



# **WELCOME TO YOUR VIP OVERNIGHT CRANE VIEWING EXPERIENCE**

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**Thank you for booking a VIP Crane Experience with us!**

## VIP OVERNIGHT EXPERIENCES

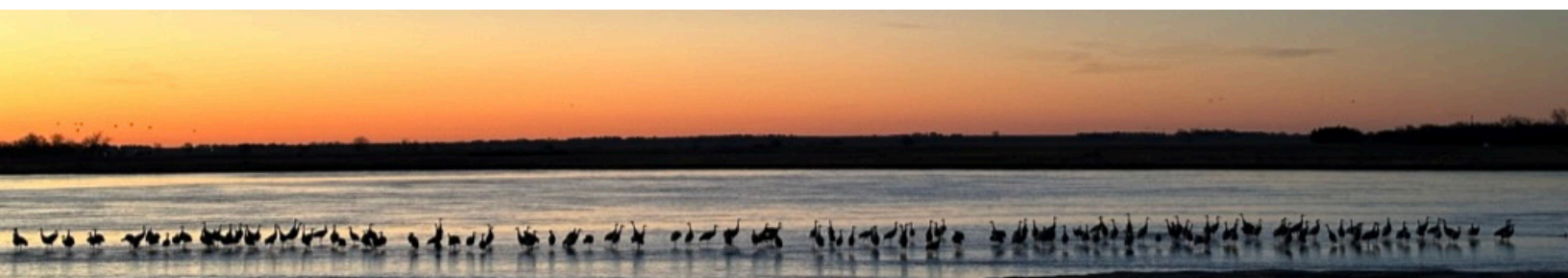
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Take your crane viewing adventure to the next level with this premier experience! For each program, up to 28 guests from across the country gather for this exclusive opportunity to engage with fellow travelers and Crane Trust staff. You will have an elevated experience while helping to support Crane Trust's mission and conservation work.

## CRANE TRUST MISSION

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Through land management, scientific research, and education, Crane Trust protects and maintains the physical, hydrological and biological integrity of the Big Bend area of the Platte River so that it continues to function as a life support system for Whooping Cranes, Sandhill Cranes and other migratory bird species.





# CRANE TRUST PROPERTY AND AMENITIES

Crane Trust's Headquarters is located in South Central Nebraska on nearly 6,000 acres of lowland tall grass prairie and wet meadows. This rare ecosystem includes an uninterrupted seven-mile stretch of the Platte River, preserved by the Crane Trust as unique habitat that has been used for millennia by Sandhill Cranes, endangered Whooping Cranes, and many other species of animals and plants.

In addition to the cottages where you will stay, the facility encompasses the Crane Trust headquarters, research laboratory, dormitory, meeting spaces, dining room, and outdoor decks with breathtaking views of the prairies and Platte River.



Crane Trust is also home to the beautiful **Nature & Visitor Center**, a unique destination that welcomes travelers and community members throughout the year.

At the Nature & Visitor Center, you'll find:

- Art and photography in our Hornady Art Gallery
- Unique items in the Crimson Crown Gift Shop
- Interactive displays and informative videos
- Ten miles of nature trails
- Pollinator garden
- Picnic area
- 30-foot viewing tower near the river
- Research bison herd





# PREMIER ACCOMMODATIONS

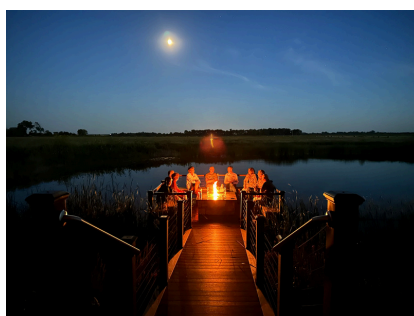
## Cottages

Overnight guests enjoy cozy accommodations in fully-furnished Legacy Cottages. The cottages each sleep eight guests in four double bedrooms (2 twins or 1 queen bed). Each bedroom has a private bath. The cottages also feature a common area, mini kitchen, and back patio.



## Suites

The two luxury Bay Family Suites each feature a master bedroom with king bed and master bathroom. Common areas include a large living area and kitchenette with microwave, coffee maker, and full-sized refrigerator, plus a shared deck with fire pit overlooking the pond. Each suite accommodates two guests.

