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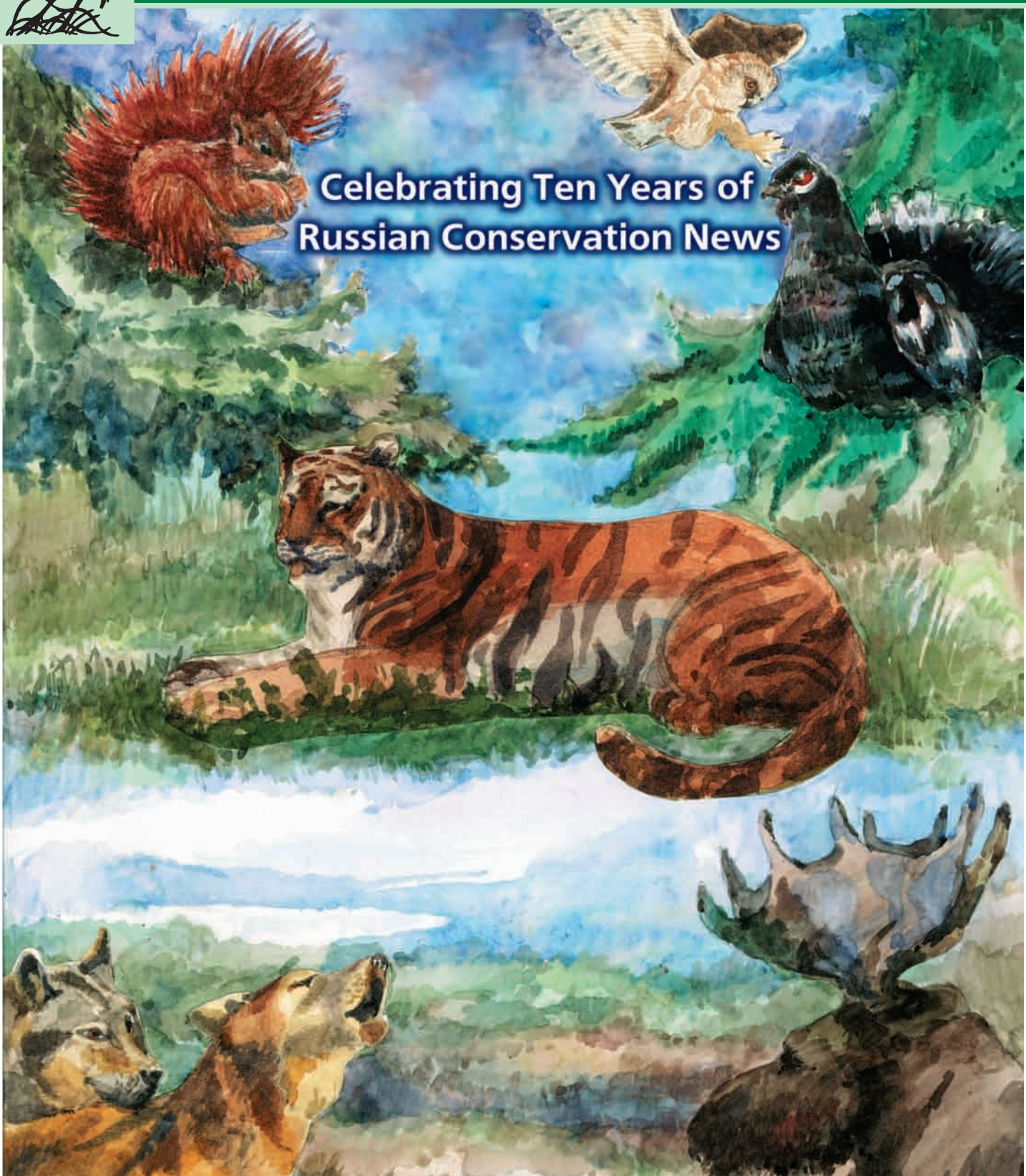

PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN RUSSIA AND THROUGHOUT NORTHERN EURASIA

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The mission of the Center for Russian Nature Conservation (CRNC) is to promote the conservation of nature in Russia and throughout the former Soviet Union, and to assist conservation groups in that region through information exchange, coordination of professional and education exchanges, and provision of technical assistance to protected areas. CRNC is a project of the Tides Center.

Center for Russian Nature Conservation

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RCN *has many partners and friends in Russia, including the Partnership for Zapovedniks, whose mission is to offer organizational, technical, and financial help to zapovedniks and national parks in Russia.*

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Acknowledgement: *Maps of Russia's protected areas that are featured in this issue were prepared using the Protected Areas GIS database of the Biodiversity Conservation Center/International Socio-Ecological Union. For more information, please consult http://oopt.info/gis/database-eng.html*

ON THE COVER

Cover artwork by V. Alkaeva, N. Titova, M. Yakovleva and M. Volskaya, students at the Moscow Academic Lyceum of the Russian Academy of Arts.

Voice from the Wild (A letter from the editors)

The year 1994 was the year that Netscape was founded, that Nelson Mandela became the first black president of South Africa, and that Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres, and Yitzhak Rabin shared the Nobel Peace Prize. For sports fans the world over, 1994 is probably best remembered as the year that Brazil defeated Italy in the World Cup final in Pasadena. For Russia, which had declared its independence from the Soviet Union three years earlier, it was the year civil war broke out in the Republic of Chechnya. Meanwhile, industrial output and agricultural production were in a steep downward spiral, even as international trade continued to rise. For Russia's nature protection system, 1994 was a year that saw a historic seminar on environmental education and local outreach in zapovedniks, as well as a note of caution that Russia's zapovedniks, like the rest of the country, were in danger of becoming commercialized. For us here at *RCN*, 1994 was the year when our first issue—then a hand-stapled bulletin—came rolling off the presses.

In this issue, we celebrate ten years of reporting on biodiversity conservation in Northern Eurasia with a look back at some of the environmental issues we reported on in that first year. And since much of our reporting then and now has focused on Russia's protected areas, in this issue we bring you a special review of zapovedniks and national parks that are also celebrating their tenth anniversaries.

But as we look back at Russia's zapovednik history, what may stand out the most is not the number of hectares placed under protection each year or the scientific studies each protected area produced—though both are, of course, important—but rather the people whose dedication has kept Russia's nature protection system going throughout the social, political, and economic turmoil of the past decade. Working in Russia's protected areas system is a tough job for anyone, but in particular for the handful of women working in a field dominated by men. In this issue, we bring you the stories of four women whose devotion to nature protection has made a palpable difference.

Since *RCN*'s inception, its mission has involved facilitating informational exchange across cultural and language borders. In the gloomy Moscow winter, when the sun sets early but hours are long and deadlines are pressing, we editors here at *RCN* sometimes ask ourselves if the work we do is really worth all the effort. What is to be learned from working internationally in nature protection? To address this question, we offer a series of interviews with and articles by people who have devoted themselves to similar callings—Russians working in nature protection abroad and international citizens working in Russia.

And just who are those editors working long hours in the gloomy Moscow winter? *RCN* has benefited from the creative talent and diligence of a multinational staff throughout its history, employing a wide variety of people with different backgrounds and divergent futures. In the final pages of this issue we invite you to meet us, the editorial staff of *RCN* over the past ten years, for a glimpse at how we changed the journal and how the journal changed us.

RCN Looks Back on the Last Ten Years

The Beginnings and History of *Russian Conservation News*

By ***Margaret Williams***

It was ten years ago this autumn 2004 that *RCN* was born. At that time, I was living in Moscow, spending most of my working hours in a tiny apartment on the outskirts of the city. This cramped little place was the office of a fledgling Russian conservation NGO, the Biodiversity Conservation Center. (At the time, few NGOs could afford office space, and doing business in such a setting was common.) In what had once been a living room, a wall-sized map of the USSR adorned one side of the boxy space, while tabletop computers stood side by side along the periphery. The apartment-office was like a revolving door: through it circulated a steady stream of people en route to or from faraway locations in the Russian wilds, or perhaps the less exotic Committee on Environmental Protection in the center of Moscow. The apartment's tiny kitchen, with its diminutive square table and small stools, was constantly occupied by someone or some group – cooking a meal (at any time of the day), brewing and drinking tea, chain smoking, and endlessly discussing work.

RCN Editor-in-Chief Margaret Williams visiting Kurilsky Zapovednik, one of the many reserves that has been featured in the journal over the years. *Photo by F. Strebeigh.*

I found myself at the center of this activity thanks to a friendship that had begun during my graduate program at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. I had enrolled in this program intending to focus on Russian conservation. Thus my new acquaintance with Evgeny "Eugene" Simonov, a Russian student from Moscow, was fortuitous and as educational as the courses offered in the school's catalog. We spent many hours together, he telling stories of Russia's protected areas and I helping to edit hundreds of pages of grant proposals he had drafted. For much of our two-year course of study, Eugene was courting international aid agencies and private donors, delivering an unusual and surprising message: Russia has vast areas of wilderness, much of it is unprotected, and it represents an unprecedented opportunity for biodiversity conservation. This was the message that captivated my interest in Russia, and has held it ever since.

During and immediately following graduate school, I ventured first to Magadan, in northeastern Siberia, and then to Karelia in the Russian Northwest. I was awarded a two-year fellowship which would allow me to work with Russian nature reserves and conservation groups to build links between Russia and the West. By the fall of 1994, I had made my way to Moscow. There, thanks to Eugene, I was introduced to a community of bright, energetic, extremely educated, and utterly optimistic young Russian scientists and students. They were the new generation of conservationists coming of age in a new country with open borders, sudden access to e-mail, international donors eager to fund their work, and a curiosity and willingness to try anything to promote their cause. They were the engine behind the creation of a new, entirely Russian NGO that would dedicate itself to protecting Russia's biodiversity. The Biodiverstiy Conservation Center, or BCC, would be the first of its kind in Russia.

BCC soon became my home base while in Moscow. And what a fascinating place to be! I soon met Nikolai Sobelev, who was designing a regional network of protected areas in the Moscow region. I also met Sergei and Elena Ponomarenko, who were researching and trying to protect the ancient forest zaseki, or barriers, that were maintained to repel invading nomads during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Occasionally passing through Moscow, Alexander "Shura" Dubynin described his work with the Novosibirsk EcoClub. From Nizhny Novogorod I heard reports about, and then finally met in person, a highly unusual regional government official, Askhat Kaiumov, who welcomed cooperation with NGOs and was doing his part to create new protected areas in his oblast.

Along came new opportunities to meet people about whom I'd read while back in the US, such as Igor Shpilenok, who had harnessed his passion for photography as a way to build support for conservation and for the creation of Bryansky Les Zapovednik. Oleg Chervyakov, founder of Vodlozersky National Park (Russia's first national park), and Vsevolod Stepanitsky, the chief of Russia's zapovednik system, were other heroes of the nature reserves. There were amazing women, too, in the system, such as tough-as-nails Elena Korshunova, Director of Kerzhensky Zapovednik, and Elena Shatkovskaya, a masterful manager of one of Russia's most precious reserves, Kenozersky National Park. It was thrilling to meet them, and to become a tiny part of their effort to safeguard, and even expand, Russia's protected areas.

One of the key challenges facing the zapovedniks was the lack of public support for their activities. For so long these nature reserves, centers of science and conservation, had been well-kept secrets from most of the Russian citizenry. As Soviet subsidies for the reserves vanished, it would be essential to solicit financial support from communities and regional and international donors. My colleagues and I wondered aloud, how could we get the word out to the world that opportunities abounded here in Russia, that

Reflections on *RCN* from the Field

Note from the editors: Eugene Simonov, a Russian conservationist who played a key role in the creation of RCN*, recently shared his thoughts on the journal with us.*

Eugene Simonov.
Photo by M. Williams.

"One thing that is striking about *RCN* is its stability and longevity. Eras pass, the organizational setting has completely changed, and the substance of US-Russian environmental dialogue differs dramatically now from what it was in 1990s; however, *RCN* still seems to be useful to its readership. I wonder how many issues, which were previously not widely known, the journal has helped to highlight, how many contacts it has helped to establish.

One other rather interesting feature of the journal: *RCN* has been very effective in raising new topics, while, generally, other publications, which are driven by the agendas of their publishing NGOs, tend to overemphasize just a few well-known topics that are important to their work and survival.

I don't know much these days about the organizational structure of *RCN*, but I suppose it is still very simple, and depends largely on the enthusiasm and discipline of several individuals.

As for my reflections on the journal's beginnings, we had originally planned *RCN* for a very different purpose. If the journal had followed that course, it would have already fulfilled its function and would not have been able to survive as long as it has. I do not mean that an English-language digest of environmental news prepared by a Russian NGO is any less important, but it probably would have been less sustainable, and likely would not have continued to exist into the twenty-first century."

Eugene Simonov is currently an advisor to the WWF-RFE Amur/Heilong River Basin Initiative and is based in Harbin, China.

Margaret Williams with a rainbow trout in Zhupanova River, on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. *Photo by M. Ward.*

successful conservation was underway, that Russia had something important to share, and that assistance and partnerships were greatly needed?

English language information about Russian protected areas was scarce, with the exception of some poorly translated scientific articles. E-mail was just catching on, but there was a long way to go before the "Information Superhighway" would be roaring across Russia. Even tapping information within Russia itself was challenging: computers were still considered a luxury – not a staple – for NGOs and scientific organizations, and the World Wide Web was only in its infancy.

In the summer of 1994, the need for information about biodiversity and conservation in Russia became acute for the Biodiversity Conservation Center. The organization had been awarded a grant to partner with one of the foremost conservation groups in the US, The Nature Conservancy. The joint program was to involve international visits for each group to the other's country, and a month-long visit in the US for a dozen young Russian conservation leaders. To prepare for their American sojourn, the Russian participants would need to compile educational materials to share with new contacts and counterparts, potential donors and partners.

Over many cups of tea and intense discussions about what should be prepared for this trip to the United States, my BCC colleagues and I settled on our plan. We would create an English-language newsletter on Russian conservation. In addition to educating the West about the protected areas and biodiversity of Eurasia, we envisioned the publication as a tool to help reach donors and raise funds. Our third goal was to facilitate a two-way communication channel between the West and Russia, eventually leading to partnerships and information exchanges across borders.

The first issue of *RCN* was comprised of articles written by most of the dozen conservationists who would be traveling to the US. My job was to translate each one, and edit it for a western audience, inserting references that would provide needed background information. Ilya Belov, our graphic designer, added photos and a few illustrations, and we mass-produced the new publication with a photo-copy machine and stapler. After weeks of work, *RCN*, issue #1, was ready!

Based on recipients' immensely positive reactions to that first issue, we knew we were on to something good. To keep *RCN* going, though, we would need to search for funds. In order to receive grants from US sources, we needed a non-profit organizational base in the US. In 1995 I met Jack Padalino, President of the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) in Pennsylvania. Jack was enthralled by the exciting developments in education in the zapovedniks, and he offered to house *RCN* at PEEC. For the next seven years, PEEC provided critical support, helping to start and manage a subscription base

The Man Behind the Crane

Note from the editors: Over the years, a number of RCN *readers have inquired about the journal's logo, an elegant depiction of a crane with its back arched, wings extended, and head held high. We're pleased to acquaint you more closely with the author of this charming drawing, Maksim Dementyev.*

Maksim Dementyev, who deigned *RCN*'s crane logo. *Photo courtesy of M. Dementyev.*

Maksim Dementyev hails from the Siberian city of Berdsk, but realized a lifelong dream in 1992 when he entered Moscow State University's (MSU) Biology Department. It was while he was studying there he learned about a contest to design the logo a relatively new publication, *Russian Conservation News*; his drawing of a crane won the 1996 contest and earned a permanent place in the journal. As a student, Maksim began traveling and sketching the nature he found in the places he visited. Now employed in MSU's Biology Department, he continues to participate annually in international expeditions with the United States Geological Survey, ever visiting new and remarkable places.

for the journal. PEEC's cheerful staff, interns, and volunteers contributed in many other ways, too, from stuffing envelopes to mailing the journals, creating a web site, and solving various technical problems which arose.

Since then, each issue has improved in appearance and quality. We replaced the stapled photo-copy version with a more polished, journal-like production. We created a US-based home for the journal, the Center for Russian Nature Conservation, and moved the journal to Washington, DC, in 2002. We improved the web site, and expanded the subscription base. Today we have readers all over the world, from Guam to Germany, New Jersey to Japan. Hundreds of Russian conservationists also read the journal; although it is produced in English only, its unique style and content makes it especially interesting for people in the field.

There have been numerous challenges along the way, ranging from the technical aspects of editing long, often very scientific articles, to the diplomatic aspects of determining the content of the journal, and selecting articles. Funding this effort has always been a difficult, but essential part of our work. Without external funding, we would be unable to provide the publication free of charge to our Russian recipients and many students and others in the West who pay very little for the journal.

Looking back over these ten years, I am grateful to so many people who have participated in the life of *RCN*, adding flavor, color, and of course, invaluable information. Thanks to these combined efforts, *RCN* has achieved a great deal in reporting on conservation in Eurasia. *RCN* is the first and only English-language journal about biodiversity in Russia and northern Eurasia. It is the main source today on protected areas in Eurasia, and is often the only source (in any language) of news on a variety of topics regarding protected areas, conservation legislation, forestry and other resource management issues.

As Editor-in-Chief, I believe the greatest achievement of *RCN* is its broad and diverse representation of issues, places, and people. *RCN* has offered a voice to a wide and diverse group of NGOs, zapovedniks and national parks, and grassroots campaigns. Rather than serving just one organization or point of view, it serves many. Since its beginning, the journal's sole agenda has been to promote and assist conservation efforts in Eurasia. Based on feedback from many Russian colleagues and western counterparts alike, I think *RCN* has played a role in doing so, and of that, I am extremely proud.

Margaret Williams *Williams is the founder and Editor-in-Chief of* Russian Conservation News. *She is also director of World Wildlife Fund's Bering Sea Ecoregion Program.*

Special Thanks

There are many people whose ideas, creativity, hard work and support have contributed to RCN *over the years. A special thank you to:*

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Nikita Lopoukhine, Director of Parks Canada, who helped to conduct the international mailings during the first years of *RCN*'s subscription.

Bill Eichbaum, of World Wildlife Fund, an early advisor to *RCN* and a stalwart supporter of our efforts.

