



ZHURAYL

A Newsletter of Friends of Muraviovka Park

Updates from Muraviovka Park

Dr. Sergei and Elena Smirenski

Fire destroys two cabins, damages a third, and claims 11,000 acres in grassland habitat.

It is not easy to explain this year's events since they took several unexpected turns. The year was highly successful for bird monitoring and hydrology research programs and for the Demonstration Farm activities. In late 2010 we could not have known how much time Dr. Tamaki would spend in the field (7 days a week for 8 months!) and what a thorough and diligent researcher he is (and he just informed us that he would like to come back for another season this year!). We also did not know that we would be hosting an amazing team of three Moscow hydro biologists and three wonderful ornithology students from Germany.

Although our fire prevention and suppression program was a huge success in April, it was interrupted in the fall, when we were denied governmental permits to burn and the Park area was not protected by firebreaks. This problem brought a devastating fire in early October (started by a neighboring co-op) that engulfed 90% of the Park's lands, destroying two summer cabins and 10 acres of soybeans. Fighting this fire took some of the funds budgeted for other needs. On the other hand, this disaster created broader publicity and brought even more local supporters to the Park.

In spite of staff and funds shortages, we accomplished more than we planned due to the growing support of volunteers and donations from FOMP members around the world.

Yes, the year 2011 was indeed a very challenging one. It produced amazing outcomes but also exacerbated a number of lingering unsolved problems that threatened the very existence of the Park, but at the same time brought hope for a breakthrough into a new era in the Park's history.

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS



German students conduct bird migration monitoring.

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A new language-environment summer school starts in Park.

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Students participate in water monitoring during summer language-environment camp.

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Jeb Barzen helps develop plan for prescribed burning in the Park.

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Wildfire sweeps through Park and destroys cabins.

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Administration and staff face many challenges in 2011.

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Did you renew your FOMP membership? Check out the renewal form on page 11



Our "stray" tractor had to be rescued from the wetland in April.

Agriculture

Dr. Sergei and Elena Smirenski

It was not easy to get our farming program up and running this year, especially because of the shortage of skilled and responsible farmhands in the region. In early April we hired two farmhands, but they quit soon thereafter. One of them, before quitting, managed to drive a tractor into the wetland- and he had no reason to drive it the wetland in the

first place! The tractor was pulled out with help from neighbors but was out of use until late November.

We were very fortunate to quickly find and hire three other, more skilled, interested, and responsible workers, and with this new team we were able to plow the fields and

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Conservation and Research

Dr. Sergei and Elena Smirenski

*Our 2011 research program
was a blockbuster!*

Crane Monitoring

Dr. Tamaki Kitagawa arrived at the Park in mid March (just a few days after the disastrous tsunami and earthquake in Japan that occurred on 11 March) and stayed until mid November. He worked as a high school biology teacher in Tokyo for many years but always wanted to come back to his first love – studying cranes, especially, *Tancho* (the Red-crowned Crane) – in the field. As a young university student, he was fortunate to meet George Archibald, do some fieldwork with him, and publish several research articles.

During the eight months of practically daily field research Dr. Kitagawa gathered an impressive amount of data on comparative territorial behavior of breeding Red-crowned and White-naped Cranes within the Park, including relationships among nesting pairs within one species (White-naped Cranes) and between species. He also documented stopover concentrations of Hooded and White-naped Cranes during migration. He mapped all active crane nests and their territories in the Park: 14 of White-naped Cranes (13 produced chicks) and



Dr. Kitagawa is watching crane nests during his field research in June 2012.



Tamaki Kitagawa is giving an origami class to the visitors at the Park's booth during the AmurExpo 2011 in Blagoveshchensk

three nests of Red-crowned cranes (two produced chicks; the low number of Red-crowned Cranes reflects the current situation with the western mainland population wintering in China – that has



Galina Zubakina, leader of the "Rahzoom" (= "Mind" as in "The Beautiful Mind") group of the "Russian Orthodox Parlor" club in Blagoveshchensk, presented 1000 origami cranes made by her group, together with best wishes of good health and happiness to Tamaki Kitagawa, his family, and all Japanese people.

decreased during the last 10 years from approximately 750 to 400 birds).

These results will allow the Park to evaluate the roles of wetlands and uplands at different stages of the breeding season and to organize more efficient protection of endangered cranes and their habitats.

