members of sport clubs from Sadovoye and Lermontovka villages, who, in their turn, helped prepare the campgrounds for the environmental camps.

A group of school students from Kuropatino village, led by their biology teacher and Muraviovka Park Board member Natalia Gromova, received a \$5,000 grant from the Russian Geographic Society (St. Petersburg) to study the current status of endangered plants within the framework of our Giltchin Watershed Project; they began their field research in May. This was the only grant from this society given to the Amur Region and the first granted to a high school. Results of their research were presented at several conferences and in mass media. A presentation about Muraviovka Park and its wildlife made by Kuropatino School students took first place at a regional contest, and its authors were invited (with



*Indian summer at Muraviovka by Vadim Gorbatov*

costs covered by the organizing committee and a local co-op) to an All-Russia Student Conference in Astrakhan.

School students from Sadovoye village, together with students from Blagoveshchensk Teachers' University, also gave presentations about the Park and won financial support to travel to Moscow and participate in an All-Russia student conference. The Park's staff and the watershed project partners gave presentations about Muraviovka Park's wetlands and waterbirds at conferences in Kaluga Region, Blagoveshchensk, and South Korea.



*Vasily Muraviov-Amursky (great-grandnephew of the first Governor of East Siberia and Russian Far East, who played a key role in settling of Russian people in the Amur Basin) and his wife Victoria*

### Tourism

From early spring through late fall, in spite of horrible road and weather conditions, Muraviovka Park hosted a steady flow of visitors. Especially big crowds were gathered at our traditional festivals. The "Crane Dawns" festival was held in late June; on 15 September, we hosted our annual fall crane festival "See You Next Spring, Cranes!" During this event, we opened an exhibit of crane paintings by Vadim Gorbatov, one of Russia's best wildlife artists. The festival and exhibit were attended by over 300 people, including Vasily Muraviov-Amursky from St. Petersburg (great-grandnephew of the first Governor of East Siberia and Russian Far East, who played a key role in settling of Russian people in the Amur Basin) and his wife Victoria.

## Award to an Outstanding Visionary and Leader in Crane Conservation



*George Archibald (left) and David Johnston, Governor General of Canada at Order of Canada Award ceremony in Ottawa, 13 December 2013*

In December, George Archibald, the Co-founder of the International Crane Foundation and Co-chair of the Muraviovka Park Board of Trustees, was awarded the Order of Canada on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his visionary leadership in international conservation efforts over the past 40 years. We extend our warmest congratulations and deep gratitude to George for his leadership and immeasurable contributions into crane research and conservation in Russia and all over the world and, in particular, for his instrumental support to the establishing of Muraviovka Park in 1994!

### Help, participation, and investment

In spring, when the deep snow cover deprived birds of food, a local newspaper and the Russian Bird Conservation Union published our appeal for help, that resulted in huge support in food and money from the Amur Region and beyond (see article in this issue "An Overwhelming Response to a Call for Help" on page 4). Alexei and Inna Yatsenko's family donated materials and paid for labor to install a new metal roof on one of the barns, which protected our harvested crops from the weather. This was the first significant investment from a businessman of the Amur Region for development of Park infrastructure. The total amount of support that the Park received in 2013 exceeded \$10,000. Growing participation, financial support and investments of Amurians are very encouraging and reflect changes in how Muraviovka Park is viewed in the Region.

The local members of the Park's International Board of Directors have become much more proactive; two Board meetings were held in September to discuss the current financial situation, actions to improve it, plans for the next year, staffing, as well as leadership and functions of the Board. The Board members are highly motivated to help in any way they can and are already providing considerable support.



*Alexei Yatsenko brought to the Park metal sheets to install new roof on grain storage donated by his family*

### Plans for 2014

Year 2013, with its historic flood, created a unique baseline for monitoring changes in all parameters that we have been studying in the Giltchin River Watershed, assessment of impacts of the flood on the economy and nature, and understanding the importance of wetlands. Therefore, it is very important to continue our project both for natural habitats and wildlife and the economy of the region.