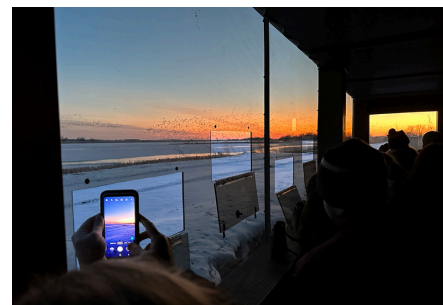




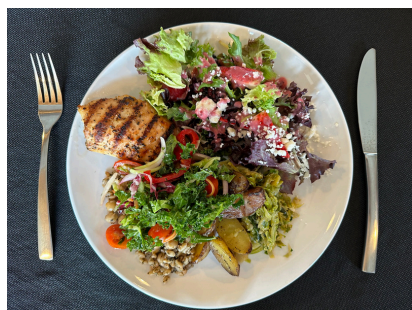
# WHAT TO EXPECT

## Guided Crane Viewing Experience

View the migration in our exclusive heated Pietrok Family riverfront blinds with Crane Trust experts who provide valuable insights into the science and the mystery of the crane migration and the Platte River ecosystem. The blinds are intentionally designed and placed to provide spectacular vistas of the largest Sandhill Crane roost on the river.



From the Headquarters classroom, take a short van ride to the trailhead, where you disembark and quietly walk to the viewing blinds. After a 90-minute immersive experience in the blind, return to the vans and ride back to enjoy an evening gathering or a hot breakfast. Your experience includes informative and engaging programs and videos about the Sandhill Crane Migration, Crane Trust's mission, and habitat protection in the Central Platte River Valley.



## Meals

Your VIP experience includes delicious catered meals\* and beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic). Enjoy cocktail hour, meals, snacks, and social time with your fellow guests and Crane Trust staff in the Headquarters classroom.



\*We try to accommodate most food allergies and sensitivities. You may bring supplemental foods to meet your nutritional needs. Please bring any over-the-counter or prescribed medications.





## PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

### How to Dress

Riverfront blinds, overnight accommodations, and dining areas are all comfortably heated. Activities take place both indoors and outdoors. Please bring clothing layers and sturdy, warm, comfortable shoes.

Average March temperatures in Nebraska range from 20 to 40°F, but can be as cold as 0°F or as warm as 70°F. The weather can also change unexpectedly. Please check the forecast prior to your arrival and pack appropriately.

Access to the riverfront blinds requires walking one quarter mile over uneven outdoor terrain in all conditions and in low light. If you have any concerns about these conditions for participation, please contact us before booking.

It is best to wear dark, neutral colored clothing during viewing experiences. Bright or light colors can sometimes scare the cranes.

### Packing Suggestions

- Various weight clothing for layering: heavy coat, knit cap, gloves, long underwear, warm socks and mild weather options. Avoid cotton outer layers.
- Hiking boots or sturdy shoes (preferably waterproof as trails can be muddy).
- Rain jacket or other waterproof outerwear.
- Water bottle and/or coffee tumbler.

### Other Tips & Hints

- We recommend bringing binoculars and a camera. A telephoto lens is recommended for photographing cranes and other wildlife. We will provide some binoculars to share.
- Phone cameras work well. During viewing experiences, please darken screen brightness and turn off flash and all notifications.
- Please note: camera tripods are NOT allowed in the blinds due to limited space. Monopods are permitted.



# TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL

## Directions to Crane Trust

The Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center is located on Interstate 80 at the Alda Exit (Exit 305) just west of Grand Island, Nebraska. Closest airports are Grand Island and Kearney, within 40 miles of the Crane Trust. Airports in Lincoln and Omaha are within 150 miles. Please check in at the Nature & Visitor Center when you arrive.

**NOTE: Crane Trust is in the Central Time Zone.**



**CRANE TRUST**  
**Nature & Visitor Center**  
9325 S. Alda Road  
Wood River, NE 68883  
(308) 382-1820

## Arrival Time

Check in at the Nature & Visitor Center between 2:45 & 3:45 pm CST.

Gather shortly before 4:00 pm CST and join a caravan led by our staff for a short drive to Crane Trust Headquarters, where you will meet your other hosts. You will have some time to settle into your private room before everyone gathers for the evening experience.

## Your Crane Trust Hosts



**Brice Krohn**  
President & CEO



**Matt Fong**  
Director of  
Fundraising &  
Outreach



**Sandra Douglas**  
Relationship  
Coordinator



**Sarah Nottage-Tacey**  
Development and  
Special Events  
Coordinator



**Matt Urbanski**  
Marketing  
Coordinator



**Kristi Castillo**  
Membership &  
Database Manager

## Airport Information

There are four airports within a few hours drive of the Crane Trust:

- Omaha Eppley Airport (OMA) : 2+ hours
- Lincoln Airport (LNK) : 90 minutes
- Kearney Regional Airport (EAR) : 40 minutes
- Grand Island Central Nebraska Regional Airport (GRI) : 25 minutes

If you plan to spend more time in south central Nebraska, we recommend visiting our friends and partners listed on page 9.