In addition to his diligent research, Tamaki provided much needed help by taking care of our captive birds, and sometimes giving tours and origami classes to the Park's visitors. The people of the Amur Region became very fond of Tamaki. On Earth Day (22 April), a big group of retired people arrived at the Park with a special folk program in honor of Dr. Kitagawa, to express their compassion and support to the people of Japan who suffered from the catastrophic events in March.

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Developing a Stronger Cooperation with the Amur Region Government

We are seeking ways to cooperate more closely with the Amur Region Government, to facilitate implementation of our activities (such as creating firebreaks), so that we can provide broader benefits within the Amur Region, and to secure financial support for some of our programs. We would like to provide staff with more competitive salaries, and to hire new staff (we need at least two more people – a

Biologist/Bird Keeper and a Site Manager; we also are looking for worthy candidates for the Director's position; such individuals are hard to find in the region). We see the expansion of the Demonstration Farm as one way to raise income for Park operations, yet achieving closer cooperation with government agencies may also help us solve these staffing and salary problems.

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Hydrology

During two weeks in June, three hydro biologists from Moscow (Elena Krasnova and Maria Mordashova from Moscow State University and Svetlana Vlasova from the Research Center for Drinking Water) collected numerous samples of plankton, algae and benthos in the Giltchin River Basin where the Park is located. They collected samples from the source all the way to the mouth of the river. Before their departure in early July they presented a preliminary report that showed the water in Muraviovka Park is the purest in this river basin. Lab analyses of these samples, conducted in late 2011 in cooperation with Tatiana Nikulina from the Biology and Soils Institute (Far-eastern Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladivostok), revealed very poor water quality in many parts of the river. Results also emphasized the crucial role of the Muraviovka wetlands as home to many species of plants and animals, and natural filters and buffers for human-made water pollution. This research will be continued in 2012 with participation of experts from Russia and the USA and will lay a foundation for the development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Giltchin River watershed – the first management plan in Russia developed for a small river that will address interests of both humans and wildlife.



Maria Mordashova, Ph.D. student from Moscow State University, is taking a benthos sample from Giltchin River, assisted by a school student from Kuropatino village.

Bird Migration Monitoring



German university students (from left to right: Andreas Siegmund, Wieland Heim, and Friedrich Erdam) are taking measurements and banding Passerine birds that they captured with mist nets in the Park.

In September and October, three university students from Germany (Wieland Heim, Andreas Siegmund and Friedrich Erdam) set up mist nets and captured over 2,000 small migrating birds of 80 species, mostly Passerines. All birds were banded and evaluated for weight, wing length, primary length, fat, and molting stage. Returns (repeat captures of the same birds that were banded at the Park in 2009-2010) over a time span longer than two weeks had confirmed that the Park is a very important resting and fattening place for many species of migratory birds. The drastic negative impact of the fall wildfire on migratory birds was also revealed: three days after the 8 October fire the daily number of captured birds dropped from 80-150/day to just 3-10/day. At the same time, many questions have arisen that need answers through follow-up research that we hope to conduct annually. We want to use this opportunity to thank Su Liying (Adjunct Professor, North-East Forestry University in Harbin, China) and Jim Harris (ICF's Senior Vice President) for providing and bringing the mist nets from China to the Park as well as the Ringing

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STRATEGIC PLANNING

In the fall of 2011, with the help of the Park's International Board of Trustees, we prepared a draft Five-Year Strategic Plan for Muraviovka Park, supplemented by Business Plans for its agriculture, woodworking, and visitors programs.

At a meeting at ICF in December, the Board of Trustees discussed and approved the first draft of the Plan and the Park's work plan and budget for 2012. This draft is currently being translated into Russian and will be discussed and finalized together with the supporters and governmental agencies in the Amur Region.

We view it as a working document that the Park leadership will follow for now and that will be rewritten after consultations with local experts.

We hope to find a business person in the region who understands the non-commercial (conservation related) aspects of our agriculture, woodworking, and education & tourism activities, and how they fit into the other Park programs. This person (or persons) would check the Russian translation of this document and help strengthen it. Getting professional help with these business plans is a central part of this planning effort.