Eliza Klose (ISAR), ***Carol Combs*** (formerly of The Nature Conservancy), ***Gary Cook*** (Baikal Watch), ***Dennis Wolkoff*** (TNC), who played key roles as members of a Steering Committee to establish what is now the Center for Russian Nature Conservation, and home to *RCN*.

Eugene Simonov, conservationist, who shaped the early stages of *RCN*.

Friends and colleagues at the Biodiversity Conservation Center.

A host of advisors, experts, and contributing editors in Russia: ***Natalia Danilina, Nikolai Formozov, Vadim Mokievsky, Irina Pokrovskaya, and Evgeny Shvarts***.

Graphic artists ***Ilya Belov and Tom Thornton,*** *who were the initial designers of* RCN**; Ksenia Pokhorukova and Maksim Dubinin;** and the team at A-4 in Moscow.

Translators ***Andrew Reese, Irina Rebrova, and Olga Sorokina***.

Hundreds of dedicated conservationists, protected areas managers and staff, scientists, and individuals who have contributed articles, illustrations, and photographs to this journal in the last ten years.

A wonderful team of editors; they are the real machine of *RCN*, churning out each issue of the journal. You can read about them all later in this issue: ***Tatiana Pyatina, Anya Menner, Nikolai Maleshin, Natalia Troitskaya, Mary Rees, Stephanie Hitztaler, Laura Trice, Lisa Woodson, and Melissa Mooza.***

And, of course, you, our loyal, engaged, and supportive readers! Thank you for your interest!

Zapovedny Vestnik Celebrates its Tenth Anniversary

By ***Svetlana*** *and* ***Aleksei Popov***

Ten years ago, in April 1994, we published the first issue of *Zapovedny Vestnik* ('Zapovednik News'). The newspaper was the brainchild of a national seminar of zapovednik directors, during which the directors unanimously called for a newspaper specifically about and for protected areas. The same meeting also birthed the humorous phrase, a variation of a popular saying during the Communist Revolution, which became our slogan: "Zapovedniks of the world, unite!" By the time we published the second issue, our resilient "Yevsyeich," the comic strip hero who now adorns each paper, had also made his first appearance (he was Aleksei's idea).

As soon as the first issues began reaching all the distant corners of the zapovednik world throughout the CIS, we received a wave of warm-hearted responses: "Our dream has come true! Your newspaper is indespensible, useful, and relevent"; "The existence of a newspaper such as *Zapovedny Vestnik* is essential for rallying together, preserving and making progress in the nation's zapovednik system"; "The newspaper is invaluable. It may raise the prestige of the idea of protecting nature in zapovedniks."

Over the past ten years, some things have changed and some things have not. Certain problematic articles are pressing even today. And for all those years, the same two people have been producing the entire newspaper from start to finish, beginning with planning and ending with distribution. Only occasionally do other specialists lend a hand. We're pleased that *RCN* has always treated *Zapovedny Vestnik* with kind attention. Some of our articles were translated and reprinted in *RCN*, which means that they reached *RCN*'s readers as well. Thanks to *RCN*, our newspaper found some new readers and friends in other countries, such as Great Britain.

Ten years is no short span for the media, especially in our fast-moving times, and any anniversary forces you to stop and think about the work you have done. We do wonder if *Zapovedny Vestnik* has made good on its promises and met with its expectations. Is it an important part of the zapovednik and national park community? After all, when the idea for the newspaper was born, its primary function was to facilitate informational exchange between protected area experts in Russia and the other CIS nations.

Just days ago we received a letter that seemed to answer this worrisome question. Here is an excerpt:

The bimonthly newspaper *Zapovedny Vestnik* brings eagerly awaited news to some of Russia's most far-flung corners, such as this inspectors' outpost in Botchinsky Zapovednik, in Khabarovsk Krai. *Photo by S. Kostomarov.*

ЗАПОВЕДНИКИ ВСЕХ СТРАН, ОБЪЕДИНЯЙТЕСЬ!

ЗАПОВЕДНЫЙ ВЕСТНИК

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ОСОБО ОХРАНЯЕМЫХ ПРИРОДНЫХ ТЕРРИТОРИЙ МПР РОССИИ

ДАЛЕЕ В НОМЕРЕ

Zapovedny Vestnik: Delivering news about Russia's protected areas to Russia's protected areas since April 1994.

"On behalf of our entire team I would like to express our enormous gratitude for such a wonderful newspaper.... We read it with great interest [and] find it absolutely essential to receive your newspaper." – Namik Ibragimov, director of Shirvansky National Park, Azerbaijan.

In that case, we'll see to it that *Zapovednik Vestnik* survives a bit longer, and will try to be helpful. And we wish the same to our colleagues at *RCN*.

Svetlana and Aleksei Popov *produce the newspaper* Zapovedny Vestnik.

A recurrent figure in Zapovedny Vestnik, the popular character Yevsyeich appears in the guise of various protected area personalities, including an inspector, as he is depicted here. *Artwork by A. Popov.*

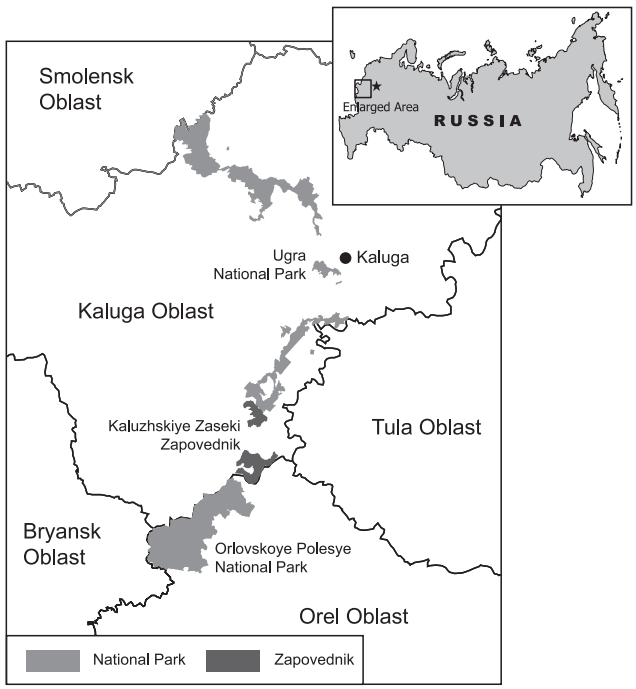
Ancient Trees and Sprouting Acorns: A Reflection on the Green Wall of Russia

Note from the editors: *In the first issue of* RCN*, we brought you a story about a relatively new project designed to protect and restore part of European Russia's ancient forests. Here, the project initiators and co-founders of the Laboratory of Ecological Planning look back at the project and its legacy in Russia.*

By ***Sergei*** *and* ***Elena Ponomarenko***

In 1989 the Laboratory of Ecological Planning, a small non-profit organization, launched a program called the "Green Wall of Russia." The initiative's intention was to rearrange existing land use structures in order to enhance a number of ecological functions in eighteen oblasts of Russia – then the USSR—south of Moscow.

This region has suffered slow environmental degradation over the last 200 years, resulting in decreased biodiversity and land productivity. The Green Wall proposed a network of protected areas and ecological corridors that would help to connect the fragmented ranges of a number of plant and animal species. It also included restoration ecology projects to restore biodiversity in depauperate ecosystems. The initiative's economic component aimed to enhance the productivity of agricultural lands by reducing erosion and runoff, providing better accumulation of water in the lower soil layers, and creating a healthier environment for agricultural land that would support natural biological means of pest control. The Green Wall followed and further developed some earlier macro-scale landscape project ideas that had been attempted twice during the twentieth century in southern Russia.



Kaluzhskiye Zaseki Zapovednik, Ugra National Park, and Orlovskoye Polesye National Park are important components of The Green Wall, a network of protected areas and ecological corridors planned to restore ancient forests in south-central European Russia. *Map by M. Dubinin.*

From an economic and political point of view, the initiative seemed timely: a macro-scale landscape project has a better chance of success at a time when the economy and land use are in transition. In the early 1990s the amount of arable land was rapidly decreasing, and with it, agriculture profitability. These factors created a window of time for restructuring land use, making it possible to set aside some land for restoring ecological functions and providing some additional income for rural populations. At the same time, economic and political uncertainty during the transition in the post-Soviet era was a major potential risk.

Now, sixteen years after launching this initiative, we can recognize its partial success, despite the fact that economic development did not follow the path we had hoped for. We were able to design and implement some bits and pieces of this initiative ourselves, and many other elements are being implemented by our colleagues who work in various posts in different regions to create ecological networks of protected areas.

A centuries' old oak *(Quercus robur)* protected in Orlovskoye Polesye National Park. *Photo by E. Pyilenkova.*

Our greatest success was in Kaluga Oblast, where two large protected areas were established with our participation. The backbone of the Green Wall of Russia initiative was a proposal to restore the ancient forests that were once part of Muscovy's defensive front ("zaseki" in Russian) against nomads in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. We did extensive archival work to reconstruct the exact location of these ancient forests and their use during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and found that the largest, best preserved tracts of these forests were in the Kaluga region. Field reconnaissance confirmed their ecological value, so we proposed founding a new zapovednik called "Kaluzhskiye Zaseki." The proposal was approved and the zapovednik was established in 1992.

We also proposed including another portion of these ancient defense forests in Ugra National Park, which was still in the

planning stages. At that time, the park was planned for lands along the Ugra River, to the north of these ancient forests.
We contacted the Kaluga Committee of Nature Protection and recommended that Berezicheskoye forest district (one of the best parts of the ancient forest) be set aside as a separate tract of this new national park. The proposal had to be approved by the local district authority, where it met with strong opposition, as it was believed that placing the Berezicheskoye forest district under federal protection would decrease the district's timber revenues. I was invited to come to the district authority meeting to discuss our proposal. At the time, our colleague and friend from The Netherlands, ecologist Hank Spaan, happened to be visiting us. He was interested in some environmental problems of agriculture in Russia, so, at my own risk, I invited him to come with me to the meeting. His appearance at the meeting was quite unexpected – he was probably the first foreigner ever who joined in a district authority meeting. He gave a short presentation on how local populations benefit from their proximity to national parks in the Netherlands, and it was likely his presentation that became straw that changed the vote in favor of the national park.

These two federal protected areas are two major living monuments to the Green Wall of Russia initiative. In the neighboring Tula Oblast, the regional government contracted us to do field work and propose a system of small regional zakazniks. Seven protected areas were proposed and some of them later received legal status. In the Samara Oblast, we collaborated with a local NGO, LAPREC (Laboratory of Natural Ecosystems), in designing elements of the ecological land network for that region. This work included both establishing new protected areas and restoring native biodiversity on agricultural lands. In the Samara Oblast we organized a conference that included some top regional decision makers, and by 2001 the oblast had developed a program "On utilization of less productive and eroded agricultural lands" that focused on aforestration and restoration ecology for 11,137 hectares of land. As far as we know, however, most of what was planned has not yet been implemented. Our attempts to find international sources of financing (for example, for two years we collaborated with American Forests in developing a pilot proposal) have not resulted in practical projects.

In 1995-1996 we received a grant from the Eurasia Foundation to analyze land reform in Russia and its ecological consequences and to write a book on the subject. This book, published by the Laboratory of Ecological Planning in 1996, summarized our observations and hundreds of conversations with people who played a role in land reform, including farmers, rural workers, collective farm administrators, district authorities, agricultural enterprise managers and many others. We presented our views on how the contemporary situation could be used to improve the ecological status of environmentally degraded rural areas, and what the dangers in the current land reform were. Soon after finishing the book, we emigrated from Russia to Canada, where we still live now. A few years later our book became very popular among Russia's federal parliament members, who were discussing the controversial new Land Code. Opposing parties cited different parts of the book to support their views. Shortly before the main discussion in the Russian Parliament we received an invitation to come and participate at this discussion, but we could not attend because we lacked the necessary time and funds.

Another outcome of the Green Wall of Russia initiative was a series of restoration ecology projects. Oak *(Quercus robur)* is a species that steadily declined in European Russia during the nineteenth and twentith centuries, so we initiated some pilot projects to reconstruct oak ecosystems in areas where there is historical evidence of their prior existence. Our largest restoration project was in the Borodino Battlefield Historical Museum-Zapovednik, where, from 1991 to 1996, we designed, planted, and managed several hectares of forest.

In 2002, I visited that forest. Oaks that we had planted by hand as seedlings or even acorns had grown well; some were over three meters tall. Thinking about those trees, I like to hope that the seeds of the Green Wall of Russia initiative will also mature, and that in the future we will see people continuing the work we did in Russia.

Sergei Ponomarenko *is a Canadian ecologist with NatureServe.* ***Elena Ponomarenko*** *is a co-curator of the Russian-Canadian archaeological project "Ancient Grasslands: Comparative Archaeology of Russian Steppes and North American Prairies" at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.*

The "Green Wall of Russia" program, launched in 1989, helped restore oak forest ecosystems in regions south of Moscow. *Photo by A. Popov.*

Business for Nature

Note from the editors: *In the first issue of* RCN *we printed a notice about a pioneer effort from a Russian bank, Mezhkombank, to support tiger and crane conservation in Russia. Although the idea of business support for nature protection in Russia has been slow to catch on, the following article describes some of the ways it has developed in recent years.*

By ***Arina Gaba***

In the ten years of its existence, the World Wide Fund for Nature's Russia Office (WWF-Russia) has invested more than $30 million into nature protection in Russia. With its initial status as a program office of WWF International, WWF-Russia's financial needs were addressed completely outside of Russia. But as the office moved towards becoming an official national organization, it was clear that this policy would have to change.

Attaining status as a WWF national organization required gathering at least ten to fifteen percent of the office's annual budget from in-country sources. With this goal in mind, in 2001 we began trying to attain funding from individuals and companies in Russia. And there begins the story of WWF's partnership with Russian business.

The cornerstone of this partnership is the WWF Corporate Club, which opened in April 2001. The club's members are companies that wish to show their commitment to social responsibility and support nature protection. When it opened, the club had fifteen members, including Alpha-Bank, BMW, the Russian Development Bank, and others. Today the club's members number twenty-six, and they continue to increase.

A company's entrance into the WWF Corporate Club is usually the beginning of a multi-year partnership: we try to create a project of interest to both WWF and the company. For example, one of our first projects of this type was called "Green Policy," a joint initiative with the insurance company RESO-Garantia. Since January 2002, for every car insured under RESO-Garantia's "Green Policy," WWF's climate change program receives 50 cents. The project's goal is not only to raise money for the climate program, but also to give drivers important information about global climate change.

Through WWF-Russia's partnership with Ivan Taranov's Brewery, the company contributes a portion of its profits from the sale of Amur Beer to WWF's Amur Tiger Conservation Program. *Image provided by WWF-Russia.*

Similarly, Ivan Taranov's Brewery, brewer of Amur Beer, became a partner in WWF's Amur Tiger conservation program in the Russian Far East (RFE). For every bottle of Amur Beer sold, the brewery gives five kopeks to the program. Surveys have shown that people in the RFE prefer buying Amur Beer precisely because they want to participate in a project that benefits society.

Another example is the magazine *Panda Times*, the first Russian publication devoted to the relationships between nature and business. WWF published the first issue (Dec. 2001) itself; we prepared the information, edited the articles, and searched for paper. Then in February 2002, we were approached by Derk Sauer, head of Independent Media publishing house, with a proposition on partnership between WWF and Independent Media. *Panda Times* now has a circulation of 40,000 and comes out quarterly as a free insert in the newspaper *Vedemosti*. The publication allows us to inform people about WWF's work with businesses, and also attract new partners.

It is not rare that an international company's global policy determines the direction of its work with WWF in Russia. For example, the packaging company Tetra Pak supports forest conservation and reforestation programs across the world. In Russia, this company took upon itself the reforestation of the unique oak forests in Ugra National Park in Kaluzhskaya Oblast.

The list of projects could go on for pages, but these examples give an impression of WWF's partnerships with Russian business. As a rule, we always try to focus on three points: imparting the importance of nature conservation to people of all walks of life, advancing specific brand names and their products, and raising money for nature conservation projects.

Arina Gaba *is the Manager of the Development Department of WWF-Russia.*

High-Speed Railroad: Ten Years Later, Still Just a Plan

Note from the editors: *In the third issue of* RCN*, we printed an article about the planned construction of a high-speed railroad from Moscow to St. Petersburg that would pass through Valdaisky National Park. What happened? Read on to find out.*

By ***Viktor Rogotsky***

Several years have passed since the ambitious high-speed railway project, which raised so much to-do and public outcry, and then disappeared from the pages of newspapers and the lips of radio and telejournalists. And thank goodness! The railway project was put to rest before any major building began, saving the forests of Valdaisky National Park. Knowing how already meager finances can be spent irrationally and even illegally in Russia today, it is pleasing to know that the initiators of the new railroad did not succeed in spending much and dragging the country into a new hole.

Valdaisky National Park. *Map by M. Dubinin.*

Did we need the railroad? There can be no simple answer to such a question. It goes without saying that any modern country needs fast, up-to-date transportation systems; and this is all the more true in Russia, with its vast expanses. But would an obsolete version of European high-speed railways meet with contemporary demands? A better alternative made its way to the forefront: reconstructing the old October Railway, which connects Karelia with Leningrad and Murmansk Regions, to allow high-

This pastoral landscape is one of many in Valdaisky National Park that were saved when conservationists fought against plans to construct a high-speed railroad through the park. *Photo by I. Shpilenok.*

The Road Not Taken

Note from the editors: *In our first issue of* RCN*, we reported on a planned road construction through Samarskaya Luka National Park. Recently the park's deputy director for protection, Sergei Belyashov, spoke with* RCN *about the fate of road and park alike*

Twenty years ago, around the same time Samarskaya Luka National Park was founded, there were plans to build a road through the area. There are several villages within the park's borders, and people wanted better access to transportation. But after the park was founded, environmentalists began an active campaign against the road. While debates over the road continued, the Soviet Union fell apart, and over time, many of the building projects that had been planned in the 1980s—including many that were very much needed—fell by the wayside. The road was one of these gradually forgotten projects, and construction on it never began.