In 2014, we will celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Muraviovka Park - first at 1:00 PM on 29 March at the FOMP Annual Meeting at the International Crane Foundation's Library, and then in June at the Park. We want to thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts for these amazing 20 years of service to cranes, wetlands, and people of the Amur River Basin and to invite you to share this celebration with us in Wisconsin or at Muraviovka Park.

# A Trip to Remember

*Valentina and Polina Efimov*

Muraviovka Park has become a part of my life since the first visit. I have taken part in lingo-ecological summer schools since 2004. This year my daughter and I, both volunteers of the Park, were invited by the International Crane Foundation to visit the USA. We performed a special mission: to acquaint American students with Muraviovka Park, its unique ecology as well as its projects and activities conducted in order to protect this important habitat and restore endangered bird species.

Our travel from Blagoveshchensk to Milwaukee, Wisconsin began on October 24. We crossed the whole continent and the Atlantic Ocean to meet the American teachers who had worked in Muraviovka Park and their students. It was our first visit to the US and when we found ourselves in the airport in Chicago we felt a little bit stressed. But as soon as we saw Jan-Marie in her "crane" T-shirt we calmed down; our friends were here to support us. During our visit we stayed with the families of American teachers who are friends of Muraviovka Park. The first who hosted us were Jan-Marie Weiler and her family. Then we spent some days with John and Sharon Hushek, Kayla Hedtke, Allison Perry, Barb Thompson, Bruce and Francine Jones, Karen Wise, John and Jean Raymer, Vladimir and Olga Trubetskoy, and Elena Smirenski. All of them were very friendly and hospitable and we felt at ease in their houses. They did their best to arrange our discovery of Wisconsin. We travelled across the state enjoying beautiful landscapes, gorgeous forests, visiting places of interest, meeting new people and learning more about true American life.

Our acquaintance with Milwaukee started with visiting the Art Museum. This amazing building looks like a white bird stretching its huge wings over Lake Michigan. Milwaukee is a nice city on the shore of the lake, well-known for its breweries, the headquarters of Harley Davidson

Company and many interesting places to see: the Public Museum, Discovery World, Milwaukee County Zoo and others. We spent the whole day in the Public museum; we stepped back in time and walked in the streets of old Milwaukee and traveled to the dinosaur age. Our visit to the zoo was really interesting; we saw the animals from all over the world. All these attractions not only entertain the public but educate too. In all the museums, botanic gardens, the zoo and even in the Capitol, everywhere were schoolchildren watching the displays and seeking necessary information to fulfill their school tasks.

October was a wonderful time to enjoy fall colors; the trees turned red, purple and yellow. Todd (Jan's husband) took us to Holy Hill, the highest peak in a chain of glacier carved hills. The tall steeples of the beautiful basilica at the top of the hill are visible for miles around. And the view from its tower was splendid!

And it was the time of Halloween. All houses in the city were decorated with pumpkins, spider webs and funny ghosts and we saw children dressed up in costumes going for trick or treating. At Sharon and John's house we carved pumpkins to make lanterns and in the evening we put on droll costumes and went to their neighbors to greet them and ask for candy. It was fun!

But the main part of our trip was visiting schools. We had a nice opportunity not only to get an idea what American schools look like but to communicate with students and teachers. We visited several elementary, middle and high schools where we made the presentations about Muraviovka Park and our country. Students were very excited to meet Russian guests and asked us a lot of questions about the Park, wetlands, cranes, Russian schools, our traditions, holidays and food. It was mutually beneficial experience.

Each school we visited was different; each of them had its particularities,



*Valentina at Ben Franklin Elementary School*

which make them special. I'd like to say a few words about some of them.

With Allison, we visited Milwaukee College Preparatory School, a very high-performing charter school. Their motto is "knowledge plus character pave the road to college and beyond." They believe if a child can't study, solve problems, think critically, be self-disciplined and self-determined, that child will not be successful. All the teachers were so enthusiastic about their mission. They encourage the students to be active and responsible for their own achievements.