Captive Birds

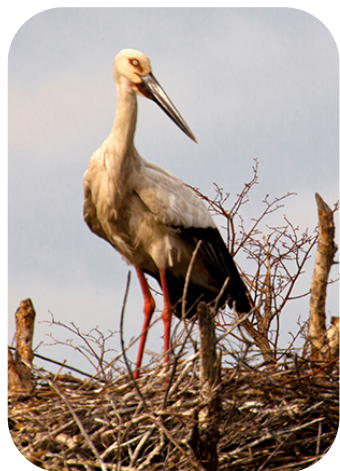
A happy event for us was the first nesting attempt of our captive Red-crowned Cranes Kivili and Oka. They laid two eggs quite late in the season and began taking turns incubating. On 29 June one chick hatched and we decided to name it "Tamaki, Jr." in Dr. Kitagawa's honor. (Tamaki, Sr. was very touched and proud when we announced it in front of a big crowd and TV journalists at the next day event!) By the end of the year Tamaki, Jr. was taller than its mother so we think it might be a male. We hope to release the young crane into the wild in spring 2012. The young bird must be separated from the parents by spring, before the new breeding season begins or the father will become irritated by the young "competitor" and begin hurting his own child. Since the Park does not have any spare pens, Barb Thompson, the FOMP President made an appeal to the crowd, gathered at the Park on 30 June for the annual folk music festival "The Crane Dawns," to support the construction of the new pen. The participants donated over \$1,000, and soon after Vladimir and Natalia Grizlov, the leaders of a local charitable fund "Sophia," made a commitment to provide funds, materials, and labor. The majority of the work was completed in late November, and in February 2012 we will complete the interior work. We are deeply grateful for this support.



*1 July 2011:
Tamaki, Jr. is three days old!*



29 November 2011: Tamaki, Jr. is five months old.



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 Muraviovka 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 Muraviovka Park. Repeat participants in the Adopt-a-Nest program receive a handsome refrigerator magnet!

For more information or to request an adoption brochure, contact Elena Smirenski at elena@savingcranes.org or Carolyn Parrott at parroo@gmail.com.

Oriental Languages School

Natalia Kalnej

The lingo-ecological summer school held at Muraviovka Park in the summer of 2012 was devoted to the study of the Giltchin River watershed. Russian teachers and students anxiously awaited the first day of camp where they would spend ten days learning from American and Russian teachers.

The benefits of attending this camp, for the children and teachers, are immense. Students and English teachers have a wonderful opportunity to practice and improve our English while communicating with native speakers. This is a rare opportunity for those of us living in the Russian Far East especially for the many children who live in villages and small towns. As an English teacher I know how valuable this is for my students. The lessons are presented in very interesting and thought provoking ways. For example, the importance of wetlands was learned through the use of metaphors as children compared wetlands to a sponge, soap, cradle, diaper, filter, pillow and mixer. It's very efficient and creative to learn about things through the use of metaphors. Children conducted experiments to see how oil affects birds' feathers; they studied the water cycle and came to understand that people are responsible for water quality in our rivers and lakes; through debates they came to understand the issues involved in building along shores and dumping waste into water. Children and teachers will long remember the lesson given by the scientists from the Faculty of Biology from Moscow State University and the enthusiasm and excitement we all felt looking for tiny insects in wetland waters. I wonder in what other place ordinary children from Amur villages can get a chance to be taught by Moscow professors or American biologists or a former judge. Only in Muraviovka Park! Environmental protection is a very important issue and it is much more effective to teach it through games, stories and different visualizations. And this is exactly what the teachers did! It is always interesting for the Russian

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Education and Tourism



School students are taking plankton samples from Kapustikha Lake during the language-environmental summer camp in June 2011.

In spite of lack of educators on staff, the Park once again had successfully conducted its diverse projects and activities.

The annual language and environment camp was one of the best in the Park's history, with over 60 participants (middle school students and teachers) from the Amur Region, Khabarovsk and Moscow and a team of 5 US educators. A big part of this success must be credited to the smooth teamwork of experienced Amur and US teachers led by Natalia Gromova and Barb Thompson. It was Barb's 10th season at the Park. Hydro-biologists from Moscow also gave classes at the camp and they were so impressed by this project that they decided to organize a similar camp at the Biological Station of Moscow State University on the White Sea in July 2012. Upon returning home they began fundraising and within a few months managed to receive financial support to organize this camp with participation of the American teachers! So this year Barb Thompson is recruiting American teachers for two summer camps – one at the Park in June, another on the White Sea in July.