Is this cause for celebration? Park officials cannot give an easy answer. Many say it would be better to have a single, well-kept road through the park rather than the multiple dirt roads through the forest that exist today. If there were such a road, it would be easier to set up turnstiles at entry points into the park to control the flow of traffic. Moreover, the poor condition of the dirt roads regularly forces people to drive on the shoulder, ever widening the roads. Closing all roads completely is out of the question because of all the people who live within the park, but the park does not have the resources to improve the roads or monitor all of them.

It is hard to predict exactly how the condition of the park would be different today had the road been built, but it is not unreasonable to suggest that the environmentalists who opposed the road may well have been backing the wrong cause.

speed trains to run on it. This decision was certainly the optimal one from any perspective, be it technical, socio-economic, or ecological.

One has only to look at the diminishing number of passenger trains (probably because the weak economy does not allow people to travel as frequently as they once did) to see that building any new railway, much less one that crosses through a national park, would be unjustified. Even people who are well-off—successful businessmen and government bureaucrats—prefer traveling between Russia's capitals by air or in comfortable cars. Cargo is also more and more often shipped by trucks, which guarantee delivery directly to any point in the city. The highway between Moscow and St. Petersburg is brimming with heavy trucks and automobile carriers. At times it seems that it is not even a road, but part of a giant conveyer belt in a foreign car factory.

When the October Railway became a pathway for high-speed trains, a fence was built around it to prevent large animals from wandering onto the track. And while it saved the animals from being hit by passing trains, the fence interrupted the seasonal migrations of the northern (Scandinavian) populations of moose *(Alces alces)* and deer *(Cervus elaphus)*. For several years now, the animals have not been found in Valdaisky National Park and in other areas just south of the railway. Genetic exchange between populations to the north and south of the railway has been cut off, with negative effects visible in both the numbers and condition of the animals.

Knowing this fact, it is not hard to imagine what kind of losses the high-speed railroad would have brought, had it been built directly through the protected forests of Valdaisky National Park. I would like to thank everyone who took a stand during the difficult, many-year struggle against building the new railway, everyone who mustered the courage and strength to fight the high-speed monster, and who, in the end, managed to stop this environmentally and economically dangerous endeavor.

Thanks go first to Dr. Alexei Yablokov and Arkady Tishkov, the chair and secretary, respectively, of the Experts' Committee on Ecology, who stood up to the subtle intrigues of the people responsible for the construction of the railroad. Likewise, V. A. Razbash, director of the EcoJuris Institute, and her colleagues deserve our gratitude for bringing the public protest against the railroad into the courts, filing a suit against the presidential decree that called for the railroad to be built. Having been informed on the eve of the court's decision that his decree would certainly be declared unlawful, President Yeltsin was essentially obliged to retract his decree in July 1998. And we would like to express special thanks to people from all over Russia who stood up to defend Valdaisky National Park, especially the Novgorod Ecology Club and its leader, I. A. Pocheteva, who made a tremendous investment in the victory of common sense. It was their firmness of spirit, civil action, conviction of right and wrong, and unwillingness to give in to indifference that put a stop to the construction of the high-speed railway.

Unfortunately, our country has made a tradition of stepping on the same rake over and over. There is no guarantee that people will not try to resurrect the project in a few years. After all, in recent years we have seen people lobby for a project long ago abandoned by engineers and cursed by ecologists, the diversion of Siberian rivers to arid Central Asia. In the case of Valdaisky National Park, a potential threat is the many wealthy Muscovites and Petersburgers, including the president, who have built dachas in the area: if they want a railroad built through the area, will it be possible to stop them? In the future the public must remain on guard and be ready to stand up against any foolhardy projects that might threaten the lovely nature of the Valdai.

Viktor V. Rogotsky *is a Deputy Director for Scientific Work Valdaisky National Park.*

Protected Areas Celebrating Their First Decade in 2004

Note from the editors: *In 1994, the year that* RCN *was founded, Russia's system of federal protected areas welcomed the creation of eight new reserves—five strict reserves (zapovedniks) and three national parks. Within these new zapovedniks and national parks, approximately 2,352,000 hectares of land, an area larger than the Central American country Belize, were placed under protection. In this section of the journal, we offer profiles of those eight reserves.*

Zapovedniks and national parks established in 1994. *Map by M. Dubinin.*

The Sinaya River is one of countless rivers and streams that winds its way through Yugyd Va National Park. *Photo by V. Rodionov.*

Yugyd Va National Park lies on the western side of the Ural Mountains in the Republic of Komi. In the Komi language, *yugyd va* means "clean water", a reference to the streams and rivers whose headwaters form in these mountains. At nearly 1.9 million hectares, Yugyd Va is Russia's largest national park, and its value for conserving large wilderness areas is even more significant when you consider that it abuts Pechoro-Ilychsky Zapovednik (est. 1930, 721,332 hectares) to the south. Together these two protected areas constitute Russia's first natural site to receive World Heritage status – the Virgin Komi Forests.

Despite this international recognition, which was awarded in 1995, the national park has fought an uphill battle against local authorities who see a gold mine—literally—within the parks borders. According to Greenpeace-Russia, illegal mining operations have been going on in the region covered by the park for over twenty years. And just a few months ago, the head of the republic's government announced that the park's boundaries had been incorrectly drawn such that they included a potential gold mining site. So far, the republic's government has been unable to change the park's boundaries, though attempts have been made at least twice.

This information was compiled from Greenpeace press-releases available on the Greenpeace-Russia website (http://www.greenpeace.ru) and the Biodiversity Conservation Center's Protected Areas Web Project (http://reserves.biodiversity.ru).

Botchinsky Zapovednik: Environmental Education in the Land of the Amur Tiger

*By **Irina V. Dunaitseva***

Located in the southeastern corner of Khabarovsky Krai in the Russian Far East, Botchinsky Zapovednik covers nearly 3,000 square kilometers of pine and broadleaf mountain forest in the Botcha River basin. A zakaznik was organized in the area in 1972 in hopes of protecting important tiger habitats, but this level of protection was not strong enough to deter several logging companies from setting their sights on the territory. Under heavy public pressure from the city of Sovetskaya Gavan and the broader scientific community, the zakaznik was re-created as Botchinsky Zapovednik in 1994.

The zapovednik has traced an interesting path of development during its ten years of existence. Close contacts have appeared in local government agencies, and authorities in the city of Sovetskaya Gavan and the Sovetsko-Gavansky District provide financial and other kinds of support to the zapovednik's initiatives. The zapovednik has won many sympathizers and supporters and has improved its image among the local population.

But despite all these achievements, the zapovednik still encounters numerous problems. For example, it is difficult to recruit young people to work in the zapovednik: salaries are low and the reserve is far from the city. One of the ways our zapovednik has sought to bridge the gap between the reserve and the local population is through educational initiatives aimed at a very broad audience. We hope to help develop environmental awareness and culture.

For adults, the zapovednik organizes marches and demonstrations in support of nature conservation, as well as roundtable discussions for questions and problems that arise. We have traveling photography exhibits, informational stands in key places, and write a column in the district newspaper with zapovednik news and information. We also conduct periodic surveys to analyze the effectiveness of the zapovednik's environmental education activities.

The zapovednik works in close cooperation with the local Department of Education, working directly with local teachers and organizing seminars for teachers of various subjects and age groups, starting at the pre-school level. And any time they ask for information about the zapovednik, nature protection, or environmental education, we eagerly provide them with the materials we have.

For children there are contests, quizzes, and other activities aimed at helping children expand their knowledge and nurture a sense of pride in their responsibility for nature protection. For example, we have a tradition of planting trees along the streets near schools. And though not all of the saplings survive the harsh winters, the children's eager care helps many young trees live through their early winters. Many local schools participate in the zapovednik's annual art contest; local contest winners have their artwork entered in the national contest and on several occasions have taken home national prizes. On Earth Day our "March for Parks" celebration includes games and prize ceremonies. The kids enjoy these activities so much that they seem to forget they are actually testing their knowledge of biology and ecology! They always leave in a good mood with prizes, and, more importantly, with the desire to work with the zapovednik.

When visitors come to the zapovednik, they find three nature trails: a 60-kilometer ecological excursion and two educational trails, twenty and twenty-four kilometers long. The trails are all marked with signs and have periodic rest stations. There are also two additional educational trails through the zapovednik's buffer zone to help people experience first-hand the beauty of Botchinsky Zapovednik and understand why it must be protected.

In winter, wildlife tracks crisscross the Botcha River Valley, in Botchinsky Zapovednik. *Photo by I. Kostomarova.*

***Irina Dunaitseva** is the Deputy Director for Management, Environmental Education, and Ecotourism in Botchinsky Zapovednik.*

Khvalynsky National Park

*By **Victor Savinov** and **Lyudmila Serova***

The Khvalynsky district in Saratov region, in the southern part of European Russia, is one of great beauty and value: richly diverse flora and fauna, unique geology, and multiple cold water springs. It is a landscape that began formation 114 million years ago, and one that supports numerous endemic plant species. The idea to place it under protection was first raised in the 1920s by the director of the local history museum, the noted botanist Conrad Gross. Others followed his lead over the years, but their efforts were brought to fruition only in 1994, with the foundation of Khvalynsky National Park, the only national park in the lower Volga region.

The park is one of the smallest in Russia – a mere 25,000 hectares – but nonetheless plays a significant role in protecting the unique natural complexes of the area. It is divided into three functional zones. A strictly protected area (1,500 hectares) preserves stands of pine *(Pinus cretaceae)* and fields with red-listed endemic plants *(Crambe litwinowii, Hyssopus cretaceus)*, as well as stands of deciduous forests 60 to 100 years of age. A recreational area (3,500 hectares) supports tourism and environmental education through nature trails and lookout points. The largest area (20,514 hectares) allows for various kinds of forestry activities, but no heavy logging.

Some of the national park's most productive activities over the past decade have been in the realm of science. The park works in cooperation with a number of scientists (especially from Saratov State University), yielding fruitful results, such as the beginnings of a register of flora and fauna in the park and a unique "electronic herbarium," as well as an "electronic zoological museum" for the park. Scientific research has revealed small tracts outside of the strictly protected area with high concentrations of endemic and relict species of plants and animals. We are currently working to increase the size of the strictly protected area by about 100 hectares to include these important areas.

The protection and management of this area has had a marked effect on the territory. At the time the park was formed ten years ago, forest covered just over 23,000 hectares. Since then the forest has grown by 342 hectares. Each year the park ensures reforestation work, environmental harvesting, as well as general forest protection activities, such as erecting forest fire prevention signs, and placing barriers and embankments along minor roads. National park employees have also constructed eight nature trails specifically to encourage environmental education and tourism in the park.

In August 2004, we celebrated the park's tenth anniversary by inviting our colleagues from Samarskaya Luka, Mari Chodra, and Nizhnyaya Kama National Parks and Zhigulevsky Zapovednik to a scientific conference on preserving the natural riches of the park.

***Victor Savinov** is the Director of Khvalynsky National Park.*
***Lyudmila Serova** is the park's Deputy Director for Science.*

Belenkaya Mountain is one of Khvalynsky National Park's most notable features. *Photo courtesy of Khvalynsky National Park.*

Orlovskoye Polesye National Park: Working to Restore the European Bison

Compiled from text written by ***Ivan Mizin*** *and* ***Natalya Mizina***

Orlovskoye Polesye National Park is located in Orel Oblast, in central European Russia. In the sparsely forested oblast, the *"Polesye"* - which means "woodlands" in Russian - is the largest forest in the region. The reserve is perhaps best know for the critical role it has played in an important effort to restore the European bison *(Bison bonasus)* population in western Russia. Work to restore the species was initiated in the mid-1990s by the Orel Oblast Administration and WWF-Russia. Orlovskoye Polesye National Park, which is centrally located within the only large area of broadleaf forests within the historic range of the bison, was selected as the site for releasing the animals into the wild. Over the last eight years, sixty-six bison have been released into the park, and their population now numbers over ninety individuals. Located proximate to Kaluzhskiye Zaseki Zapovednik and Ugra National Park, Orlovskoye Polesye National Park has also come to serve as an important link in a regional "Econet," or system of "green corridors," by which bison can seasonally migrate without creating problems for local farmers. The reserve has also conducted environmental education activities to raise public awareness about bison conservation and the sustainable development of ecotourism in the region.

This pond by the village of Khotiml-Kuzmrnkovo is a typical central Russian landscape, which is carefully preserved by Orlovskoye Polesye National Park. *Photo by N. Mizina.*

The pride of Orlovskoye Polesye National Park is its wild population of European bison *(Bison bonasus). Photo by I. Mizin.*

While the national park's bison population is certainly an attractive draw for tourists, the reserve might also someday become a destination frequented by ornithological enthusiasts.The park's forests provide habitat for spotted eagle and lesser spotted eagle *(Aquila clanga, A. pomarina)*, short-toed eagle *(Circaetus gallicus)*, black stork *(Ciconia nigra)*, and middle spotted woodpecker *(Dendrocopos medius)*. White storks *(Ciconia ciconia)* build thirty nests in the park each year, and flocks of common cranes *(Grus grus)* gather on the floodplain of the Vytebet River.

Ivan Mizin *is the Deputy Director of Science at Orlovskoye Polesye National Park, where his wife* ***Natalya Mizina*** *works as an Environmental Education Specialist.*

Blazing a Trail through an Impenetrable *"Urema"* in Voroninsky Zapovednik

By ***Igor Vorobyov***

Urema is the Turkic word that nomadic steppe-dwellers gave to the impenetrable floodplain forests that form the border between forest and steppe all the way from the Danube River to the Pacific Ocean. The steppe-dwellers avoided the forest, and in translation, *urema* literally means 'do not enter.' Indeed, for many years these forests, which follow rivers south deep into steppe country, served as natural protection for forest dwellers (bee-keepers, hunters, and fishermen) who lived far from Muscovy* against the attacks of nomads from the south. [*The term "Muscovy" refers to the grand duchy of Moscow, which was a state existing in west-central Russia from the late fourteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries, with the city of Moscow as its nucleus].

Many centuries have passed since those days, and Russia's forest-steppe landscapes have been nearly completely transformed. The extensive feather-grass steppes, which once stretched as far as the eye could see, are now few; forested areas have also diminished, and many animal species have become rare. Where the old, impenetrable floodplain forests remain, they are recognized not for the protection they offer, but for their need of protection.

In the early twentieth century, conservationists took note of the Vorona River valley. The famed geographer Veniamin Semyonov-Tian-Shansky wrote about the area in 1917 in his report to the Nature Protection Commission of the Russian Geographic Society. The report contained a special section on *"Urema Parks,"* in which Semyonov-Tian-Shansky recommended that nature reserves be established along the Vorona and Ural Rivers. Though many of the geographer's recommendations later materialized into zapovedniks across the Soviet Union, the "Urema" project on the Vorona River was abandoned for over seventy years.

Voroninsky Zapovdnik was founded along the Vorona River, pictured here, and its tributaries. *Photo by I. Vorobyov.*

Eventually in 1994 Voroninsky Zapovednik was founded along the Vorona River and its tributaries.

The primary jewel of the zapovednik is, of course, the Vorona River itself. Wide pools turn into fast, bubbling streams; there are backwaters, old channels, floodplain lakes, stands of willows, and majestic oaks and poplars. The contrast is particularly striking against what lies at the perimeter of the zapovednik: twenty-five towns and villages that hold more than 20,000 people. And the collapse of industry and economy in the early 1990s has left the region with severe unemployment and poverty.

For the forest, however, the last ten years have been anything but stagnant. Since the time when the zapovednik was created and the area put under protection, the forest has changed significantly. Areas where trees were felled are growing back and forests are beginning to creep into fields where locals once cut hay. Roads and paths are disappearing, and all manner of grasses stand like a thick wall.

Trekking through such a forest, especially under threat of heat and mosquitoes, one recognizes with new clarity the etymology of the word *urema*: 'do not enter.' It is just not worth it.

But at the zapovednik we have no choice but to enter the forest. Every day rangers walk through the forest and find plenty of work to be done: over the past ten years, rangers have apprehended over 500 lawbreakers in the zapovednik, confiscating more than 2,000 illegal instruments. Nearly sixty-seven percent of these violations involved illegal fishing. In fact, Voroninsky Zapovednik is one of the most difficult zapovedniks in Russia to protect. Comprised of ten different regions located up to eighty kilometers away from each other, it is physically difficult to cover. Add to that problem the local tradition of using forest resources, the lack of forests

The Vorona River Valley. *Photo by I. Vorobyov.*

around the zapovednik, and poverty and unemployment, and you can begin to see why protecting the zapovednik is so complicated. The reserve is still relatively young, and many locals still do not understand the purpose or goals of a zapovednik. Moreover, with government power much weaker in the country than thirty years ago, people are much more likely to use forest resources spontaneously and illegally, creating unending headaches for the rangers.

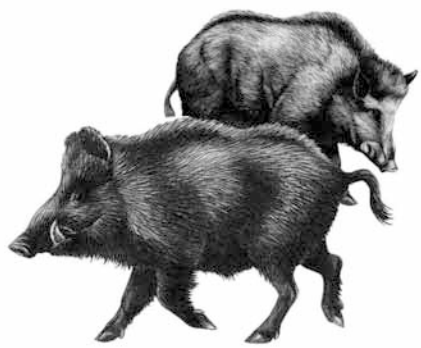
Nonetheless, in the past ten years we have managed to make considerable progress in protecting the zapovednik. And even as the *urema* grows up around us, ever more impenetrable, we at the zapovednik are blazing a new trail in the region, learning how to manage and study the zapovednik. Our environmental education department has played an important role in improving the zapovednik's image in the eyes of the local population. By working with children and offering aid to teachers and schools, the zapovednik has won quite a few sympathizers.

We have also been cutting a path towards understanding what a zapovednik is and what its function should be. The activity of zapovedniks is delineated by a rather contradictory conception, one that comes out of the complex history of the formation of the system of protected areas. These contradictions make management of certain protected areas – including Voroninsky Zapovednik – much more complicated, as the following example shows.

Our studies of the zapovednik's vegetation offer a prognosis for the development of plant communities. We expect to see the formation of shady forests, which may lead to a loss of two-thirds of the current vascular plants. The question is whether to sit by calmly and watch as natural processes develop (including the loss of existing flora), or to try to preserve sun-loving flora in some parts of the reserve. Both goals – observing natural processes and preserving biodiversity – are included in the law that governs the zapovednik, but in this case, following either to the letter means excluding the other.

