



Five Years to Shape the Next Fifty

2025-2030 Strategic Plan

For nearly half a century, the Crane Trust has been a guardian of one of the world's great wildlife spectacles – the annual migration of the endangered Whooping Crane and Sandhill Cranes along Nebraska's central Platte River. But today, these birds face unprecedented threats. The decisions we make in the next five years will shape the future of this river – and the cranes – for generations.

This plan is our vision, and your invitation to be part of it.



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STRATEGIC PLAN

This plan outlines five strategic priorities that will guide our work from now through our 50th anniversary in 2028 and beyond – bold steps to protect the river, the cranes, and the communities who cherish them.

MISSION

Crane Trust protects Platte River habitat for migrating cranes.

GOAL 1: PEOPLE – Building the Team for a Stronger Future

Our mission is powered by people – dedicated staff, visionary board members, passionate volunteers, and committed partners. By engaging local communities, policymakers, and ecologists we ensure our work is sustainable and culturally relevant.

We will strengthen our ability to secure funding, deliver effective programs, and advocate for lasting habitat protection by optimizing personnel, fostering leadership continuity, and investing in training for staff and volunteers.

“Crane Trust works hard to build critical links between people, cranes and other wildlife and the Platte River. This results in the protection and preservation of one of the most important and threatened migration corridors in the world. They ensure people will hear and heed the call of the crane and of the land and water.....for help.

- Doug Frey, Crane Trust Supporter

GOAL 2: HABITAT – Protecting & Restoring the Platte River

The Platte River is part of one of the most important migration corridors in the world. **Our Southside Vision will connect key habitat areas from Overton to Chapman**, ensuring cranes and other wildlife have safe, healthy spaces to rest and feed.

We will expand wetlands, restore grasslands, and use cutting-edge science to guide our work for maximum impact. Long-term monitoring will provide the data needed for adaptive management, helping us respond to emerging threats and maintain a thriving ecosystem.

“The Central Platte River Valley is a lifeline for cranes and countless other species. With our Southside Vision, we have a rare chance to connect and restore critical habitats on a landscape scale. By combining adaptive management with long-term monitoring, we can ensure this ecosystem remains resilient in the face of future challenges.

- Brice Krohn, Crane Trust President & CEO



GOAL 3: INFRASTRUCTURE – Inspiring Conservation Through Experiences

A new, state-of-the-art Nature & Visitor Center will bring the wonder of the cranes to thousands each year. With interactive exhibits, guided tours, and expanded meeting spaces, this hub will connect visitors to the mission and inspire future environmental stewards.

Additionally, the center will generate revenue through donations, strategic programming, and eco-tourism, helping to sustain long-term conservation initiatives.



Visiting here is highly recommended. Every volunteer and member of staff I encountered was so passionate about the work they do. I couldn't help but be excited at every turn. The migration of the cranes is an awe-inspiring event that everyone should see in person.