The Park staff and associates gave presentations in local schools, community colleges, and universities in several districts of the Amur Region and in a library for the blind and visually impaired in Blagoveshchensk.

In July, the Park started a public campaign, "Spring without Gunshots." During the above mentioned presentations, over 1000 signatures were collected to appeal to the Governor of the

Amur Region to ban spring hunting – one of the most destructive human impacts on migratory birds. On our request, the Working Group on Cranes of Eurasia and the Russian Bird Conservation Union also sent similar petitions to the Amur Region Administration.

It looks like this campaign brought some results. On 1 February 2012, when Sergei was giving presentations and collecting more signatures for the petition at the Natural History Museum in Ivanovka town and at a high school in Sadovoye village, he was told that the regional mass media just reported that the Administration decided to ban the spring hunting season in the Amur Region for five years. A few days later it became clear that this new regulation had exceptions – spring hunting would still be allowed in geese staging areas in Tambovski District, where the Park is located. So the efforts for the "Spring without Gunshots" are far

from over.

Extensive mass media coverage of the April fire prevention workshop attracted public attention to the Park, which resulted in greater visitor flow in 2011 – over 2,000 visitors from April-November. All of these visitors received tours at the Park.

The Park hosted two annual crane festivals – "The Crane Dawns" in late June and "See You Next Spring, Cranes!" in September, with participation of excellent local folk groups of singers and dancers. The second tour for the blind and visually impaired was conducted during the June festival. Many of the

attendees of these events and other visitors later returned as volunteers for different projects.

The Park had a booth at a choice location at the annual Amur Expo Fair (3 days in early June) and our staff gave a press conference about relevant conservation issues

after the fair. Many new visitors came to the Park after they found out about us at the fair. We are very grateful to Anatoliy and Tatiana Telyuk, the Amur Fair Directors, for letting us have a booth and a conference hall free of charge.

We also successfully hosted two international birdwatcher groups in May and June (11 people from the USA and 9 people from Belgium).

Our staff and visiting researchers gave numerous interviews to regional and national TV channels and newspapers.



Interim Director Svetlana Andreeva talking to the Park's visitors about our program to bring back populations of endangered birds.

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Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow) and Andrei Averin ("Bastak" Nature Reserve, Jewish Autonomous Region, Russia) for providing bird bands.

Fire Prevention & Suppression

Grassfires have been and remain one of the biggest threats to nesting cranes, storks and many other birds, greatly reducing their breeding success. Our experience showed that trying to fight the quickly spreading fires is very costly but futile, and the losses are always huge. That is why since the mid 1990s the Park has been an avid advocate and promoter of prescribed burning activities that create sufficient firebreaks around the bird habitats and the Park headquarters thus preventing catastrophic fires. Unfortunately, the governmental agencies in charge of fire control, in the Amur Region and all of Russia, still do not want to organize and finance the planning of this critical work. Instead, they limit their role to posting decrees about the dates of the fire dangerous periods. Of course, this does not help to reduce the number and scale of illegal fires and the losses caused by them.

To change this situation, in April 2012 the Park organized and conducted two hands-on workshops on prescribed burning, with participation of staff of the Amur Ministry for Emergencies and local firefighters. Russian participants were puzzled by the equipment used by their American colleague who traveled to the Park to lead the workshop (Jeb Barzen, Director of ICF's Field Ecology Department). They expected to see something very fancy and high-tech, but Jeb was using simple backpack fire extinguishers, swatter flaps, and drip torches.

They were surprised that no heroic strenuous efforts and large



April 2011. ICF's Jeb Barzen demonstrates to staff of the Park, employees of the Ministry for Emergencies, and firefighters the proper use of water pump to minimize water usage and efficiently put out the fire when conducting a prescribed burn.

machinery were required to conduct efficient prescribed burns; that the amount of used water was miniscule; and that the whole procedure was nothing out of the ordinary. But what confused the Ministry officials the most was that these burns could be conducted with great precision and efficiency if you know the exact microclimate conditions at the site of the burn. Jeb also showed participants how to measure all necessary climate parameters even when special tools and gadgets are not available.

Jeb gave lectures and shared his 28-years of experience conducting controlled burns.