An analysis of this problem showed that small zapovedniks in anthropogenic landscapes cannot be idealized as "models of wild nature," as the course of natural processes within them depends significantly upon human activity in neighboring areas. Another similar problem relates to the wild boars *(Sus scrofa)* that live in the zapovednik. Wild boars find a comfortable habitat in the zapovednik's forests, but their primary food source is the fields of grain and sunflowers along the perimeter of the reserve. By failing to regard the borders of the zapovednik, the wild boars make it impossible for the zapovednik to be an isolated object to be researched and managed. The density of animals in the zapovednik, and, as a result, their role in the ecosystems depends heavily on the inflow of anthropogenic energy from without. Thus, scientific research done in the zapovednik cannot be considered studies of absolute, "untouched" territories, but instead have contextual meaning.

Besides theoretical questions, wild boars also create practical problems for managing the zapovednik by causing considerable harm to local agriculture. The zapovednik's buffer zone has regulations governing limited use of natural resources that specifically ban hunting. Without permission from the zapovednik, local farmers thus do not have the right to protect their fields. The complex structure of land use and multiple potential legal "collisions" demand a special, balanced management program. At the moment, the science department of the zapovednik is working on just such a program.



Wild boar *(Sus scrofa). Artwork by A. Mosolov.*

Much has been done in the past ten years, but much more still awaits us. Perhaps most important is bringing the zapovednik and its scientific importance to the attention of ever more people and organizations. The zapovednik certainly deserves as much. And so we continue treading where the old nomads said, "do not enter," studying and learning from our *urema* on the Vorona River.

***Igor Vorobyov**, Ph.D., is the Deputy Director for Science at Voroninsky Zapovednik.*

Nurgush Zapovednik was established ten years ago on the site of Nurgushsky Zakaznik, which had afforded some protection to the old-growth forests of the Kirov Oblast, in the central and eastern part of European Russia, since 1954. The zakaznik was founded to observe the acclimatization of a number of animals—Russian desman *(Desmana moschata)*, muskrat *(Ondatra zibethica)*, beaver *(Castor fiber)*, raccoon dog *(Nyctereutes procyonoides)*—and accordingly, hunting was forbidden. By now, animal populations have grown so large that bears *(Ursus arctos)* wander into the zapovednik village, a sight not even the region's oldest residents can recall happening before the zapovednik was created.

Nurgush is one of Russia's smallest zapovedniks, a mere 5,643 hectares, with a buffer zone of 7,998 hectares. The vast majority of this area is forested, though the zapovednik also contains more than sixty lakes and several small streams. The Vyatka River curves around the edge of the zapovednik, forming Nurgush's eastern boundary.

Information provided by V. Smirnova, Head of the Environmental Education Department of Nurgush Zapovednik

Krivoye Lake in Nurgush Zapovednik. *Photo by A. Kraev*

Polistovsky and Rdeisky Zapovedniks were founded together on May 25, 1994, as two halves of what was essentially one reserve intended to protect the Polistovo-Lovatskoye Marsh in western Russia. Because this large sphagnum marsh, which covers approximately 140,000 hectares, straddles more than one administrative region, separate reserves were founded in each region: Polistovsky Zapovednik (37,983 hectares) in Pskov Oblast, Rdeisky (36,922 hectares) in Novgorod Oblast.

A brown bear *(Ursus arctos)* lumbers through Polistovo-Lovatskoye Marsh, which is protected within Polistovsky and Rdeisky Zapovedniks, in search of berries. *Photo by M. Yablokov.*

The Polistovo-Lovatskoye Marsh is one of the largest and most valuable wetlands in Europe, collecting and protecting large quantities of fresh water and peat, stabilizing the climate, and regulating river flow. Many important edible and medicinal plants, such as wild cranberries, cowberries, and bilberries thrive in the wetland. The area is especially noted for its avian population, as a number of rare and endangered species nest in its marsh. The largest European population of Eurasian curlew *(Numenius arquata)* lives in the marsh, as do white-tailed eagles *(Haliaeetus albicilla)*, golden eagles *(Aquila chrysaetos)*, ospreys *(Pandion haliaetus)*, black storks *(Ciconia nigra)*, greater golden plover *(Pluvialis apricaria)*, black-throated diver *(Gavia arctica)*, and great gray shrike *(Lanius excubitor)*.

In 1973, a UNESCO project identified the marsh as a significant wetland that required immediate protection; is also constitutes an Important Bird Area (IBA). At present, the Polistovo-Lovatskoye Marsh is under consideration for future inclusion on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Two additional protected areas, Rdeisky Zakaznik and Lake Polisto Natural Monument, are also located in the Polistovo-Lovatskoye Marsh.

This information came from the Biodiversity Conservation Center's Protected Areas Web Project (http://reserves.biodiversity.ru). Additional materials were provided by Alexander Sheludchenko, Director of Polistovsky Zapovednik.

Conservation Heroes

Nina Livinova: A Strong Force for Nature Conservation

*By **Dimitry Bondarev***

Note from the editors: *Being a zapovednik director is not an easy task for anyone, but even more so for a woman working in a field dominated by men. Nina Aleksandrovna Litvinova, the celebrated director of Astrakhansky Zapovednik, is one of the bright figures leading nature protection in Russia today. She was recognized as zapovednik "Director of the Year" in 2002 by the Ministry of Natural Resources, and in 2004 was named "Woman Director of the Year" in a national contest of female leaders from many different fields. In this article, one of her co-workers describes the life that made this tough-as-nails director such a strong force for nature conservation.*

Our director, Nina Litvinova, says she never had trouble deciding what she wanted to do when she grew up. No doubt the wonders of the natural world of the southern Caucasus played a role in her developing interest in animals. By the time she had finished her primary education in a small town in subtropical Azerbaijan, Nina knew she wanted to become a zoologist.

But life often places difficult hurdles in a young person's path. Nina wanted to study in Leningrad or Moscow, and despite her high academic abilities, she was rejected from universities in both cities. Refusing to give up her aspirations to be a student, Nina entered Severo-Ossetinsky University in the Caucasus, where she spent three years enjoying field study in the mountains and along the Black Sea coast – and earning only the highest marks for her studies. In 1972, fate took an unexpected turn for Nina, when the Ministry of Education decided to send the best students from provincial universities to the capital cities. She found herself a fourth-year student in Leningrad. As she would do in other aspects of her life, in Leningrad Nina literally "took the bull by the horns," writing her senior thesis on the biology of bison.

Nina Litvinova is widely recognized as one of Russia's best zapovednik directors. *Photo courtesy of N. Litvinova.*

Astrakhansky Zapovednik. *Map by M. Dubinin.*

After university, Nina had no question of where she wanted to work: a zapovednik. She returned to her native Azerbaijan to Kyzyl-Agachsky Zapovednik. The only problem was that the zapovednik already had a zoologist; Nina would have to become an ornithologist. The fact was that any work that involved studying animals was pleasant to Nina, and she enjoyed the years she spent tramping waist-deep through flooded tamarisk forests looking for nests or listening to the gulf waves while she watched the congregation of thousands of birds each winter. It was working in Kyzyl-Agachsky that galvinized Nina's refusal to compromise the protection of the zapovednik or turn a blind eye to poaching. Together with a small scientific staff of about five people, Nina took a stand against allowing people to pasture their herds, cut hay, or hunt in the zapovednik. And after a few years, in her own words, Nina even

found a way to "get back at" the zoologist for forcing her to change professions: she married him.

Nina and her husband Vasily Litvinov lived happily for several years at Kyzyl-Agachsky Zapovednik. It was there that their two sons were born, and where Nina wrote and defended her Ph.D. dissertation. By 1990, Nina had become deputy director for science, a change in status that only added to her conviction to protect the zapovednik. Cut hay in the zapovednik? *Nyet!* Dig a canal through the zapovednik? *Nyet!* Even the powerful Ministers of Agriculture left Nina's office with empty hands.

But as local officials became more tyrannical and anti-Russian sentiment in the republic grew, the Litvinovs realized it was time to leave. The final straw came when threats were made against their younger son, who was in second grade at the time. The family moved to Russia in 1990 and settled at the Volga Delta on the Caspian Sea, at Astrakhansky Zapovednik.

Starting out as a senior scientist, Nina quickly gained admiration and authority in her new workplace. Though Russia faced different problems than Azerbaijan, Nina's insistance on protecting the Volga Delta and the northern Caspian Sea earned her the respect not only of colleagues, but also leaders in the Ministry of Environment and local officials in Astrakhan. In 1993, she was named Deputy Director for Science and in 1998 became the zapovednik's director.

Under her guidance, the zapovednik received much needed funding from outside sources at times when government funding had all but disappeared. Most of this funding came from the fees of visiting scientists, tourists, and foreign media. The zapovednik certainly has sights worth seeing, as many visitors have discovered. We remember the surprise and delight of the German cameraman who saw sixteen pairs of white-tailed eagles in the sky at once, or the Dutch birdwatchers who were awed by the sight of flocks of pelicans standing before swimming swans. The lotus blossoms each summer bring many who wish to see this natural wonder. But zapovednik management does not allow masses of visitors to come to the zapovednik, as its primary role is to protect and preserve the delta's natural ecosystems.

A good director must pay attention to far more than the interior workings of the zapovednik. Even if the zapovednik is an inviolable "core" area, activities around the reserve nonetheless affect it. More recently, Nina has given due attention to the formation of a biosphere "polygon" (zone) in the delta that would allow observation of natural processes under the influence of regulated human activities.

In the evenings, as the sun fades behind the reeds, and as the chirping of birds falls, a sense of peace settles in the Volga River delta. But a peaceful moment in nature is a far cry from peace in the souls of the people responsible for protecting it. New challenges await us, and we are glad that Nina Litvinova is among those who have dedicated themselves to this cause.

Dimitry Bondarev *has worked at Astrakhansky Zapovednik since 1965.*

The rare Eurasian spoonbill *(Platalea leucorodia)* finds safe harbor in Astrakhansky Zapovednik. *Photo by G. Rusanov.*

Elena Shatkovskaya: A Northern Light

Adapted from an article by ***Yekaterina Lipnitskaya***

"A Northern Russian Wonder." That's what both international visitors and Russian experts call Kenozersky National Park, located northeast of St. Petersburg in a land of forests and lakes. The park is recognized both in Russia and abroad for the cultural heritage that it protects together with natural landscapes, for its ethnographic wealth, and for the respect for nature evident in the traditions and customs that local people have preserved for centuries. The park contains villages from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries as well as numerous religious and historical monuments. The area still produces one of Russia's largest concentrations of traditional folk art and crafts. It is a land of fairy tales: you can practically see the stories of the Kenozersky heroic epic written into the landscape.

Elena Shatkovskaya, who, for more than thirteen years, has served as the director of Kenozersky National Park. *Photo courtesy of E. Shatkovskaya.*

The story of the park is also something of a fairy tale, one of surprising success credited largely to the tireless efforts of its director, Elena Shatkovskaya. Shatkovskaya was born in the northern city of Arkhangelsk, and early in her career worked at the historical museum-zapovednik on the Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea. When Kenozersky National Park was founded in 1991, Shatkovskaya became the first director, a post she retains to this day. Even in the darkest days of financial crisis in Russia, she managed not only to preserve the national treasures in Kenozerye, but to increase them.

Kenozersky National Park. *Map by M. Dubinin.*

Bells began to ring in newly restored chapels and churches. Seventeenth and eighteenth century icons and frescos were restored. A new school was built, and with it visitor centers, cafes, a hotel and other tourist services. An international environmental children's camp, folk groups for adults and children alike were organized. The park became a center for scientific research, the location of fruitful international projects, a site for evaluating new technology for restoring monuments, preserving cultural landscapes, and developing needed infrastructure. While many protected areas were struggling to survive on meager budgets from the federal government, their traditional source of funding, Shatkovskaya forged a new path by looking for – and finding – outside sources of funding to support the park.

The director has always had particular concern for the people who live along two lakes in the park. She worries about the older generation, which she calls the "golden fund" – those who preserve traditions from the distant past – and the local children, the future of this region. For this reason, she ensured that a system existed for collective management of the area, which incorporates the local community in the development of park policies and programs. When she first came to the park, few members of the older generation understood or supported her work, but over the years, that attitude has changed completely. "To see a smile on the face of a *babushka*, or to hear her approval of our work is far more important than receiving approval from higher up," says Shatkovskaya.

The park's success began to attract attention from all sides, and in 2002, Shatkovskaya won the Ministry of

A chapel in the village of Zikhnovo, which is located in Kenozersky National Park. *Photo by I. Shpilenok.*

Natural Resource's third place prize for "Director of the Year." Just a year later, Shatkovskaya was awarded a prestigious national medal "For Services to the Fatherland."

Shatkovskaya's response to the awards reveals more of her character and of the reasons for the park's success. It is no secret that corruption pervades many government structures in Russia, including protected areas, and it is not unusual to hear of monies earmarked for conservation projects dissappearing. Meanwhile, when asked how she planned to use the $2,000 prize award, Shatkovskaya responded that she would finally be able to do some repairs and remodeling in her apartment – something she had been waiting to do for 30 years but hadn't been able to afford on a director's salary and as a single mother of two.

What is the secret of the park's success, this bright northern spot on the map of Russia's protected areas? There is the fact that from the beginning, the park employed a development ideology sought to renew traditional habitat and adapt it to new socio-economic conditions. Or the fact that the efforts of so many scientists and specialists have fused perfectly with the energies, patience, and wisdom of local residents to create concrete results. Or the fact that the enchanting park casts a spell on everyone who visits even once, transforming ordinary guests into supporters who devote their abilities, knowledge, and inspirtation to the renewal of this region. And of course, the fact that behind all of these reasons stands a titanic will and love, hidden inconspicuously in the form of a beautiful and charming woman, the director of Kenozersky National Park, Elena Shatkovskaya.

Yekaterina Lipnitskaya *is the editor of the newspaper* Kenozerye. *Additional materials for this article came from an interview by Anna Sparber published in the internet magazine* Chetvertnoi*, vol. 5 (Autumn 1997).*

A field of wildflowers in Kenozersky National Park. *Photo by I. Shpilenok.*

Galina Sedova: An Undanted Ranger

*By **Vasily Sutula***

Note from the editors: *In 1999, the State Committee for Ecology awarded Galina Sedova, Deputy Director for Protection at Baikalsky Zapovednik, honors for her achievements in the area of nature protection; in 2002, she received a similar award from the Ministry of Natural Resources. In this article, the director of Baikalsky Zapovednik explains just why this most unusual ranger and scientist has earned the respect of the Russian conservation community.*

A simple set of figures shows why Galina Sedova has become one of the most respected rangers in the Russian zapovednik system, a feat all the more remarkable because she is one of few women in a field occupied almost exclusively by men. Between 1990-1998, a period during which Galina came to Baikalsky Zapovednik, tickets for poaching and other violations were issued only occasionally and haphazardly. At the same time, fish stocks in the zapovednik fell to one-seventh of their 1990 level, largely on account of illegal fishing. Some forty to seventy percent of waterfowl species' eggs, including the endangered Asian dowitcher *(Limnodromus semipalmatus),* perished on account of domestic animals grazing in the zapovednik during nesting times. Since Galina was appointed Deputy Director for Protection in 2000, however, the situation has changed markedly. In the past three years, hundreds of people have been fined for violating the zapovednik's regime and dozens have been arrested for more serious offenses. And as a result, the fish population has stabilized and the numbers of waterfowl that nest in the zapovednik has risen.

Another clear example can be seen in the reduction of the illegal gathering of alpine leeks *(Allium victorialis)* since 2002. In 2003, after many years, the population of leeks began to restore itself, a turn we credit to Galina Sedova's strong and wise protection of the zapovednik. Also notable was that in 2003, under Galina's direction, the zapovednik rangers apprehended a group of armed poachers who had killed a bear in the zapovendik. When she became the head of the rangers at Baikalsky Zapovednik, the locals' respect towards the rangers and the zapovednik as a whole rose significantly. They know "who is who."

Galina Sedova, Deputy Director for Protection at Baikalsky Zapovednik, patrols the reserves borders. *Photo by I. Izgagin.*

Baikalsky Zapovednik. *Map by M. Dubinin.*

What is the secret of this woman's success? For starters, she has all the physical skills required of rangers: she is an excellent marksman, adept at handling both rifle and pistol. Her athletic training is stellar, as she climbed in the Caucasus Mountains and is an avid skier. Now she skies easily up and down the Khamar-Dabana mountains on sealskin-lined skis – a difficult task for anyone – and practices skeet shooting. As a leader, she stands up for

her opinion in all situations, but is noted for her principled approach to nature protection and patroling the zapovednik.

Galina is also skilled in the intellectual capacities of her work. By education a forest engineer, she is currently working towards a Ph.D., and has published numerous scientific articles on plant pathology and forestry. She regularly receives grants to work on forest monitoring and other aspects of her job as a ranger. Her English is excellent, a skill that aided her during a month-long environmental internship in the United States. This trip also raised her qualifications as head of protection in our zapovednik.

One of Galina's talents is turning disparate individuals into a team of highly skilled rangers. She operates on the principle that "the right people make all the difference." She has a good sense – women's intuition helps, no doubt – for how to demand excellence from the rangers while simultaneously caring for them as people. She maintains their enthusiasm by setting an example herself: several times a year she throws a knapsack onto her shoulders and disappears for many days into the depths of the zapovednik, apprehending poachers and evaluating the varied work of the rangers, monitoring the condition of the forest, observing and taking pictures.

Galina Sedova. *Photo by I. Izgagin.*

A mountain river in Baikalsky Zapovednik. *Photo by N. Troitskaya.*

A very true Russian proverb says "a man alone on the plain is not a warrior." Looking at the future, we can say with confidence that Galina is not alone, thanks to the legacy she leaves her rangers and others. Her eleven-year-old son Yuri is a good example: since the time he was four, he has accompanied his mother on excursions through the taiga and mountains. Many grown men would be unable to climb to the heights of Khamar-Daban with his agility, or the speed that he demonstrates as he moves across the mountains on seal-skin-lined skis for dozens of kilometers on end. Galina is a good mother to him; to the rest of us, an excellent leader. And having such an excellent leader is the singlemost inspiring factor in helping us overcome the difficulties we face in the zapovednik.