- Shayla Laub, Crane Trust Visitor

GOAL 4: AWARENESS – Expanding Our Reach Locally & Globally

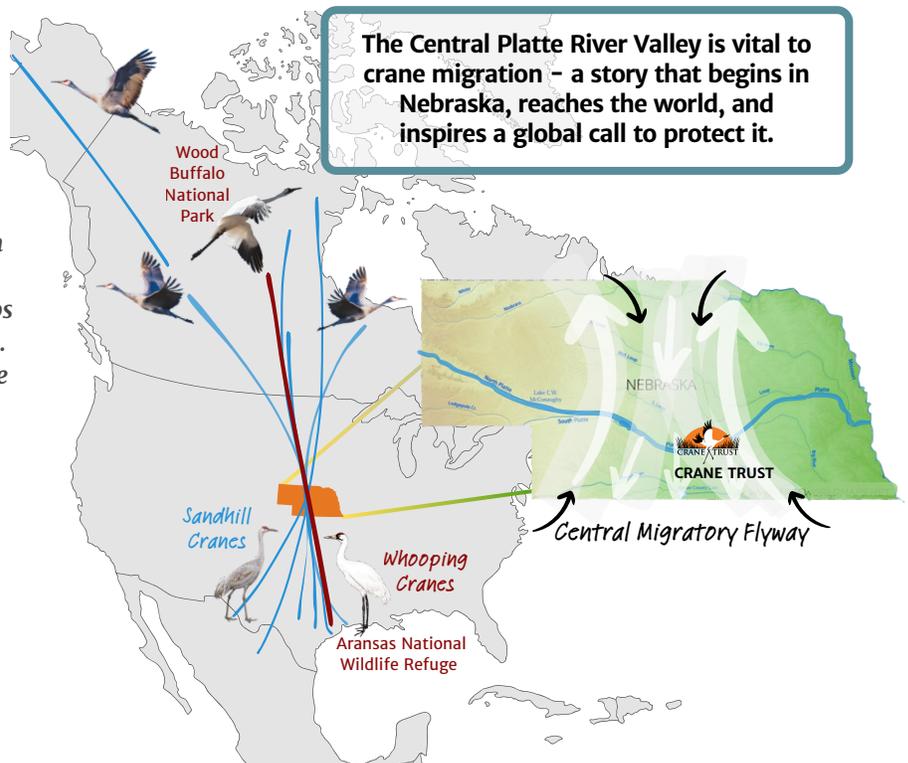
From Nebraska to the world, we will share the story of crane conservation. By engaging decision-makers, educators, families, and community leaders, we'll inspire more people to join us in protecting this rare ecosystem.

Our 50th anniversary in 2028 will be a celebration of decades of impact – and a launchpad for our next 50 years.



This fellowship has given me incredible hands-on experience. I'm learning how our work to protect crane habitat helps many other species thrive. Here at Crane Trust, we're helping to inspire future scientists by allowing them to come and see nature... the way it is supposed to be.

- Emma Richards, Crane Trust Fellow



Whooping Crane Population by the Numbers*

1860: 1,300-1,400 cranes

1870: 500-700 cranes

1890: Disappeared from north central US

1944: 21 cranes in two populations

1950: Last whooper in non-migratory population died

1967: Biologists begin egg transfer to reintroduce eastern migratory flock

2006: 473 total cranes

2025: 834 total cranes

- 703 wild
 - 557 in Nebraska flock
 - 146 in reintroduced flock
- 131 in captivity

*Sources: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, International Crane Foundation



GOAL 5: SUPPORT – Growing the Network that Sustains the Mission

Conservation takes vision – and resources. We will grow our endowment, launch major donor initiatives, and expand our membership to 5,000 families by 2030. **Our goal: \$50 million in pledges in coordination with our 50th anniversary.**



I have been a member, donor, and volunteer of Crane Trust for a few years now. Crane Trust is in my estate plans, as well. I believe in their mission and I trust the staff, administration, and scientists to protect and maintain this 80-mile corridor along the Platte River. It gives me great pleasure to continue donating to the Trust, knowing I am helping in some way to ensure the survival of the wildlife, the river, and the ecosystem.

- Bev Thompson, Crane Trust Supporter

Your Role in the Vision

This work is only possible because of people like you.

Every acre protected, every crane safeguarded, every child inspired – it all begins with your support.

Together, we can ensure that the awe-inspiring migration continues for generations to come.

Ways to Give

- ✓ Make a one-time or monthly gift.
- ✓ Join as a member.
- ✓ Include the Crane Trust in your estate plans.
- ✓ Become an ACRE MAKER and sponsor a Southside Vision project.

“For more than 15 years, our commitment to the Crane Trust has grown because its work makes a real difference. When we invest in the Crane Trust, we’re not just saving cranes – we’re protecting entire ecosystems. Wetlands filter water and store carbon, prairies sustain pollinators and wildlife, and every acre protected secures a future for our children and grandchildren.

This is about legacy: ensuring that the haunting call of the Sandhill Crane continues to echo across the plains, and that the Whooping Crane remains not just a memory, but a living miracle.”

-Pietrok Family, Crane Trust Legacy President’s Council Members



CONTACT US to learn more or get involved:
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READY TO GIVE NOW?
Scan to support the vision
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