After completion of the workshop, a group of Park staff (4-6 people) spent six evenings creating over 8 km (5 miles) of firebreaks 30-50 yards wide. The outcome exceeded all our expectations – a record number of nesting pairs of cranes – 17 (during the last 8 years only 2 to 5 pairs of cranes nested annually in the Park). Regretfully, the leaders of the

Ministry for Emergencies rejected our invitations for their staff to take part in this work and did not even want them to become aware of the results.

In the fall we were all ready to conduct prescribed burns again, but were categorically denied the permit to burn. Around 12 p.m. on 8 October, when gale force winds were blowing, a wildfire ignited in the

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A firebreak created in the Park in April using the prescribed burning technique.

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fields of co-op "Korfovsky." Sergei was very watchful those days so he spotted the fire in its very beginning from the Education Center balcony and alerted the Fire Department in Muraviovka, which saved the village of Dukhovskoye from being burned to the ground, as well as many human casualties. Sergei, his staff, Tamaki, university students from Germany and Blagoveshchensk, with help from local firefighters and a team from the Amur Ministry for Emergencies, fought the fire non-stop for many hours but could not do much in these extremely windy conditions (wind velocity of 30-40 m/sec). As a result, all dry vegetation in over 10,000 acres of wetlands was destroyed, as well as two summer cabins at the campgrounds (plus one cabin was damaged but can be easily repaired), the arboretum, and part of our soybean crop.

If we had a permit and conducted prescribed burns, the firebreaks still would have not protected 100% of the wetlands, but would have definitely saved the campground buildings and the Headquarters. But the governmental agencies that denied us the permit to burn began blaming the Park for this fire and reporting much smaller losses and damages. And when independent journalists broadcasted truthful information, these officials turned their wrath on the Park.

And what about those in charge of wildlife protection? Right after the fire poachers began a mass slaughter of the roe deer in the Park and surrounding area. The light-colored deer had nowhere to hide in the charred wetlands and fields. This

October grassfire spread quickly over 90% of the Park's land.



*Above:
Fighting grass fire*



*Left and Below:
Remnants of the burned camp
cabins*



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illegal hunting inside a protected area could not have happened without unofficial approval from game managers and wardens. After Sergei spoke about it in his TV interview, the offices in charge of wildlife and specially protected areas sued him for libel. Fortunately, the regional judge saw right through the accusers, and on 23 January 2012 he dismissed the case with a ruling of "the plaintiffs' reputation cannot be trusted."

Unfortunately, this did not stop the poachers – three times during the week after the court hearing gunshots were heard near the former school building used by the district game manager and his buddies as a hunting lodge. The deer slaughter is going on...

On the bright side, this disaster was felt very personally by many people in the Amur Region and beyond. Friends from

Blagoveshchensk and Saratov (old Russian city on Volga River, southeast of Moscow) wrote poems about the fire and the Park. During the first week after the fire volunteers began coming to the Park in numbers, to clean the site of burned trees and to plant new trees. Over 8 acres were planted with acorns and different local nuts.



Staff of the Blagoveshchensk office of newspaper "Komsomol'skaya Pravda" planting acorns and seeds of the Manchurian Nut tree at the Park after the October fire.



The head of one of many roe deer killed by poachers after the October grassfire

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plant the crops just before it was too late in the season. Discipline on the farm was restored, as well as the two tractors and two combines that remained out of use for a long time. We also were able to make the final payment on the powerful combine purchased with credit in 2004, and even to purchase another used combine of the same model and year of manufacture. The second combine allowed us not only to harvest the entire 2011 crop, but it also ensures the harvesting of the planned larger acreage under crops in 2012. We were able to purchase this combine due to good relations with Mr. Vladimir Oose, the Director of "Looch" (= "Sunray") co-op in Ivanovski District. As a result, we harvested 200 tons of soybeans (twice as much as in 2010) and prepared ~540 acres of fields in advance of the growing season of 2012 (ten times more than had been prepared in 2010 for the 2011 season).

THANK YOU!

Of course all the work described in this newsletter could not have been accomplished without the generous contributions and participation of supporters from the Amur Region, other parts of Russia, the US, and some other countries. We are very grateful to ICF leaders who have been steadfastly supporting the Park since its inception and, in particular, for allowing Elena (ICF Program Assistant and Amur Expedition Coordinator) to move her workplace to the Park for over 90 days in May-July. We also want to express our heartfelt thanks to all the wonderful Friends of Muraviovka Park. We are honored to be your friends and hope to see all of you at the Park one time or another!