She amazes and infects us all with her tenacity and dedication. Neither deep snow nor pouring rain, ferocious cold nor unforgiving heat, nor any other hurdles or difficulties can stop Galina from making her patrols through the forest. And the reason is simple: Galina is devoted to her work in nature protection. She loves her zapovednik. She is a bright figure, worthy of admiration, a model for all of us to follow.

Vasily Sutula *is the Director of Baikalsky Zapovednik.*

From the Pages of Zapovednik History: Kronotsky's Greatest Discovery

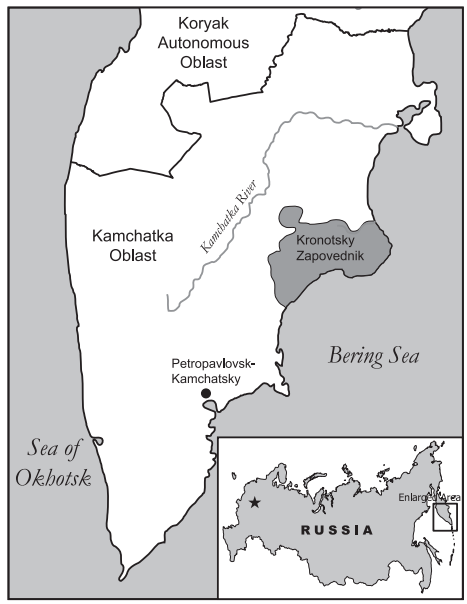
Note from the editors: *In 2003, the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources honored Tatiana Ustinova with an award "For Services to Zapovedniks" on account of her discovery of the now-famous Valley of the Geysers in Kronotsky Zapovednik in 1941. Recently she talked with* RCN's *Lisa Woodson about her discovery.*

When Tatiana Ustinova moved with her husband to Kronotsky Zapovednik on the Kamchatka Peninsula in 1940, they went to a wild country. Their friends and family could not make sense of the decision not only to move to the farthest edge of the Soviet Union, but also to move so close to a potential enemy: "For as long as I could remember we had always expected war with Japan," Ustinova recalls. "It was always, 'War will start tomorrow, war will start tomorrow.' But at the time there was still no war with Japan and we thought we might yet make it in time." They planned to stay on Kamchatka for a year.

At the time, there were no accurate maps of the interior of Kamchatka. The coastline had been drawn earlier for navigational purposes, but within that outline there was nothing but a few points that indicated the peaks of volcanoes. And even though the zapovednik in which Ustinova and her husband were to work had already existed for six years, it had no established boundaries and its contents were still a mystery.

A geologist, Ustinova was well-suited to one of her first tasks in Krontsky Zapovednik: making a map of the reserve, determining its boundaries, and recording its geography. Moreover, her love of wild natural areas eased whatever discomfort long trips through the backcountry might have caused. In the absence of roads or towns, she and the other zapovednik employees traveled simply, with packhorses that carried their tent, stove, sleeping bags, and food.

Her first trip was to Uzon, the crater of an old volcano. The trip there on foot took eight days, but the expedition was well rewarded with the sight of steam and bubbling mud pots. There was one item in particular that caught Ustinova's attention: a stream that flowed out of the large crater lake. The most direct path to the sea was blocked by a mountain ridge. "Where did the water go?" she wondered. "It



Kronotsky Zapovednik. *Map by M. Dubinin.*

Tatiana Ustinova is still as vital and as young in spirit as she was in 1941, when she discovered the famed Valley of the Geysers in Kronotsky Zapovednik. *Photo by G. Averina.*

had to go somewhere, but no one knew where."

In March of 1941, Ustinova was ready to make another trip across Kamchatka. The person who had accompanied her to Uzon the first time, however—another staff member in the park—was less than eager. On that first trip, there had been endless walking and little to eat, and to make matters worse, one of the horses had fallen into the water, ruining their supply of bread. But a local Kamchadal named Krupenin decided that walking through the wilds was the life for him. The pair set off with a dog sled and skis in search of the water that flowed out of Uzon.

"Krupenin was rather ill-disposed towards me," Ustinova recalls, "because the former director had hunted and so forth, and the local people believed that was the right thing to do." They disapproved of the new directions the zapovednik was taking under the guidance of her husband, who had become the acting director. But Ustinova soon proved her mettle to the doubtful Krupenin: whenever they would come to running streams, Krupenin would cut down trees, and Ustinova—who stands about five feet tall—would drag them to the river to make a bridge. "I didn't demand anything from him," says Ustinova, "and so he softened a bit."

After several days, the pair came upon a large valley through which a river flowed from Uzon towards the sea. It was a beautiful, sunny March morning blanketed in snow. Krupenin tied up the dogs and they descended 400 meters into the valley, eventually taking off their skis to follow the river's tight turns. Interesting as it was, the valley did not seem terribly unusual for those parts: there were warm spots in the ground that were barren of snow, and steam rose from hot springs. And as it grew late and clouds appeared overhead—a sure sign of danger—Ustinova decided it was time to head back.

She and Krupenin had just sat down for a snack before their return journey out of the valley when a jet of hot water shot out directly at them from across the stream. "It seemed to be aiming directly at us," says Ustinova. "We became quite frightened: after all, anything could have happened—volcanoes are unpredictable.... We grabbed a hold of one another and sat there, half-dead." After the blast of hot water, a pillar of steam rose from the ground, and then everything grew still. "Ah, a geyser!" Ustinova exclaimed. At the time, geysers had been discovered in only a handful of places on earth, and nowhere on the Eurasian continent. No one had any idea that geysers existed in Russia.

The pair crossed the stream in their rubber boots, glad for the chance to warm their feet in the warm water. The geyser was now nothing more than a small hole in the ground. But after a few minutes, water began to rise out of it, faster and faster, until it burst into the air for a few minutes and died down again. Ustinova and Krupenin timed and recorded the entire process, collected and tasted the water, and, noting that it was already 4 p.m., decided they had to turn back.

From the plateau above, clouds were already descending into the valley. When Ustinova and Krupenin reached the top, they found themselves in a swirling blizzard. The dogs and the camp could not have been too far away, but in the blizzard they could find nothing. And after Krupenin slipped and fell, sliding dangerously close to a 400-meter drop-off, they decided to stop for the night. Their only option was to dig a make-shift shelter into the snow, which provided warmth for about half an hour, after which they spent the rest of the night shivering and with chattering teeth.

By morning the blizzard had not cleared. Krupenin thought their best chance was to follow the stream

Valley of the Geysers. *Photo by V. Kantor/Greenpeace.*

toward the sea, where the zapovednik had an outpost with a roof and a stove, and hope that the dogs would survive another day on their own in the storm. The pair lost their way, however, and when they found their bearings, they discovered they would have to cross three separate valleys before reaching the sea. "It was scary, of course," Ustinova explains, "because we had to climb down into each valley, cross it, climb up the other side, get to the next one, climb down it, and so forth. In short, by the time we reached our own valley, we had expended our last strength." They managed only to have some tea and dried fish (the fish was actually used to feed dogs, but was the only food at the outpost) before collapsing into sleep.

The next day they awoke to the same blizzard, but Krupenin set out to look for the dogs. In the evening he appeared on the doorstep and muttered, in his Kamchadal dialect, "Didn't find doghsh. Killed leg." And he fell onto the ground and lay there unconscious.

The following morning finally dawned clear, sunny and beautiful. The pair left to look for the dogs, but Krupenin's "killed leg"—a serious injury—soon forced him to turn back. Ustinova went on, explaining that if she found the dogs she would spend the night there with them instead of returning to the outpost. "What do you mean you'll spend the night alone with the dogs?" Krupenin insisted. "You'll be scared!" "I'll find another time and place to be scared," Ustinova replied coolly, and continued her search for the dogs.

She followed the sound of their baying to the place they were still tied with one of Krupenin's clever Kamchadal tricks that allowed the dogs to stay on top of the snow instead of being trapped under it. The same could not be said of the tent, and Ustinova had to dig it out of the snow. She also found Krupenin's woodpile ("Wherever we went he would stash a week's worth of firewood!"), heated the stove, and settled in for the night. In the morning Krupenin came running: "Are you still alive?"

News of the discovery upon Ustinova and Krupenin's return to the zapovednik headquarters pleased the rest of the staff, and before too long the pair was sent out again to learn more about the geyser and the valley where they had found it. And this time, when they reached the valley, they realized that the first geyser had not been an isolated discovery: the entire valley was filled with geysers.

After the Valley of the Geysers, the Uzon Volcano Caldera is the second most visited attraction in Kronotsky Zapovednik. *Photo by E. Ledovskikh.*

On Krupenin's advice, they blazed a trail through a snowfield to descend into the valley. Krupenin carried their supplies himself, blistering his skin until it bled. The valley was warm and green, bubbling everywhere with hot water. But Krupenin was worried that if the snowfield, which was quickly melting, disappeared before they climbed out of the valley, they might be stranded in the valley. "You want to leave when we've only just arrived, before we've done any work?" Ustinova asked incredulously.

So they compromised. Krupenin was a simple hunter, barely literate, but literate nonetheless. Ustinova gave him a notebook and showed him how to time and record the stages of a geyser's activity. "In four days we managed to run around and describe the entire active area of the valley," says Ustinova. "We kept an eye on our snowfield, but we kept timing the geysers."

By the time they climbed out of the valley, Ustinova and Krupenin had exhausted most of their foodstuffs. What's more, fog closed in on the pair, stranding them just above the valley for several more days. When they finally arrived at home, they announced they had found an entire valley of geysers. Ustinova's husband sent a telegram announcing the discovery and recommending that Ustinova and her discovery be mentioned on the radio. But the Soviet Union was already embroiled in war; not with Japan, as expected, but with Germany. The reply to the telegram was curt: "Fire Ustinova. Stop all scientific activities in the zapovednik."

Ustinova and her husband remained on Kamchatka, with permission to kill two bears and one deer as food for the upcoming winter. But Ustinova could not stand living without work. "I couldn't simply occupy myself with silly matters," Ustinova explains. "So I said to my husband, 'Let's have a baby....'"

Tatiana Ustinova *turned 91 in November 2004. She lives with her elder daughter Tanya, who was born on Kamchatka, at their home in Burnaby, Canada.*

History of the Historian

Note from the editors: *In September, Felix Shtilmark, Russia's foremost historian of zapovedniks, spoke with* RCN*'s Natalya Troitskaya and Lisa Woodson about how he became interested in zapovedniks and their history. Below is an adaptation of the first part of that interview. Part two will appear in the next issue of* RCN.

My profession had little to do with nature protection – on the contrary, I was trained as a game specialist. I began my studies at the Moscow Fur Institute in 1951. We had game and hunting departments there, and I graduated as a "Biologist-Game Specialist." I began working in game management, participating both in expeditions to the taiga and in work around Moscow. My work involved zoning natural areas: game management was expanding and we had to work on land use planning. These issues are essentially the same for game management and zapovedniks.

So anyway, in the winter of 1963-64, I decided to work in a zapovednik. I signed a contract and left with my wife and children for the city of Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur, in the Russia Far East. My work involved organizing the zapovednik's territory, and immediately we began to doubt the choice of location. Forest management units across from Komsomolsk had been given to the zapovednik, something like 30,000 or 35,000 hectares. But the entire area was constantly being used by the local population, and conflicts were immediately apparent. We proposed changing the zapovednik's location to the Khungari River—the right tributary of the Amur River—where the entire spectrum of "Ussurisky" fauna was still in existence. All of the Far Eastern rarities were concentrated there, while there was hardly anything notable in the zapovednik near Komsomolsk. We were able to create a zapovednik branch there, but many years later everything was revised, and the zapovednik was moved away from Komsomolsk, but not to the Khungari River, as we had wanted, but farther north, on the left bank of the Amur, at the mouth of the Gorin River. So Komsomolsky Zapovednik is now there.

At that time, Muscovites could sign work contracts for a three-year period without losing their status as residents of Moscow. So when my three years were up, the higher-ups in Khabarovsk said to me: "You can cut off your stake in Moscow and keep working here with us, and we'll provide you with any conditions you want, full up to a doctorate. You can run the laboratory – whatever you want..."

I said, "But I have daughters! I can stay here in the taiga—that's my choice. But I can't answer for them. They would have to give up Moscow and live in Khabarovsk. Even if you built me a palace, I wouldn't stay here unless you chained me." So I left.

Then I worked in the Research Institute of Nature Protection, again working with game management, again organizing land use. In Losiny Ostrov [now a national park in northern Moscow] there was a Laboratory of Game Management and Zapovedniks (*Glavokhota*, the main game management institution, was responsible for zapovedniks as well as game management units). So I immediately began working under Professor Syrechkovsky in the laboratory. Our very first trip was to the Khanti-Mansisky Okrug [in Northern Russia], where a new railroad had been built. We hoped to set up an outpost there to study changes in game animals in conditions of intensive human disturbance. And the location of the planned outpost happened to fall right on the territory of what had once been Kondo-Sosvinsky Zapovednik.

The zapovednik had been closed in 1951, but its abandoned villages in Khangaku were still there: buildings, reports, manuscripts, books, the remains of a library... I stumbled upon all of this and even the local Khantis, the last remaining natives of this region, were saying, "Somehow all of this should be saved – to leave some memory of the zapovednik." So I began working on it, and after a while a new zapovednik, Malaya Sosva,

Renowned zapovednik historian Feliks Shtilmark in 1985.
Photo courtesy of F. Shtilmark.

appeared in its place, complete with a full staff and everything. It was there, you could say, that I really was "sucked into" to the zapovednik world.

I began to work on setting up new zapovedniks and gained a fair amount of experience at land use planning. But the most important thing was that I had the brazen stubbornness necessary to get the job done. I knew "what buttons to press:" you go see an academician or some higher-up such as Sokolov or Flint, and there, in his office, you pick up the phone, dial the number, hand him the receiver and say, "Tell them this needs to happen." And that was how it was done. I planned Malaya Sosva, Sokhondinsky, Taimyrsky Zapovedniks...

Then for a while I worked in Yugansky Zapovednik [in Siberia]. But there, as often happens, a conflict arose – the director and I had our differences. We would make a decision together one evening, and then in the morning he would act as though it had never happened. We started to file complaints about each other. In the end he drove

everyone away. He threw me out, threw out three rangers, the head ranger – everyone left. He stayed on for about two months and then left himself. They say that he is now somewhere in Thailand...or Laos...

After leaving Yugansky Zapovednik I free-lanced for about twelve years, but retained my status as a working member of the Writers' Union. I traveled around the country a great deal, to Lake Baikal and Central Asia, all over, and had much of my work published. When *perestroika* began and the system fell apart, and there were no more business trips to be had and it was impossible to make ends meet living as a journalist, my former boss Syroechkovsky saved the day, offering me the chance to return to the Institute on the condition that I would earn my doctorate. However, that probably would not have happened if I had not received a grant from the MacArthur Foundation to publish a book on the history of Russia's zapovedniks.

In the 1970's, the American historian Douglas Weiner, who wrote a book on ecology in the Soviet Union, found me through the zoological museum and a number of people and asked me to be the scientific editor of the Russian version, Ecology in Soviet Russia. (It was published by "Progress" in 1992.) That forced me to dive into that topic.

And then I heard, quite by accident, that a branch of the MacArthur Foundation was opening in Moscow. I was living village life, working in the garden, when a friend's son, Misha, drove up and said, "What are you doing digging in the mud when people are applying for grants? But you're too late—there are only two days left." I was heading for Moscow anyway, so he drove me to town and showed me how to fill out the application. Thirty-two people applied that year, the very first year—now hundreds apply, and I hear they don't even give out grants to individuals any more. But I received a grant, bought a computer, and wrote my book, The Historiography of Russian Nature Reserves, 1895-1995. It was published by my son-in-law. Then, on the basis of this book, I defended my doctorate at the Institute when Syroechkovsky invited me back.

Feliks Shtilmark, at home with his four-legged friends. *Photo by D. Weiner.*

A view onto the Amur River in Komsomolsky Zapovednik. It was here in this Far Eastern reserve that Feliks Shtilmark began his long career working in Russia's protected areas. *Photo by N. Troitskaya.*

NOTE: *The editorial staff of* Russian Conservation News *is deeply saddened to report the passing of Felix Shtilmark. Shilmark passed away on January 31, 2005, just as this issue of* RCN *was going to press.*

Vladimir Flint: Remembering a Respected Scientist and Conservationist

*By **V. M. Galushin, V. G. Krivenko, E. N. Kurovhkin, A. G. Sorokin***

It is hard to believe that we have lost a most remarkable person, someone bright and well-rounded, recognized around the world as a scientist and renowned defender of nature, an indefatigable organizer of scientific and nature protection work: Vladimir Evgenievich Flint.

Flint did not reach the heights of life and peaks of creative work by walking the easy road. This native Muscovite from an academic family became interested in birds as a child, and loved zoology so much that he chose it as his profession. But his journey towards science took a detour while Flint served in the army during the Second World War. Only in 1948 did Flint tackle the first step on his long scientific path, enrolling in the Biology Department of Moscow State University, and immediately revealing in himself a learned ornithologist. To this day, experts cite an article Flint published as an undergraduate on the birds of Izmailovsky Park; in fact, it is one of the most significant primary sources on Moscow's avian life.

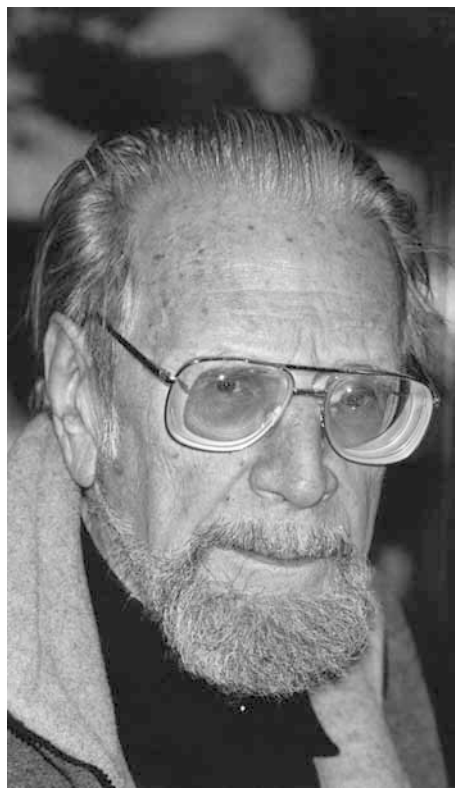
The diverse nature of Flint's scientific interests became evident after he graduated from Moscow State University, when this future leader of Russian ornithology began studying epidemiology and defended two dissertations—one on epidemiology (1959) and the other on small mammals (1972). Working in the elite Gamaley Institute of Epidemiology provided rich opportunities for expeditions to the farthest and least-studied areas of the Soviet Union, for multifaceted research on animals. And those included Flint's beloved birds, to which he eventually returned, entering the ornithological division of Moscow State University's zoology museum in 1969.