Kayla arranged our visit to Milwaukee High School of the Arts. She teaches chemistry there. The school offers music, dance, theatre, visual arts, and creative writing courses. They provide an educational experience which enables all students to develop their academic and artistic talents to the fullest. All the walls were decorated with the students' pictures. We visited ballet and theatre classes. We saw the teenagers playing jazz in the hall, rehearsing their parts for a play, preparing decorations for the performance, modeling their self-portraits. The spirit of creativeness reined everywhere in this school.

In Golda Meir Elementary School we spent two days with Jan-Marie's students. Everywhere in the school halls and classrooms we could see students' posters, essays, pictures, and photos. This display of kids' creative works makes them feel the importance of their studies, encourages them to



*Sharon Hushek, Polina Efimov, Valentina Efimova,  
Allison Perry at Wehr Nature Center*

demonstrate their talents and to feel proud of their achievements. We became real friends with the kids. We told them about Russia and our Park, about cranes and other animals, we talked about families, school, and many other things. We taught them to make origami cranes. And they were very excited to create paper birds themselves.

We had a chance to see a real musical "Shout" It was performed by Whitnall High School students. It was such a beautiful show! All students played and sang like professional actors! Sam Hushek (Sharon and John's son) was one of them.

As a part of our program we visited several nature centers and we learned what they do to restore endangered animal and plant species and provide ecological education of the local community. The 2nd of November we went to the International Crane Foundation (ICF) which is located not far from Baraboo. It is a home to all fifteen species of cranes found in the world. Dr. Smirenski gave us a tour of ICF and shared many interesting facts about birds and ICF activities. It was a special Member Day and many Friends of Muraviovka Park came to ICF. They

sold lunches and T-shirts to visitors to raise money for our park. They really do a great work! We are very thankful to them for their support.

Thanks to ICF and FOMP our trip came true. It gave us a nice opportunity to see the USA with our own eyes, to meet Americans in their home, to learn more about culture, education and nature conservation. It's a lifetime experience for us! We will remember our travel along the Mississippi River, Chicago night promenade, sightseeing in Madison and hiking under the rain in Eau Claire. We appreciated very much the heartfelt welcomes and warmth of all our American friends who made our visit unforgettable.

In conclusion, I must say that it is not "a happy end" of our American story; it is the beginning of a new period in my life. The participation in Muraviovka Park's international summer schools and especially this trip enriched my personal and professional experience, made me a more knowledgeable teacher, and developed my awareness of American culture. All this gives me the opportunity to make my classes more creative, interesting and informative. I share my knowledge with my students involving them in different activities and projects, which are based on the ideas and methods gained in the synergy with my American colleagues. And it is very important to keep this nice tradition to arrange Russian-American summer camps in Muraviovka Park and teachers' exchange programs because, for many of our students and teachers in the Amur Region, they are the only chance to communicate with Americans as representatives of a different culture, to discuss our common environmental problems and to learn more about each other.

## DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

**Francine Jones** traveled to the Park in 2002 to help plan and teach at the first International Languages Summer School there. Francine joined FOMP in 2003 and has served as treasurer since 2004. As a Board member she wants to continue being part of a great support group promoting the summer camps which she believes are vital in offering environmental education and encouraging an appreciation for the natural beauty of the Amur Region to the children of Russia.

**Jan-Marie Weiler** travelled to the Park in 2007 and 2011. She filled a vacant spot on the board in 2011 and, as special events coordinator, has been active in coordinating and hosting Russian educator trips to Wisconsin. Jan-Marie enjoys sharing our American culture and would like to continue serving on the Board "as a way to give back to an organization that helped change my world view and does so much good for Muraviovka Park".

