



The Prairie Pulse



Chuck Cooper

Note from the CEO

Dear Friends,

It is with mixed feelings that I inform you that I will be retiring at the end of this year. There have been many changes at the Crane Trust since I became the Chief Executive in 2010, including the additions of the Nature and Visitor Center, the bison herd, the VIP cottages, and public crane viewing blinds. All of this is because of our friends and members that love the cranes as much as we do.

Brice Krohn, Crane Trust President, will assume my duties and will lead our talented science and land management staff into this new phase of the Crane Trust's history.

I've had the privilege of meeting many of you over the years, and I hope you consider taking your crane viewing to the next level by visiting the Trust and participating in a crane viewing tour. These tours give you the opportunity to view the migration from a new and exciting perspective

Thank you for continuing to help us so that the Crane Trust is positioned to protect the migration for generations to come.

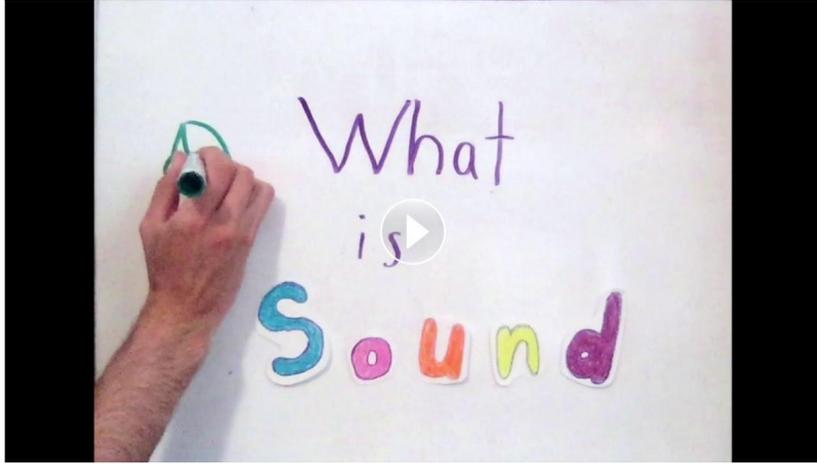
Sound of the Prairie

by: Bethany Ostrom

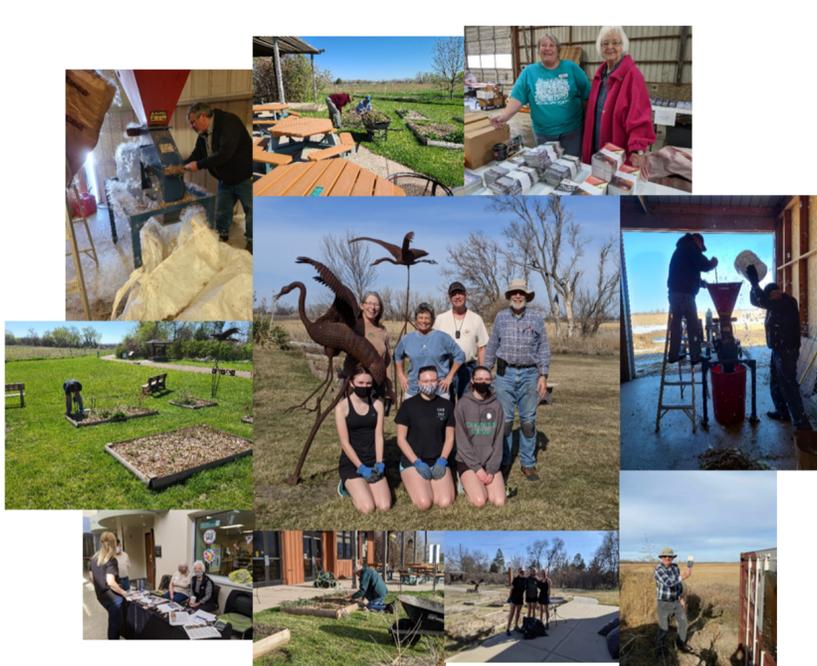
We all know how beautiful and all-encompassing the sound of the Sandhill Cranes is while migrating through the Central Platte River Valley (CPRV) prairies and wetlands. The rattling and trilling of their chorus creates a rejuvenating experience for our ears, reminding us to truly listen and take in nature's songs. However, many are unknowingly missing out on the dynamic and melodic sounds of the prairie outside of crane season. Nebraska prairies, especially around the Crane Trust, orchestrate a full music ensemble throughout the spring and summer months. The CPRV has six frog and toad species providing the bass. The CPRV is globally recognized as an Important Bird Area for breeding and migrating birds. These multitudes of birds sing the melodies creating intricate harmonies with each other. Even the plants are played by the wind, adding anything from soothing undertones from a breeze rustling the grasses to the clashing cymbals of wind throwing branches. All of these sounds work together to create the delicate but astounding prairie soundscape.

The soundscape can tell us about the health of our prairies and the Crane Trust has been working to protect and understand the prairies and the animals in them. If one bird or frog species becomes extinct or a habitat destroyed, the soundscape will forever be lacking. If noise created by cars, planes, construction, and other manmade sounds increase, the soundscape is altered. This not only lessens the ability for us to hear and enjoy nature, but it disturbs animals and makes living in their habitat more difficult and stressful. In order to fully experience this beautiful landscape it must be heard and protected. The prairies have been communicating with us since the beginning. Are you listening?

Check out the video below to learn more!



Volunteer Highlights



Our volunteers have been busy this spring! With spring comes new growth, including weeds and our volunteers have been great help in keeping our pollinator garden and landscaping maintained by trimming, weeding, and picking up trash at the Nature and Visitor Center. Our volunteers have also helped with a lot of other maintenance projects we have had already this year. The Crane Trust hosted the Brochure Swap in May and our volunteers helped get our arena building ready for the event. They have also helped build new photography blinds and cleaned up our other viewing blinds after the long winter.

Last fall, volunteers helped collect native seed from our prairies by hand. Then, this spring, they helped us clean the collected native seed with a hamster mill which we later reused in restored sites to increase diversity. Although cleaning the seeds was a very dusty job, it was also very rewarding knowing it was going right back to help restore our prairies. We appreciate all of the dedication and support from our volunteers as we could not do everything we do without them. Thank you!



Featured Artist: Kristine Chavez

Kris started taking photos with a Brownie Instamatic. It wasn't until after graduating from Nebraska Wesleyan that she got into photography using manual cameras and film. A brief stab at developing her own photos was gradually interrupted with the gift of a digital camera.

The Nebraska Master Naturalist program brought a bounty of opportunities for Kris to photograph nature. Through encouragement from her sister and good friend, she entered her first photograph in a juried art exhibit. It was accepted. The desire to share her photography with others has taken precedence over selling. When her art can also benefit places like the Crane Trust, she has been honored to display her photography.

Kris has had exhibits in Nebraska, Minnesota, Kansas and Iowa. Her photography is in homes throughout the Midwest. Currently, in addition to the Crane Trust Art Exhibit, she was also at Connect Gallery in Omaha, NE which featured Nebraska artists but closed in 2020.

Kris is married to Carlos. They have three children and four grandchildren. She taught for 33 years before taking early leave. Photography, travel, kayaking, hiking and spending time at the family cabin are her hobbies and stress relievers.



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