Flint quickly became a pioneer of the nature protection movement, a wise strategist and active participant. He was especially noted as a leader in efforts to protect endangered species. Beginning in 1976, he devoted more than a quarter-century to this most important effort, working in the Institute for Nature Protection. The results of this work are compiled in one of his last books, "A Strategy for Preserving Endangered Species in Russia: Theory and Practice" (2000). In this field Flint always pressed towards the future, always looking for new ways to protect birds.

Flint's greatest achievement in this regard was arguably the founding of the Russian Bird Conservation Union in 1993. His participation was crucial for rallying sympathizers, determining the Union's activity, structure, and inclusion in BirdLife International. Naturally, at the beginning, Flint headed the organization, for ten years he was its president, and later its president emeritus.

"Operation Siberian Crane" is an excellent example of his skillful coordination of national and international efforts in bird conservation. The project allowed for the study of populations of this very rare Russian endemic, and also for the collection of information on and implementation of measures to create reserve groups of captive rare cranes in Oksky Zapovednik and the International Crane Foundation in the United States.

It is impossible to count all of Flint's achievements in the study and protection of the animal world, his great public posts, national and international awards. His work included helping to publish Red Data Books of Endangered Species, preparing important legislation, developing and implementing strategies for biodiversity conservation, creating working groups for cranes, birds of prey, and bustards. He was elected to the IUCN council for six years, participated in the work of many IUCN General Assemblies and International Ornithological Congresses, including the most recent in Beijing (2002). He won many government and international awards and prizes, was given the title of professor and the honorable "Merited Ecologist of the Russian Federation," and was designated an academician of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences.



Famous Russian ornithologist, Vladimir Evgenievich Flint. *Photo by M. Flint.*

Vladimir Flint's contribution to science and nature protection, as well as to the formation of the country's scientific potential, is so significant that he will always remain a solid figure on national and international levels. May he be remembered well.

*Reprinted with permission from **Okhrana Dikoi Prirody**, No. 1 (27)/2004.*

Stories of Foreigners in Russia and Russians in Foreign Lands

The Life I Never Expected (to Love)

By ***Laura Williams***

Note from the editors: *Laura Williams has been active on the Russian nature conservation scene for more than a decade, but with perspective few westerners share: she lives and works in a rural Russian village at the edge of a nature reserve. Here she tells the story of her involvement in nature conservation in Russia and the lessons it has taught her.*

Last night I dreamt I was back in college at Cornell. I'd overslept and was late for Russian. I ran into the classroom and everyone stared. I looked down to find that I had no clothes on. I dashed out the door and up the ivy-covered bell tower that stands at the head of the campus' main square. I looked out over snowy Ithaca and the icy Finger Lakes and, for some reason, they resembled the frozen floodplain of the Nerussa River where I live today, in the buffer zone of the Bryansky Les (Bryansk Forest) Zapovednik in western Russia.

I wake up, relieved my nakedness was only a dream. I think back to my first Russian class sophomore year. We began by talking about Gorbachev and his efforts to restructure the country, known as *perestroika*.

I looked blankly at the teacher and asked, "What's *perestroika*?"

The year was 1988 and I was eager to work on global environmental issues. I figured if I wanted to have an impact on international issues, I would need to work with the world's other superpower – the Soviet Union. I told my teacher I was taking Russian to build relationships between our two countries on environmental policy, global climate change, and nature conservation. But I was ignorant as to what was going on in the country, hence my nakedness in the dream.

Bryansky Les Zapovednik. *Map by M. Dubinin.*

Laura Williams. *Photo by I. Shpilenok*

I was confident of my knowledge of the environment, however. I had volunteered for the Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Division in Boulder, Colorado, and then canvassed neighborhoods around Boulder to raise funds for local environmental issues. I was the one bringing my own bags to the grocery store, and staring down the cashier when he mockingly asked, "Are you from Greenpeace, or something?" I didn't care that my younger brother gave me the moniker "tree hugger," but he really made me mad when he told me, "One person can't make a difference."

Traveling to new places, learning foreign languages, and meeting people from other countries were my other interests, so "international" and "environment" seemed like the perfect combination to me. In 1990, I participated in a summer language exchange at Leningrad State University. Russia was plagued by economic depression and food shortages, yet I fell in love with the people and the land. The next summer, after graduating from college, I volunteered to go on a Russian-American park exchange trip. I traveled with three other American students and four US park specialists to work on a management plan for the Pereslavl-Zalessky National Park (now Plesheevo Ozero National Park), two hours north of Moscow. While food shortages were still rampant, we were able to find plenty of fresh strawberries and Soviet champagne to tide us over.

In the fall of 1991, I landed a job at a think tank in Washington, D.C, working on energy conservation issues in Eastern Europe and Russia. It was a plush job, with a generous salary for someone just out of college and included a lot of traveling to Eastern Europe and Russia. But after two years there, I was ready for a change and decided to move to Russia. On a whim, I quit my job, not knowing what I would do next. On my last day, as I was cleaning out my desk, I received a call from Bill Eichbaum, one of the vice-presidents at World Wildlife Fund-US, who had been an important supporter for the energy efficiency center I helped to create in Moscow. He asked if I would be interested in helping to establish a presence for WWF in Russia. I jumped at the chance and soon found myself living in a communal apartment in central Moscow, searching for a Russian compatriot to help me create a WWF office. I recruited a shrewd man named Vladimir Krever, who was then working for *Glavokhota*, the state organization charged with planning Russia's nature reserves. It was Vladimir who first introduced me to zapovedniks and, on weekends, whisked me off to Oksky Zapovednik and its bison and rare crane breeding centers in neighboring Ryazan Province. Soon I began to admire the reserve system and its lofty goal of biodiversity conservation through total human exclusion. With the support of WWF US and the MacArthur Foundation, Vladimir and I compiled a portfolio of urgent measures to save Russia's zapovednik system, which many believed was on the verge of collapse due to the lack of political and financial support. Adopting our portfolio as the basis of its initial conservation work in Russia, WWF International approved creation of a WWF Russian Programme Office on July 1, 1994.

I spent the next three years working for WWF, helping to raise international funding for conservation in Russia and implementing field projects all over the country. I was fortunate to travel to remote places like the Arctic, the Russian Far East, and Lake Baikal. Very quickly I realized that Russia was largely a land of pristine nature and magnificent natural heritage. When I had first come here with only the desire to work on pressing environmental issues, I had assumed that those issues would be the "dirty" ones – air pollution, oil spills, Chernobyl, etc. Little did I realize that Russia had much more to offer: in fact, I was shocked to learn how much of Russia was virtually untouched. I understood the profound importance of the zapovednik system – a place where nature is assured absolute respite from human pressures – to protect these areas. Like the Russian biologists I was working with, I began to sing the praises of the zapovednik system to our western supporters.

I deemed myself a "preservationist," arguing that nature deserved a place of its own, completely off limits to human presence, free of logging, mineral exploration, poaching, and even tourists. To many of the international visitors that came to our WWF office in Moscow, this concept was absurd and completely unacceptable: people, they reasoned, had a right to go anywhere; they just had to learn to obey certain rules of behavior in the wild. I could understand their beliefs – if protected lands were put off limits to visitors in countries such as Germany and Denmark, then there wouldn't be a whole lot of wild places left for them to enjoy. But Russia, I argued, was different. Russia was big. There were vast stretches of this country where one would not find a single road or sign of human presence, stretches that were larger than some European countries. These areas could be set aside easily for nature protection alone. Along with the many Russian conservationists defending zapovedniks in those early transitional years, I was determined to prove to the world that the zapovednik system created under the Soviet command economy could be maintained and even upheld as a model for the West to follow.

The ten years since my arrival and the nascence of WWF in Russia have seen enormous changes. WWF in Russia molted from a two-person project to an influential organization with 120 full-time employees and half a dozen field offices around the country, charged with implementing a wide range of conservation programs from the Caucasus to the Bering Sea.

The past decade has seen important changes for me personally as well. During my time at WWF, I supervised dozens of projects, but one had an impact on me that would last a lifetime. In working to create an environmental education center in the Bryansk Forest Zapovednik in western Russia with funding from the Danish Government, I met zapovednik director Igor Shpilenok. In January 1997, Igor invited me to head up the education center we had worked to create in the reserve. I am still here seven years since, now married to Igor and raising two sons in a remote village in the heart of the Bryansk Forest.

Instead of writing grant proposals about boosting anti-poaching measures in zapovedniks, I now live next door to "poachers" or come face to face with them in the reserve. Instead of talking to decision-makers in Moscow about promoting public awareness, I have led hundreds of schoolchildren through the forest and showed them signs of wildlife. My mere being here is often enough to make them proud of their zapovednik: if an American is here trying to protect it, why shouldn't we? In my time here, I have transformed from city girl with a childhood dream to protect the global environment to country girl

with horses, chickens, and a goat, committed to protecting the forest in my own backyard.

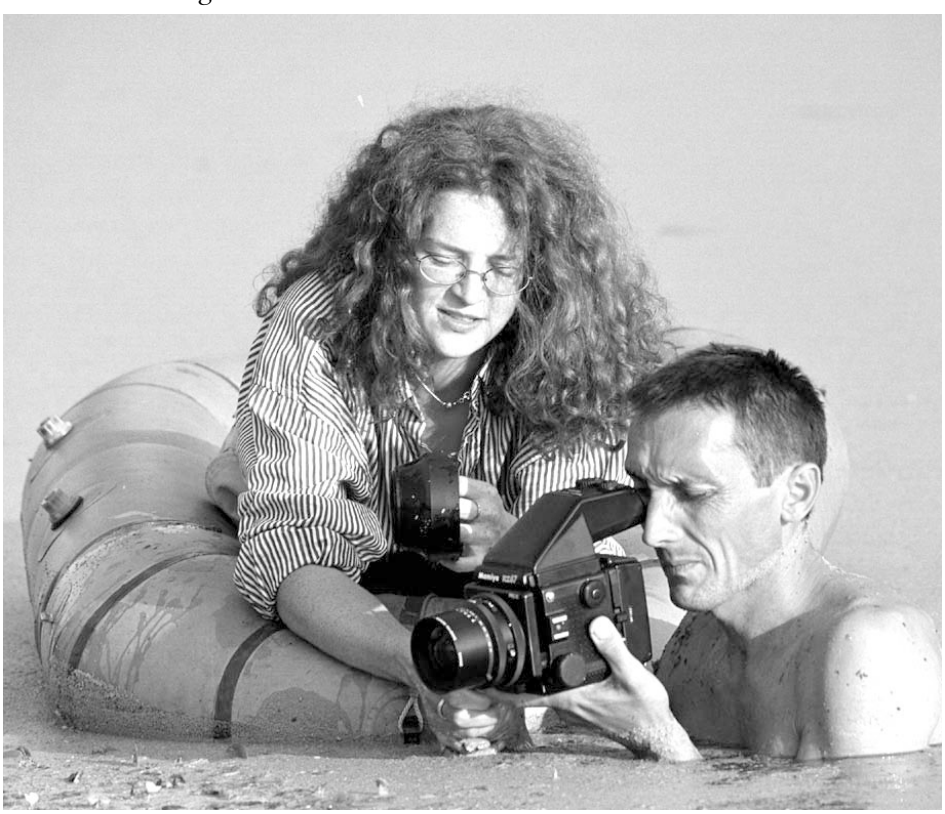
My environmental beliefs have changed as well. Seven years working and living alongside the Bryansk Forest Zapovednik have taught me that, while one may be a preservationist at heart, in the real world, compromises are necessary. Here, we can't speak of building public support for the reserve without allowing people living along its borders to come and see what's there to be protected. We can't just give rangers rifles and expect that to solve the poaching problem. I have had heart-to-heart conversations with poachers and, in the end, I know we both are right – they have a right to hunt and the animals have a right to be protected. Now I often tailor my arguments for the nature reserve to win support from poachers and hunters, telling them that by allowing game animals to reproduce safely in the reserve, they are assuring a greater bounty next year, when wildlife populations will spill over the reserve's borders.

Seeing the financial benefits that ecotourism has brought to some of the other zapovedniks in the past decade, I have come to accept that a controlled flow of tourists would provide funds for important conservation programs in the zapovednik. Tourism also brings world fame and recognition for Russia's beautiful protected areas. I still cling to the belief, however, that visitation to zapovedniks should be monitored, and generally in the company of a guide from the reserve. Watching Russian children toss their empty soda cans into rivers and scatter candy wrappers onto the banks, or avid fishermen and naturalists litter their campsites with empty vodka bottles, canned meat tins, and cigarette butts, I just don't believe that the average Russian is ready to be let into strictly protected nature reserves unbridled. Much work needs to be done on building environmental responsibility and teaching people the elementary task of cleaning up after themselves.

Today, although I am no longer directly involved with the nature reserve where I live, and Igor has resigned as director to become a full-time photographer within Russia's zapovednik system, I am always ready to contribute to the great work the zapovednik is doing. Now I spend most of my time (apart from trying to raise two rambunctious but environmentally-conscious boys) traveling with Igor to other reserves to write articles for international publications on Russia's wildlife and protected areas. We also contribute our work to the "Wild Russia" website, a project of the Center for Russian Nature Conservation (http://www.wild-russia.org). And this past spring I finished a book on our life in the Bryansk Forest that I hope will be published next year. Through this work, I believe that we are helping to bring needed international attention to Russia's endangered species and the protected areas system. I feel that international support for nature conservation in Russia is crucial to ensuring that the Russian government will not suddenly undo the great conservation achievements made in this country over the past century. Yet, I am confident that any strike at the zapovednik system would be met with resistance from the capable and dedicated non-governmental sector and its international supporters.

Looking back, I believe that my casual decision to take Russian was fate. The past ten years have proven to be the most exciting and dynamic time to live in Russia, particularly for someone interested in environmental issues. While a decade ago I never would have guessed where I would be today, now I cannot imagine another life for myself. Living in the constantly changing environment of Russia, it is hard to say what the future holds for me. But, when I look out my window at the several-centuries-old oaks rising above the floodplain of the meandering Nerussa River, I am certain of one thing: zapovedniks must remain wild no matter what and I will do my part to make sure that happens. One person can make a difference, I tell my brother with poise, and, together, we can change the world.

Laura Williams *lives with her husband, nature photographer* ***Igor Shpilenok****, in a remote village near the Bryansk Forest Zapovednik.*



Laura Williams assisting her husband Igor Shpilenok photograph plants in a pond in Bryansky Les Zapovednik. *Photo by N. Shpilenok.*

On Migrations: An Interview with Elena Smirenski

Note from the editors: *Originally from Russia, Elena Smirenski has spent many years living and working in Wisconsin, USA, with the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Besides this work, she and her husband Sergei Smirenki are the founders of Muravoivka Park in the Russian Far East. Here she responds to questions about her international conservation experience. For more information on Muraviovka Park, please see* RCN *issues 26 and 35.*

RCN: ***What was your nature protection background in Russia?***

ES: I was raised by a mother who worked as a college language teacher and spoke three major European languages, so she taught my older brother and me foreign languages from the time we were very young. But she would also often encourage us to pick a "real life profession," such as biology or medicine. In our home, we did not have much furniture, or fancy clothes, but we had lots of good books, which we devoured, and many of them were about wildlife and wild places. Every summer we traveled with our mother to beautiful rural areas where we could watch and fall in love with all kinds of wild things. So by the time we were in high school, both my brother and I decided to pursue careers in biology.

I graduated from the Moscow State Teacher's Institute with a major in biology and chemistry in 1972. My Masters Degree thesis was about soil fauna, but during my college years I also participated in ornithological expeditions. After college, I worked for 10 years as a scientific editor for the *Zoological Journal of the USSR Academy of Sciences*, and also as a free-lance translator, while raising my two children at the same time. But by virtue of being married to my college classmate Sergei Smirenski, who must have been born with a pair of binoculars in his hands, I became deeply involved in his work to study and protect cranes and other wildlife in Russia. On weekends and during summer vacations we traveled with our children to nature reserves and refuges. I participated in some of his expeditions to the Russian Far East and Central Asia. Though our main interest was scientific research, you grow to love what you study, and once you love something, you want to protect it. That's how nature protection and conservation really came into focus.

Elena Smirenski with her husband and founder of the Muraviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use, Sergei Smirenski, boating on the Wisconsin River. *Photo by D. Kamla.*

In 1980, Sergei and his colleagues founded the Crane Working Group (CWG) of the USSR, and I tried to help their work as best as I could. Over the years, the group had produced five collections of crane papers and held a number of national meetings. I would write and publish a detailed report about each meeting in *Zoological Journal*. The major goal of the group was to coordinate crane studies and crane conservation efforts in the Soviet Union. This group fell apart after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but was recently restored as a Crane Working Group of Eurasia (CWGE), thanks to the terrific joint efforts of Elena Ilyashenko and the International Crane Foundation.

RCN: ***How did you become involved with nature conservation outside of Russia and the International Crane Foundation in particular?***

ES: In 1982, the International Ornithological Congress was held at Moscow State University, and for the first time in my life I had an opportunity to mingle and chat with an international, English-speaking group of birders and conservationists. I volunteered to help with translation. It was a great chance to practice my spoken English and to meet colleagues from around the world. Sergei introduced me to George Archibald, the ICF Co-Founder and Director. I was amazed with this man's drive and love for cranes - and people, too! I was thrilled

with the story of how he and Ron Sauey, two penniless Cornell University graduates, started an amazing organization that became a pilot project in crane conservation around the world. He became a role model for me.