# ONE-NIGHT VIP CRANE EXPERIENCE ITINERARY

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## DAY 1

### Afternoon

- Between 2:45 and 3:45 pm, arrive & check in at the Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center.
- Just before 4:00 pm, caravan in private cars, led by Crane Trust staff, to Headquarters (three-mile drive). Meet your other hosts and get settled into the cottages.

**\*NOTE:** Due to our cleaning schedule and our commitment to providing a high-quality experience for all guests, we are unable to accommodate early check-ins. We appreciate your patience as we prepare your space with care and attention.

### Evening

- Welcome and dinner in the classroom\*
- Van ride to the trailhead for a one quarter-mile walk to the riverfront blinds
- Sunset viewing of cranes returning to the river (approx. 90 minutes)
- Return for dessert, video presentation, and social time before retiring to the cottages.

## DAY 2

### Morning

- Arise well before dawn for optional coffee and light breakfast in the classroom.
- Van ride to the trailhead for a one quarter-mile walk to the riverfront blinds.
- Sunrise viewing of cranes as they awaken, dance, and display (approx. 90 minutes)
- Return for breakfast, program, social time, and farewells. Checkout time is 10:00 am.

**\* Note:** Before Daylight Savings on March 8, 2026, we will provide appetizers before the sunset crane viewing experience. Enjoy dinner, drinks, and dessert afterwards back at the classroom.





# TWO-NIGHT VIP CRANE SAFARI ITINERARY

**\*NOTE:** Due to our cleaning schedule and our commitment to providing a high-quality experience for all guests, we are unable to accommodate early check-ins. We appreciate your patience as we prepare your space with care and attention.

## DAY 1

### Afternoon

- Between 2:45 pm and 3:45 pm, arrive & check in at the Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center
- Just before 4:00 pm, caravan in private cars, led by Crane Trust staff, to Wild Rose Ranch (three-mile drive). Meet your other hosts and get settled into the cottages.

### Evening

- Welcome and dinner in the Headquarters classroom\*
- Van ride to the trailhead for a one quarter-mile walk to the riverfront blinds
- Sunset viewing of cranes returning to the river (approx. 90 minutes)
- Return for dessert, video presentation, and social time before retiring to the cottages

## DAY 2

### Morning

- Arise well before dawn for optional coffee and light breakfast in the classroom
- Van ride to the trailhead for the walk to the riverfront blinds
- Sunrise viewing of cranes as they awaken, dance, and display (approx. 90 minutes)
- Return for breakfast and video presentation in the classroom
- Enjoy approximately two hours of free time to visit, hike, relax, explore with your camera, or browse the gift shop and art gallery in the Nature & Visitor Center
- 12:00 Noon – Lunch in the classroom

### Afternoon

- 1:00 – 3:00 pm (approx.): Guided excursions in our vans may include a tour to see our genetically diverse bison herd and/or visits to unique private prairies and historic sites to find cranes foraging in daytime. Learn about local ecology and our work to preserve habitat.
- Afternoon free time to socialize, hike, rest, explore with your camera, or browse the gift shop and art gallery in the Nature & Visitor Center

### Evening

- Dinner and drinks in the classroom\*
- Van ride to the trailhead for the walk to the riverfront blinds
- Sunset viewing of cranes returning to the river (approx. 90 minutes)
- Return for dessert, video presentation and social time before retiring to the cottages

## DAY 3

### Morning

- Arise well before dawn for optional coffee and light breakfast in the classroom
- Sunrise viewing of cranes as they awaken, dance, and display (approx. 90 minutes)
- Return for breakfast, program, social time, and farewells. Checkout time is 10:00 am.

**\* Note:** Before Daylight Savings on March 8, 2026, we will provide appetizers before the sunset crane viewing experience. Enjoy dinner, drinks, and dessert afterwards back at the classroom.





If you have questions about VIP Overnight Experiences, please contact:

Sandra Douglas  
(308) 833-3808  
[reservations@cranetrust.org](mailto:reservations@cranetrust.org)

We look forward to experiencing the Incredible Crane Migration with you!

## SPENDING MORE TIME IN THE AREA? WE RECOMMEND . . .

**Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center** Gift Shop and Art Gallery

**Stuhr Museum** of the Prairie Pioneer

**Grand Island** Downtown and Railside

### **Hastings:**

- Museum of Natural and Cultural History
- Odyssey Restaurant
- Blue Fork Kitchen
- First Street Brewing Company

### **MORE INFO ABOUT AREA ATTRACTIONS, FOOD AND LODGING:**

Grand Island Tourism [visitgrandisland.com](http://visitgrandisland.com)

Hastings Tourism [visithastingsnebraska.com](http://visithastingsnebraska.com)

Kearney Tourism [visitkearney.org](http://visitkearney.org)

Nebraska Flyway [nebraskaflyway.com](http://nebraskaflyway.com)



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[cranetrust.org](http://cranetrust.org)