Tastes from Russia

Russian Baklazhan Parmesan (Eggplant Parmesan)

Ingredients

1 Eggplant
1 Onion -- diced
3 tbsp Olive oil
1 Green pepper -- diced
1 lb Mushrooms
10 oz Carrots, frozen
1 can Tomato paste
1 tbsp Brown sugar
1 tbsp Vinegar
1 tsp of each of the following:
Salt, Pepper, minced Garlic (or
garlic salt), Black olives
2 tbsp Grated Parmesan
cheese

Method

Wrap eggplant in foil and
bake about 1 hour at 350 deg.
Brown onion in olive oil. Add
green pepper, mushrooms
and carrots. When cool, peel
and dice the eggplant in
about 1/2 inch pieces and ad
to the above ingredients. Add
tomato paste and the balance
of the ingredients with 2 cups
water. Simmer for 1 hour. Add
black olives. Sprinkle grated
Parmesan on top and serve
warm or cold. Enjoy!

Administration and Staff

In the beginning of the year Marina Kolodina, who served as the Park's Director since 2005 and was responsible for the Park's daily operations and activities, had to take a long-term leave due to health issues and is now on an extended maternity leave. Her Deputy, Svetlana Yakovenko, rose to the task and became the Interim Director.

Early in the year, we had no farmhands, no one to take care of our captive birds, and no one to coordinate the education program and host visitors. Our machinery and vehicles were in pitiful condition.

The German furnace that cost us so much just two years ago proved to be designed for a mild Central European winter and is of no use in the harsh Amur winter, when outdoor temperatures drop below minus 40°C, so it had to be replaced. (The good news is that in November 2011, a new, efficient furnace was built at the Headquarters and, thanks to a local sponsor, we received a gift of coal that would last us through the winter!)

Our available funds were at their lowest. During the March discussions at ICF (Baraboo, Wisconsin) with members of the Park's International Board of Trustees and the FOMP Board, it looked like the most feasible solution was to freeze or drastically reduce a number of our programs, primarily the agriculture program. At the same time, considering the significant reduction in international monetary support to the Park, our long-term goal to make the Park self-sustaining has become our top priority as we believe that achieving financial independence is the foundation of the Park's future.

When Sergei arrived at the Park in late March it became clear that the list of unsolved problems was much longer than it looked from the other

side of the pond. Our small staff, however, – Interim Director Svetlana Yakovenko, Bookkeeper Nina Lukianova, and Production Manager Alexander Kolotiy, – emanated an energetic, “combat” spirit. Several times we put our heads together to go over the accumulated difficulties and every time we saw more and more clearly that the Park could rise to its full capacity, function efficiently, and even develop and grow – but only if the current problems were addressed immediately instead of putting their solution off “until better times.”

Thus the Park's staff, while busily attending to their numerous and diverse daily tasks and responsibilities, began to reorganize the Park's management. Elena arrived at the Park on 2 May and stayed for three months to help in whatever way was needed. At the same time, new research programs have been initiated (*see Conservation and Research section*). The heaviest load fell on Svetlana's fragile shoulders – she, on top of carrying out responsibilities of Interim Director without a Deputy, took upon herself all administrative and daily operation tasks, plus responsibilities for the summer camp and visitors.

*Congratulations to
Marina (Kolodina) and
her husband Alexander
on the birth of their
daughter Masha
(Maria).*

School...continued from page 4

teachers to see how our American colleagues use simple, everyday objects to help teach a lesson. I have been helping at the camps since 2004 and I can't help but admire the enthusiasm and energy the American teachers put into their work.

I believe that we must be very grateful to the Park staff who remind us about our beautiful world. They make us think and understand that people are not 'the tsar of nature' but just a small part of it and, unfortunately, not always the best part. Thanks to the lessons given during the summer camps we manage to perceive the laws and mysteries of nature and better understand the great diversity of life and how complicated and at the same time perfectly organized this world is. We learned that we should not just be consumers but investors too. Our main task as human beings is to save this world for future generations. And to my mind it is a very vital issue in Russia. Living in such a large country and possessing such a vast territory we sometimes forget that sooner or later everything comes to an end and in order to prolong our resources we must protect and use them carefully.