When *perestroika* began and the iron curtain fell, George and ICF made a titanic effort to reach out to all the "crane people" in the former USSR and involve them in international cooperation. In 1988, I traveled to the US for the first time in my life (in fact, it was my first international trip ever!), to visit my good friends in New Jersey, who had emigrated to America eighteen years earlier. I called George from New Jersey and he invited me to come to ICF for a week. That week was the best part of my first American experience! The facilities impressed me, but I was especially in awe of all the dedicated and incredibly friendly people who worked there. George and I would sit down over a map of the USSR and go through the list of crane researchers in Russia. I would describe everyone's expertise and personality, and George would take notes, and then we would make plans for how ICF could work together with these people to benefit crane conservation. ICF had quite a collection of crane literature in Russian and George suggested that Sergei and I should come to ICF for the entire summer next year: Sergei would work with George and Jim Harris (the current ICF President) on the first draft of the "Global Crane Action Plan" and I would translate Russian literature into English for the ICF library. George located funding for our travel and in-country expenses and in June 1989 Sergei and I came to ICF for 3 months. That's when both Sergei and I seriously shifted our interests and efforts from academic research on cranes to crane conservation. Those would have been the best three month of my life at that point if I hadn't missed our two children so terribly!

Two years later, in June 1991, I returned to ICF to work for a few months – and stayed for good. My employment with ICF helped promote Sergei and his colleagues' work in the Amur Basin and other parts of Russia. In 1994, the Muraviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use was established, to protect important nesting and roosting grounds of the endangered Red-crowned and White-naped Cranes. This summer we celebrated its tenth anniversary.

RCN: ***How do you balance work with ICF and Muraviovka Park and your life in the United States and Russia?***

ES: Striking a balance is hard, and sometimes I think I just don't! At ICF, I am a Program Assistant to the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project Director (90% of my time) and the Amur Expedition Coordinator (10% of my official time and unlimited hours after work and on weekends). Being married to Sergei, who is the driving force behind the Park's projects, means working practically all the time and even "talking shop" at home. I also travel quite a lot to Russia and other countries under both projects (the Siberian Crane project coordinates conservation efforts in four countries – China, Iran, Kazakhstan and Russia). But it has been a lot of fun and personally fulfilling – and of course I never get bored! If you want to know how I manage to stay sane – well, love balances it all: I am deeply in love with God, with my husband, my children and grandchildren, with my two countries (Russia and America) and their people, who are so dear to my heart – and of course, with cranes! How can anybody not love these beautiful, magnificent, and vulnerable birds?!!

RCN: ***What do you see as the primary challenges of nature conservation efforts between Russia and other countries?***

ES: Wild, insatiable, and uncharitable capitalism in Russia; impoverishment of a certain part of the population; lack of a federal structure for nature protection; corruption in some agencies responsible for game management; a poor taxation system that still does not encourage charity... Also certain frictions within Russian and international conservation communities and the bureaucratic and over-competitive character of some NGOs (sometimes people compete for funding and resources instead of joining efforts for a good cause).

A pair of young storks gathers at Elena's feet (1976). *Photo by S. Smirenski.*

RCN: ***What do you think the United States and the international conservation community should learn from Russia?***

ES: That in spite of all the negative news about terrorism, crime, greed, etc., etc. that are flooding the media, there are great people out there, throughout huge Mother Russia, doing wonderful charitable work for very little or no reward – in conservation, education, social spheres... And I want to compliment the editors of the *Russian Conservation News* for their outstanding job in making information about these people and their projects available to the public.

RCN: ***What have you learned from your work in the United States that you think would be helpful for Russia?***

ES: During my first months in the US, I was amazed by the countless NGOs, small and large (such as The Nature Conservancy or The Aldo Leopold Foundation), that are doing a terrific job in conservation and nature protection in working cooperation with the American government. In Russia, it was entirely the government's prerogative to protect nature, and this mindset still pervades in the majority of Russian officials and even conservationists. Also, the Russians should try to model the well-developed coopera-

tion and collaboration among conservationists and researchers in the US. Of course there is some competitiveness here, too, but it is "softer" and to a lesser degree than in Russia. ICF is a great example of how a small group of dedicated people can be successful and efficient in working with and providing support to all people and groups concerned about cranes and crane habitats, regardless of their national, religious, or political affiliation. Also, it would be very useful if more Russians would learn such "Western" virtues as punctuality, sound time and money management, good planning, positive thinking...

RCN: *What value do you see in international conservation exchanges?*

ES: The exchanges have tremendous value. They allow Americans and Russians to get to know each other on a level that is absolutely impossible to reach through regular commercial tourism. They work and play together, they learn each other's language and culture, and they become friends for life! By doing all this they are contributing to a more secure future for themselves and for the wildlife that they appreciate so much. I receive comments to that effect all the time from Americans and Russians alike who meet during Muraviovka Park's exchanges. Becky Thompson, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin who went on Amur Expeditions three consecutive years said it well: "Muraviovka Park is not only a place that provides a safe environment for endangered birds, but also a place where lifelong friendships ignite and flourish. As these [American high school students] go on to graduate from college and make their mark in the world, they will never forget the two weeks they shared their lives with students from halfway around the world."

Russian and the American children birding together in Muraviovka Park. *Photo by S. Smirenski.*

American and Russian participants in an environmental education teacher workshop held at Muraviovka Park in July 2002. *Photo by S. Smirenski.*

As the Crane Flies

Note from the editors: *Eliza Klose, a longtime leader and supporter of the US-Russia environmental movement, conducted this special interview with George Archibald. Archibald is the co-founder of the International Crane Foundation in Wisconsin, USA, and he speaks here about his experience working with Russia.*

RCN: *How did you begin to work in Russia?*

GA: In the early 1970s, Ron Sauey, the co-founder of the International Crane Foundation (ICF), and I started corresponding with Dr. Vladimir Flint, an authority on the birds of Russia who was employed at the Zoological Museum in Moscow. Flint had worked on Siberian Cranes, a rare species that nests exclusively in the Arctic region of Russia and then migrates across a continent to spend the winter in Iran, India, and China. At that time, the western population that was rediscovered in Iran in 1978 was believed extirpated, a small flock of about seventy birds wintered in India, and the wintering area in China was unknown. Ron and I were anxious to establish a captive population of Siberian Cranes as a safeguard should the species disappear in nature. Flint had studied the cranes on their breeding grounds in Yakutia. We hoped he might be willing to send hatching eggs to ICF. I first visited Flint in Moscow in 1976; and in 1977 and 1978, he transported Siberian Crane eggs in a portable incubator heated by hot water bottles to ICF. The first year there were four eggs. Two were infertile. Two were alive and well. Both hatched and both were females. The next year we received five living eggs. All hatched and four were reared – three males and one female. So from those two years, we had three pairs of Siberian Cranes. In 1981 we achieved the world's first captive population of breeding Siberian Cranes. Today there are about 200 Siberian Cranes in captivity worldwide. (They breed well in captivity.) In the meantime the western population in Iran declined, the last pair of the central flock that migrated to India was seen on the breeding grounds, and the eastern population numbers about 3,000 birds – all on a wetland downstream on the Yangtze floodplain from the Three Gorges Dam. The captive population is a safeguard against extinction and experiments are underway to use captive-produced cranes to bolster the numbers migrating to Iran and to reestablish a flock that migrates to India. The plan is to use hang gliders and ultra-light motorized aircraft to teach captive-reared cranes ancient migration routes.

RCN: *What was it like working on conservation in Russia in those days?*

GA: Since it was during the Cold War, I was only able to visit Moscow, Leningrad and the Oka Nature Reserve near Moscow. ICF helped the Oka Reserve establish a captive breeding center for endangered cranes, a program that has proven to be very productive. Since its establishment, the Oka Reserve has managed to breed the seven species of cranes native to Russia: the Siberian, Red-crowned, White-naped, Hooded, Eurasian, Demoiselle, and Sandhill. Since 1991, Siberian Crane eggs and chicks produced at Oka have been used in experimental releases of Siberian Cranes in Russia, India and Iran.

RCN: *Can you offer an anecdote to illustrate how you and your Russian partners got around the difficulties of working in Russia at that time?*

GA: It was illegal to visit Russian homes in those Cold War days so we left the car with our KGB guy while Flint and his colleagues "showed me the Moscow subway." We went by subway to Flint's apartment, had a party, and returned by subway to the sleeping KBG guy. We then proceeded to discuss with him which Metro station was the most beautiful.

RCN: *Have you been able to develop some additional partners in Russia in addition to the Oka Reserve?*

George Archibald, right, and Dr. Sergei Smirenski in the wetlands of Muraviovka Park, in June 2004. The International Crane Foundation, of which George is a co-founder, has a long history of close collaboration with Muraviovka Park, which Sergei established. *Photo courtesy of G. Archibald.*

George Archibald, left, visits longtime friend and famed Russian ornithologist Vladimir Flint and his wife, Tatiana, in their home in Moscow in 2002. *Photo courtesy of G. Archibald.*

GA: ICF has two major projects in Russia: the Siberian Crane Project and Muraviovka Park. Initially the Siberian Cranes Project involved establishing the species in captivity and the development of techniques to return captive-produced birds to the wild. In recent years, through GEF grants from UNEP, ICF has worked with Russian colleagues on the conservation of wetlands critical to the welfare of Siberian Cranes in China, India, Iran and Russia. After the completion of the GEF program in 2008, we hope to help reestablish the western and the central populations of Siberian Cranes. Dr. Flint was, and his colleague, Dr. Alexander Sorokin, continues to be, the leader of the Siberian Crane Project.

Muraviovka Park is Russia's first private nature reserve since the Russian revolution of 1917. With non-government support from Japan and the USA, 12,000 acres of wetland and farmland were protected through a fifty-year lease between the International Socio-Ecological Union based in Russia and the government of Tambovka District on the lowlands of the Amur River near China. Under the skillful direction of biologist Dr. Sergei Smirenski, critical nesting habitat for Red-crowned Cranes, White-naped Cranes, and Oriental White Storks have been protected. On the nearby farmland, there are demonstration crops of organically produced corn and soybean. Outreach to the local people is provided through summer camps for children and assistance to an orphanage. Dr. Smirenski's wife, Elena, is employed at ICF and provides valued logistic support to her husband's efforts. ICF's President, Jim Harris, and co-founder, George Archibald, are members of the Board of Muraviovka Park.

RCN: *Have your Russian partners come to ICF? What do you find they are most interested in learning from your facility?*

GA: Many Russian colleagues have visited ICF, starting with Dr. Flint in 1978. Many of them are amazed by the abundance and the tameness of local Sandhill Cranes as compared to cranes in Russia. Most Russian biologists are familiar with the writings of American conservation philosopher, Aldo Leopold, and are surprised that Leopold's cabin and the land where he restored prairies, forests, and wetlands are just a few miles from ICF headquarters. It is always a pleasure to sit in the cabin and share Leopold's ideas about caring for the land.

RCN: *What additional crane preservation programs would you most like to see take place in Russia?*

GA: The restoration of the western and central populations of Siberian Cranes are life goals for me. Despite our efforts for many years, both of these populations have declined. I hope that restoration will be possible through widespread public education and international cooperation among the eleven nations that share the wild Siberian Cranes.

RCN: *Why is Russia important to crane conservation?*

GA: Seven of the world's fifteen species of cranes are native to Russia. Of these, four species are endangered. The wetland-dependent Siberian Crane, at about 3,000 birds, breeds exclusively in Russia and is considered the most threatened of the world's cranes. The Red-crowned Crane, at just 2,200 birds in nature, is also threatened by wetland loss. The White-naped Crane numbers about 6,000 birds and faces threats on wintering grounds in Korea (shared with Red-crowned Cranes) and in China (shared with Siberian Cranes). The Hooded Crane numbers about 10,000 birds. But the majority is concentrated at a single artificial feeding station in Japan, a condition rendering the species vulnerable to disease.

RCN: *What can the US learn from Russian conservation efforts? And Russia, from the US?*

GA: Americans can learn from Russians how to develop a greater appreciation for nature. Russians, unlike most of my American colleagues, talk very little when experiencing nature. For many of them, being in nature seems almost like a religious experience, something to appreciate in silence. Under the former Soviet system, Russians from different work units were seldom encouraged to communicate and collaborate with each other. Under the new system where individuals have a greater role in public affairs, networking among people from a diversity of backgrounds and interests is vital for excellence in conservation, a skill that is well developed by many Americans.

RCN: *What do you think about* RCN's *efforts to inform the West about conservation in Russia? What are the key messages RCN should provide to the international community?*

GA: I think *RCN* is a terrific publication that has made a real difference in bringing information about Russian conservation to the Western reader. Russia has some of the world's greatest natural treasures and some of the world's best naturalists, scientists and conservationists. They need our help to conserve their global treasures.

Exchanges Across Borders: An Interview with Steve Kohl

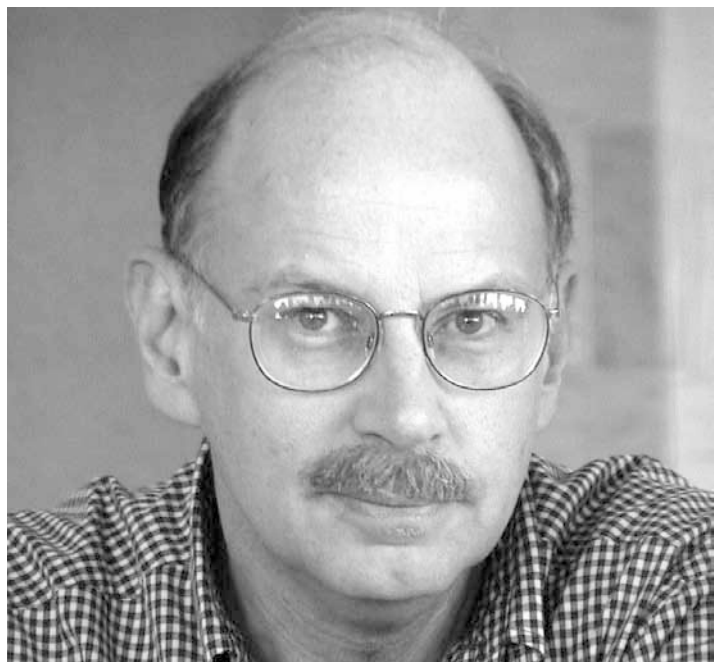
Note from the editors: RCN *interviewed Steve Kohl, chief of the Russia-East Asia Branch within the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Division of International Conservation. A seasoned veteran in Russian conservation, who speaks both Russian and Chinese, Steve has been helping facilitate cooperation between the U.S. and USSR/Russia since 1978.*

RCN: ***In the last decade partnerships between the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Russian protected area management agencies have undergone active development. Which programs do you consider the most successful?***

SK: I think our cooperation has been successful in several areas. First and foremost is the program for financial assistance to Russian protected areas. When USFWS announced its first grant competition in 1995, we awarded 21 grants in sums of up to $2,500 each. Congress later increased funding for cooperation between the USFWS and the Russian Federation. We recently administered our fifth grant competition not long ago, and awarded 40 grants of up to $7,500 each. So you could say that program is developing successfully! But the greatest achievement of our cooperative efforts has been 30 years of continual informational and professional exchange between experts on endangered species and their habitats. Work is always carried out in a spirit of respect and mutual understanding.

RCN: ***Which programs will continue in the future? Do you have ideas about new programs?***

SK: We maintain close contact with our colleagues in Russia and are constantly exchanging ideas and recommendations. It's very important to be accepting of new areas of cooperation that take into consideration the interests of both sides. For example, during many of my visits to zapovedniks, employees often asked about the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to resolve natural resource management problems in the United States. That led to the organization in 2003 of a seminar in Pennsylvania on GIS, in which Russian participants became acquainted with the use of GIS and received the necessary software to employ them in their own protected areas. Having received positive feedback on the seminar from its participants, we decided to hold a second GIS seminar in summer 2004. Now more than 40 specialists who have gone through this training use GIS in their own Russian protected areas.



Steven Kohl, Chief of the Russia-East Asia Branch within the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Division of International Conservation. *Photo courtesy of S. Kohl, USFWS.*

RCN: ***In the last decade Russian protected areas have actively developed a relatively new field for them: environmental education and ecotourism. The United States has considerable experience in this field. Are there any training programs planned for Russian specialists in this field?***

SK: Involving the public in nature protection is important to the USFWS. In accordance with the significant increase in the numbers of ecotourists in the USA and Russia over the past decade, employees of Russian zapovedniks and national parks are going to have to be ready to receive these visitors. In 1998 and 2002 we held seminars for 20 Russian specialists in the US on designing and organizing visitors' centers and making trails. Over the course of ten days the seminar participants visited a number of museums and visitors' centers, where they became acquainted with both effective and ineffective exhibitions; they then used these principles in a special exercise to plan a visitors' center for their own protected area. Because the USFWS's approach to the question of ecotourism is constantly evolving, we hope to hold a third seminar in the near future.

RCN: ***What do you think about* RCN*? Do you have any suggestions for how to improve it?***

SK: *RCN* is a very helpful journal for us. First off, the journal is always relevant. It has information about the latest laws and events regarding Russia's protected areas. Secondly, the diversity of themes and authors forces the reader to think about the links that hold these various viewpoints together. And thirdly, it's in English, which allows us to distribute it to USFWS employees who don't speak Russian. In short: please continue your wonderful work!

RCN: ***How do Russian protected areas differ from their American***

counterparts? You have visited more than 30 Russian zapovednniks -- what stands out to you about these visits?

SK: I think that national parks in both countries have a lot in common, but it's hard to find an analog to the Russian zapovednik in the United States. For example, in the majority of our federal refuges, sport fishing and seasonal hunting are permitted. Refuges are open to the public, though recreation is strictly controlled. In the US, the public actively supports its refuges, because we consider them our own land and want to preserve it for future generations. There are many volunteer organizations called "Friends of such-and-such a refuge."