**Barb Thompson** helped found the Friends of Muraviovka Park and has been on the Board since its creation in 1998. She has been to the Park 13 times and helped plan and teach at the first International Languages Summer School there as well as the first Russian/Chinese/American environmental camp in China. She also serves on the Park's International Board of Directors. Barb would like to continue her involvement on the Board because she has seen the positive impact Park projects have had on the people and wildlife of the area and hopes to contribute to future successes there.

# Connect with FOMP

## QUILT FOR SALE



The "Gliding Whooping Cranes" barn quilt was designed by Ruth Bauer and painted by a group of retired teachers and spouses: Pam Zimpel, Deb Wagner, Mary Mischel, Karen Walker and Ruth Bauer. We call our group the "Saturday Club," now that we are retired our motto is "Everyday is a Saturday."

\$300; All proceeds go to FOMP for Park programs.

Contact Ruth Bauer at 608-537-2099. Will deliver in Wisconsin.

### The Board of Directors:

Barb Thompson, President

Ruth Bauer,  
Vice President

Francine Jones, Treasurer

Peter Boger, Secretary

George Danner

Jim Harris

Victoria Rydberg

Jan-Marie Weiler

### Online:

Visit our **WEBSITE:**

[www.muraviovkapark.ru](http://www.muraviovkapark.ru)

Are you on Facebook? **LIKE** us!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Muraviovka-Park/200362133317888>

Join our **CAUSE:**

<http://www.causes.com/causes/595771-become-a-member-of-friends-of-muraviovka-park-to-save-cranes>

Online donations coming soon!

*Note:*  
The student board member seat is currently vacant.



**Please cut & return the following membership form and voting ballot**

We hope you haven't forgotten about us! Please renew your membership today.

## Friends of Muraviovka Park Membership Form (New or Renewal) and Board of Directors Ballot 2014

Please vote for **THREE** of the following candidates:

Jan-Marie Weiler     Barb Thompson     Francine Jones     Write in candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

We hope you will **renew your support** of Muraviovka Park. (Membership 1/1/2014 – 12/31/2014)

### Membership Levels

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 - Student       \$25 - Individual

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\$35 - Family       \$50 - School Group

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\$50 - Adopt-A-Nest (includes membership)

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\$50 - Adopt-A-Nest (includes membership; but please don't send me a thank-you gift, use all the proceeds for the Park.)

Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

\$100 - Contributing Member

Please make your check payable to the ICF/FOMP and send to: **International Crane Foundation, attn. Elena Smirenski, P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913.**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other Donation for \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Donation**



# Thank you!

Ms. Dale Pesmen kindly donated her time to translate articles written by  
Nastya Shapoval and Ivan Chernichkin.

We greatly appreciate continued support from the International Crane  
Foundation, Woodland Park Zoo, Columbus Zoo, Bay & Paul  
Foundation, Erica P. John Foundation, Fifth Age of Man Foundation, Das  
Gupta Fund, Russian Bird Conservation Union, Fund Sophia  
(Blagoveshchensk), Association of Lawyers "AGORA," Publishing House  
Komsomol'skaya Pravda (Blagoveshchensk), and all generous personal  
contributions made by FOMP members from USA, South Korea and  
Russia, which helped us implement our diverse programs and projects in  
field research, wildlife conservation, sustainable land use, environmental  
education, and nature tourism.

**Muraviovka Park  
20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
1994 - 2014**

**Friends of Muraviovka  
Park invite you to the  
Annual Meeting  
Saturday, March 29**

*Please join us to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of Muraviovka Park.  
Hear from the 2014 Teacher Team  
and Dr. Sergei Smirenski!*

**1:00 pm - ICF Library**

*Note: Parking available at the  
Main Office or the Guest House  
Parking Lots*

*Dedicated to environmental protection, educational programming, ecological research, and sustainable agricultural development at  
Muraviovka Park and in the Amur River watershed of the Russian Far East.*

*Learn more at: [www.muraviovkapark.ru](http://www.muraviovkapark.ru) or [www.rbcu.ru](http://www.rbcu.ru)*



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