As usual it was an unforgettable summer camp. In addition to all the lessons, our children had a chance to become teachers of their native language as well by teaching Russian to the American teachers. As I was responsible for organizing these lessons I can tell you how enthusiastic the girls and boys were to enlist to teach Barb, Jan and Joan, Sean and Angela. The list was made up several days ahead of time.

The people who work in Muraviovka Park do a really great thing; I haven't heard of any other place in Russia that has this type of camp. The children who were lucky enough to attend these summer schools liked them so much they asked if they could go again. Needless to say, their knowledge of English improved and they became more confident and not afraid of speaking with foreigners.



About the Author:

Natalia Kalnej has been working as the English teacher at Oriental Languages School in Blagoveshchensk for 12 years teaching kids ages 7 to 18, from 1st grade to 11th grade. She has nine groups and two individual classes this year. The school celebrates its 15th birthday in 2012.

As for myself, I'd say that since 2004 I can proudly call myself a "Friend of Muraviovka Park". My visits and work in the park have given me a lot of inspiration. I work as an English teacher at a private language school in Blagoveshchensk and though from time to time we get some foreigners at our school nothing can be compared with the Park. Here I get the chance to satisfy my need for communication with native speakers, learn some new teaching methods, games, songs, poems and other very interesting activities. It stirs up my curiosity and enthusiasm to say nothing of the beautiful nature, where we can breathe really fresh air not polluted by car fumes, hear the birds singing, watch the stars, which is almost impossible in town and of course make a lot of good friends. Finally, I just hope that with the help of foreign friends, local authorities and hard and invaluable work of the authorities of the Park we'll continue this great job and won't let it be destroyed by unfriendly people.

DIRECTOR CANDIDATE



Peter Boger is a doctoral student in environmental studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Peter first visited

Muraviovka in 2006, teaching at the EE camp, and was so impressed by the students and teachers he was determined to incorporate the park into his master's thesis. He returned in 2007 as leader of the teaching team for the ILSS camp, where he developed renewed appreciation for the adaptability and indomitable spirit of everyone at the park! His master's thesis determined that the camps successfully altered students' appreciation of environmental issues and feelings of responsibility for making positive environmental change.

Peter joined the Board in 2009 and has served in the role of secretary since then. He wants to continue on the Board both to give back to the Park that has given him so much and to help Muraviovka remain a powerful force for community-building and environmental change in the Amur Region.

DIRECTOR CANDIDATE



Victoria Rydberg traveled to the park in 2006, taking two of her former

students with her. She is now the state environmental education consultant at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Victoria joined the board in 2010. Her background in graphic design and love of technology put her in charge of communication, including helping increase awareness of FOMP through updated means, including social media such as Facebook.

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The Board of Directors:

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Join our **CAUSE**:

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

Online donations coming soon!



Please cut & return the following membership form and voting ballot

Friends of Muraviovka Park Membership Form (New or Renewal) and Board of Directors Ballot 2012

Please vote for TWO of the following candidates:

☐ Peter Boger ☐ Victoria Rydberg ☐ Write in candidate: _____

We hope you will **renew your support** of Muraviovka Park. (Membership 1/1/2012 – 12/31/2012)

Membership Levels

Name _____

☐ \$10 – Student ☐ \$15 – Individual

Address _____

☐ \$25 – 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 – Organization/Firm

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 _____

\$ _____ **Total Donation**

Thank you!

Successful Fundraiser

Francine Jones, FOMP treasurer

The Friends of Muraviovka Park (FOMP) served lunch during the International Crane Foundation's Annual Meeting on September 24, 2011.

This is one of FOMP's annual fundraisers. Throughout the day, we sold beverages, snacks, and fruit. When people stopped by, it gave us an opportunity to tell them about Muraviovka Park in Russia and the wonderful work that is being done there by Sergei and his staff. FOMP also had a booth to sell our T-shirts and to give out more information.

It was a great fundraiser for FOMP. Money raised will provide much needed funds to continue our work at Muraviovka Park. Thanks to everyone who donated and volunteered or purchased T-shirts and lunches.



*Friends of Muraviovka Park
Annual Meeting • Saturday, March 17th*

*Featuring the film **Green Fire**
with comments by George Archibald*

1:00 pm - ICF Library

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



Friends of Muraviovka Park
International Crane Foundation
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P.O. Box 447
Baraboo, WI 53913