The opportunity to work with Russian zapovedniks is the favorite part of my job. If memory serves me correctly, I have already visited 36 zapovedniks, just over a third of the total. And my dream is to visit all of Russia's zapovedniks before old age prevents me from travelling! What makes the greatest impression on me in Russian zapovedniks is probably the dedication of their employees to preserve the natural riches of the country despite all the difficulties – physical, financial, and administrative – against which they constantly fight. Incidentally, I respect the same kind of dedication in USFWS employees, who have a surprising amount in common with their Russian colleagues.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has hosted more than forty specialists from Russia's nature reserves and national parks for training in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). *Photo by P. Ward, USFWS.*

RCN: ***What do you have to say about Russian experts and their participation in the USFWS volunteer program?***

SK: I've been very impressed by the level of professionalism of the employees of zapovedniks and national parks. I also respect my Russian colleagues who fulfill the administrative positions necessary to support protected areas. Like me, they are considered "bureaucrats," a title that tends to hold a low position in public opinion. Nonetheless, these "bureaucrats" fight to make sure that protected areas receive financing; they organize meetings for zapovednik directors, organize the transfer of grant money, help put documents in order so that zapovednik employees can travel outside of Russia, and help protected areas in many other ways.

Volunteers from Russia who work in our office for two to three months come through a program that has been operating continually since 1992. Over these 13 years more than 20 people from the Ministry of Natural Resources, Academy of Sciences, public organizations, universities and botanical gardens have come to work for us. They become temporary Washingtonians, living in an apartment, buying groceries in supermarkets, and visiting our capital's tourist attractions. And of course, constantly talking with USFWS employees and residents of Washington, D.C., helps improve their English considerably. I also can't fail to mention how helpful it is for me and my colleague Peter Ward to speak with our volunteers in Russian.

Staff of Russia's nature reserves and national parks visited Walkill River National Wildlife Refuge in Northern New Jersey, United States, in August 2004 to see how GIS software is used in the management of wildlife and wildlife habitat. *Photo by P. Ward, USFWS.*

RCN Through the Eyes of its Editors, Past and Present

Margaret Williams in Chukhraie, a village near Bryansky Les Zapovednik. *Photo by L. Williams.*

Margaret Williams, Editor-in-Chief, 1994-Present

Margaret Williams, founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Russian Conservation News*, has had a lifelong interest in nature, conservation, travel, and languages. Her current career has allowed her to pursue all of these passions. In addition to editing the journal, Margaret's primary job is managing World Wildlife Fund's Bering Sea Ecoregion Program. This job involves coordinating an international team of experts in wildlife biology, toxic pollution, fisheries policy, education, and communications. From 1993 to 1995, she lived in eastern Siberia, northwestern Karelia, and Moscow. Before joining WWF in 1997, she worked as a consultant to the World Bank on biodiversity projects in Russia and Central Asia. She graduated from Smith College and received a master's degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. For Margaret's reflections on *RCN*, please see her article, "The Beginnings and History of *Russian Conservation News*" on page 2.

Tatiana Pyatina, Editor, 1995

Working at *RCN* was very special for me. It was my first experience working with people of so many different backgrounds; it was my first experience working in written English; it was also the first time that I had an American boss. All these experiences were extremely valuable. The whole atmosphere was great: people were listened to and their opinions were respected, but the opinion of the journal was not lost. Russian news was put in a form that was understandable and interesting for an English-speaking reader and everything was charged with positive energy, which gave the wonderful feeling that everything was possible.

Something else was very special about that work too: it really gave me feeling that there are no borders for environmental issues, that we live on one planet, that we share it, that we are all responsible for it, and that our planet is not that big and it needs us to protect it.

Tatiana Pyatina. *Photo by G. Korchemskii.*

It was short but a happy time for me. I am very glad that the journal is still published now and that other people can have similar wonderful experiences as I did when I worked with *RCN*.

Note from the editors: *After working for* RCN*, Tatiana moved to the United States, where she earned her Ph.D. in Engineering at the California Institute of Technology. She currently resides with her family in France, while working as an engineer for an oil consulting company.*

Anya Menner, Managing Editor, 1995-1996

I began working as *RCN*'s managing editor in August 1995. It was a critical time in my life, as I had just decided to leave the field of geological science where I had been researching theoretical and experimental ideas. I had just returned from Canada and was hoping for work that would allow me to use my English on a regular basis. The editing job at *RCN* simply fell into my lap, completely by chance, as it were. But looking back, I can see that it was a job that fulfilled all of my inner wishes.

I joined the journal when it had just begun to be a bit more professional, with higher standards for articles, authors, subjects, and articles. So we were always having to improve our work, which forced us to grow creatively and professionally. I especially enjoyed the atmosphere in which each issue was planned: we would discuss a wide variety of possible topics with leaders of the nature protection movement, biologists, and ecologists. I liked learning about how various environmental NGOs operated. Their problems, struggles, concerns, challenges and goals provided ample food for thought. I liked interviewing people, allowing them to freely state their thoughts on some interesting issue; and then I would try to clothe that conversation in the form of an article. Sometimes it worked out well, sometimes not so well, and the article would have to undergo intense editing. The best part of the work was that it was a continual creative search in the company of people united by common ideas. I could have worked forever and ever.

The downside of the job was that the work would come in uncontrollable waves, and we never managed to get an issue out on time. We were always waiting for materials to arrive, which created stress and hindered our efforts to painstakingly check the articles for mistakes. It grieved me considerably.

It is with much gratitude that I recall my relationships with other people on staff—Margaret Williams, Mary Rees, and Stephanie Hitztaler. I also enjoyed working with the staff of the Biodiversity Conservation Center, who were always ready to help with their thoughts and actions.

Anya Menner. *Photo by N. Agaltseva.*

In late 1996, my second daughter was born. I tried to keep working, but after half a year, I understood that I was going to have to choose between being a good editor and being a good mother. June 1998 was my last month with *RCN*. The upcoming years proved to be difficult, as my husband became gravely ill and my aging mother required much of my attention. But I continue to find some of what I learned at *RCN* quite helpful in my life and work today. Working at *RCN*, I learned how better to converse with people, I was able to overcome some shyness and nervousness, and I learned to formulate my thoughts and express them in writing. These are all skills that help me in my present work, teaching by correspondence at a Bible school whose students cannot attend regular classes because they are elderly or in prison.

I always remember warmly everything connected to *RCN* and can say quite honestly that they were wonderful years of my life. I regret only that I worked for such a short time with the remarkable people that surrounded the journal. I want to wish all of them the best creative successes, joy at work, and peace at home.

Mary Rees, Editor, 1996-1998

Note from the editors: *Mary Rees was editor from 1996-1998. At the time, she was living in St. Petersburg, and traveled to Moscow frequently to work on the journal. Now living in California, she took time to speak to* RCN *about her experiences as the first American editor hired to work on the journal.*

RCN: *What was fun about working at RCN?*

MR: It was a good experience, working on *RCN* and with Russians who were in the protected areas, or with those who were in Moscow, working hard to establish protected areas. On one hand, people seemed pessimistic about the future but nevertheless continued to work hard on establishing new protected areas. They must have had a lot of optimism to do that!

It was fun working with Anya Menner, a hard-working and extremely dedicated editor, and with the staff at the Biodiversity Conservation Center in Moscow. I loved having the occasional chance to travel to remote places in Russia, get to know the staff of zapovedniks there, and write up a piece or two about their struggles and successes. I cherish those memories of stillness in the snow-clad Karelian taiga, and of schoolchildren singing their love of nature in "March for Parks" plays presented for Earth Day in Yoshkar-Ola (the capital of the Republic of Mari-El, where Bolshaya Kokshaga Zapovednik is located).

RCN: *What issues did you find most important and/or interesting in the conservation realm?*

MR: The issue that seemed most important in the years I was editing *RCN* was passing the laws – getting the resolutions and local and governmental support to put aside as much land as possible for protected areas. This was before any land privatization laws had been enacted, and many polluting factories were shutting down in the new economic conditions of supply and demand, so there was great optimism about establishing protection for those lands and the species they harbored. The Russians who were working on creating and defending protected areas worked with great energy and enthusiasm.

Looking back, another important issue was the gathering and computerizing of data from zapovedniks and national parks. During my tenure at *RCN*, a Man and the Biosphere project was underway to gather data about plant and animal species, including putting the paper versions of the annual scientific work (as part of the "Chronicles of Nature") into a computer database. The program was being coordinated by two professors from the US, who were helping scientists from the zapovedniks and parks to learn how to use it. Such efforts seemed very important, as they held the potential for allowing employees in far-flung regions to compare notes about the actual wealth and health of species.

RCN: *Are there any memorable people you'd like to recall?*

MR: I remember Sergei Ponomarenko, his wife Elena and their son Dmitry ("Mitya"). In March 1996, I accompanied them and a group of people to a zakaznik on the edge of Moscow. They had organized a "March for Parks" event to clean up the trash from this protected area. I enjoyed meeting Sergei and seeing his enthusiasm as well as the enthusiasm of the group he had pulled together. I also remember Svetlana and Aleksei Popov, who were in Bolshaya Kokshaga Zapovednik at the time I met them. Aleksei was the director, and Svetlana was editing the newspaper *Zapovedniy Vestnik* and was in charge of education in the nature reserve. She had put together a whole educational curriculum for young people.

When traveling south of Moscow to Pushchino, I met a biologist who worked with young people, taking children outside year-round to become involved in outdoor activities. In the summer, they learned to collect water samples for testing and in the winter, they went on cross-country ski trips. Another related, interesting issue I came across was a volunteer water sampling program involving children who did serious work, carefully recording data to be used by scientists. That was an exciting part of the times. Russians weren't used to volunteering, but here was such a program, with hands-on involvement, where the young people could actually make a difference.

Mary Rees. *Photo by B. Hill.*

RCN: *Did this work have any impact on your life?*

MR: It did. First of all it got me well-versed in the conservation issues in Russia. I came back to the US to work for Pacific Environment, organizing exchanges for Russians (mostly from environmental NGOs) coming to the US to see what kind of protective measures we have, and how we manage national parks near inhabited areas. After my time at *RCN* I was well-acquainted with the types of situations and problems Russian conservationists and environmentalists dealt with, and that helped me plan appropriate meetings for them with counterparts here. Whenever I need a bit of inspiration, I think of the Russians I know who were and are working so hard for the love of nature.

Editors' note: *For more information about the Man and the Biosphere project referenced in this text, please consult http://www.ice.ucdavis.edu/mab/, or contact Robert Meese, who coordinates the project at the University of California-Davis, by email at rjmeese@2ucdavis.edu.*

Stephanie Hitztaler, Assistant Editor, 1998-2000

It's hard to believe that five years have already passed since I edited the fifth anniversary edition of *RCN*! I began my stint as *RCN*'s assistant editor early in 1998. This time was one of transition for the journal, as it had recently become independent from its parent organization. My first months on the job were very challenging due to the relocation of our office, and the search for a new managing editor. It was also a particularly difficult period for Russia, especially after the August 1998 financial crisis.

Nonetheless, we tried our best to stay abreast of the evolving face of nature conservation in Russia and the Newly Independent States during hard times. This work would not have been possible without a dedicated team of people. Nikolai Maleshin, who took over the role of managing editor early in 1999, was an invaluable part of this team. Together we spent hours preparing—and sometimes agonizing over— pieces for publication. His enthusiasm for nature conservation and sense of humor were contagious and much appreciated. Moreover, thanks to his tireless efforts, *RCN* now has a great office located in proximity to several of Moscow's environmental organizations.

Besides working with Nikolai, I loved the opportunity I had to travel to zapovedniks and other protected areas where I could experience Russia's diverse natural world firsthand. More impressive than the nature I encountered, however, were the dedicated people working in these areas. It's difficult to pinpoint a favorite experience that I had at *RCN*, but my visit to Khasansky Nature Park in the southernmost tip of the Russian Far East, including an interview with the park's director, certainly stands out in my mind. The park's spectacular coastal landscape, and the director's tenacity to establish this protected area against all odds were both unforgettable. It was a delight to write about this unique green corner of Russia, and an honor to learn that the article, which appeared in the fifth anniversary issue, helped the director promote his mission to protect the park.

I left *RCN* in the summer of 2000 to begin graduate school. I believe that the work that I did at *RCN* gave me a distinct advantage in the application process and undoubtedly had a major influence on the school and program that I eventually chose: a joint Master's program with the School of Natural Resources and Environment and the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. This unique joint program gave me a wonderful opportunity to pursue my strong interests in both ecology and Russia. It pushed me to develop an original research project that integrated the skills I gained in ecosystem management with my enhanced understanding of Russian culture, history, language, and politics.

Beginning independent research in Russia would have been much too daunting without my prior experience at *RCN*, where I often communicated with specialists working throughout the vast country. In fact, one person whom I had "met" through an article turned out to be a key contact on the Kamchatka Peninsula where I undertook fieldwork during the summers of 2001 and 2002. This work served as the basis for my Master's thesis focusing on the relationship between forest resources and post-Soviet demographic change in central Kamchatka.

When the 2002 field season on Kamchatka drew to a close, it seemed that I had only begun to learn about this unique and stunning part of Russia. So I applied for a Fulbright student grant and have spent the last ten months on Kamchatka, concentrating on forestry related issues. Specifically, I undertook ethnobotanical research looking at the ecology, as well as the human uses of non-timber forest products (for instance, berries, mushrooms, and medicinal plants) in central Kamchatka. I plan to develop this study further in my Ph.D. work.

Stephanie Hitztaler. *Photo by J. Omninen*

I've been fortunate to visit Moscow several times en route to Kamchatka. (Believe it or not, it is significantly less expensive to reach Kamchatka flying through Moscow than through Alaska, although it is twice the distance!)

Amid the great change that has occurred in this city that I once called home, it's been wonderful to return to the familiarity of *RCN*'s office. Here I've reunited with old colleagues and have met the new faces whose commitment and hard work have taken the journal to new heights. *CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR 10th ANNIVERSARY,* RCN!

Nikolai Maleshin, Managing Editor, 1999-2004

You might say that there are two types of people in the world: those who try never to change their work, and those who change jobs as soon as they feel that they have learned all they can at their present work. I certainly fit better in the second category, having changed my profession several times in my life. The longest I ever worked in one place—nine years—was as the director of Tsentralno-Chernozemny Zapovednik in western Russia.

I have known Margaret Williams, the founder of *Russian Conservation News*, since 1992, and it was with her assistance that I volunteered for three months in the United States with Acadia National Park and The Nature Conservancy. Those three months changed my worldview significantly, and after I returned to Russia, I wrote a series of articles for *RCN* about Tsentralno-Chernozemny Zapovednik, its value for preserving biodiversity and the unique scientific research it has allowed for more than sixty years. Not long afterward, when *RCN*'s managing editor, Anya Menner, left the journal, Margaret Williams asked me to take her place.

After some wavering due to my doubts about leaving government service and the post of director, and about losing years of experience and contacts in order to work in the non-governmental sphere and for an American journal, I decided in favor of *RCN*. I have trouble remembering now all the details of that process, but I can say that my further work with the journal only confirmed my conviction that I had made the right choice.

Changing the nature of my work, my location, and finding a new circle of friends and colleagues all brought worries and joys, and offered food for thought. One of the first tasks was finding an office for the journal, which was then based in a private apartment on the edge of Moscow. This seemingly simple problem required the help of a Russian partner organization, but none of the existing organizations were able, for a variety of reasons. So I had to start a new organization, the non-profit "Partnership for Zapovedniks." The charter for this new organization was so successful and innovative that as a result many organizations that were just coming on the scene, such as the Association of Yenisei Zapovedniks and the Association of Protected Areas of Central Russia, used it as the basis for their founding documents.

The most important (and most difficult) challenge was positioning myself among nature protection organizations, from the federal to the local level, not only as the managing editor of *RCN*, but also as the director of a new NGO, the "Partnership for Zapovedniks." Only then would I be accepted as a partner and be privy to first-hand information; otherwise I would simply have been a journalist and unable to understand deeply the problems of nature protection, and would merely have distracted people from their work. To my great pleasure, I was able to solve this problem with the help of my wonderful friends Natalia Troitskaya, Mikhail Stishov, Vsevelod Stepanitsky, Natalia Moraleva, and Natalie Volkova. They were a support in my work and helped with contacts in the Ministry of Natural Resources, in zapovedniks and national parks, in various scientific institutes and universities, and in Russian and international NGOs.

Nikolai Maleshin. *Photo by A. Lotov.*

Another complication was working with the American editors of *RCN* in Moscow. As a rule, they weren't biologists or geographers, and translating articles often required broad knowledge of both fields, as well as the ability to read specialized maps. I did all I could to explain not only the scientific concepts, but also the mentality of people, the full meaning of words and expressions, and many other things that a person needs to know in order to live in Russia. I suppose that was my "cultural investment" in the work of the international *RCN* team. From the American editors, who were always young women (my friends always joked that I deliberately chose them that way) I received much help in learning and improving my English. Their lessons have helped me so much in my new work as vice-president of the Dersu Uzala Ecotourism Development Fund that whenever I use an English expression or proverb I remember exactly who first told it to me. And then their faces appear in my memory, smiling or thoughtful, but always beautiful and energized: Stephanie Hitztaler, Laura Trice, Lisa Woodson, and Melissa Mooza. I will never forget them and will always remember with gratitude the six years during which I had the opportunity to work side by side with them.

I had to learn a lot of new technical skills as well. I needed to learn how to rework photographs and drawings for print, and this meant having to familiarize myself with graphic programs previously unfamiliar to me. I also needed to learn how to edit and shorten very long texts and create effective and pithy photo captions. I learned how to maintain a database with the addresses of our Russian recipients, and using this database, I generated address labels for envelopes. And, of course, I also maintained regular correspondence with all our authors, and coaxed articles from them using all possible means. And what a challenge it was finding cover artwork for each issue! I was very fortunate to have been able to rely on the assistance of my dear friend and former colleague from Altaisky Zapovednik, Irina Filus, a senior scientist at the reserve. In addition to being a first rate scientist, Irina is also a very talented artist. Her drawings appeared on a number of issues while I worked for the journal, and I was very happy that we were able to share them with our readers.

Artist Irina Filus

Over the last several years, the original and expressive work of Irina Filus, an artist and scientist at Altaisky Zapovednik, graced six *RCN* covers. A wildlife biologist, Irina spent several seasons working on the moose farm in Pechoro-Ilychsky Zapovednik, where she gathered material for her dissertation on the comparative behavior of moose and Maral stag (Asian elk). She began working in Altaisky Zapovednik in 1979, first as a zoologist, and later, compiling collections for the reserve's museum. We have appreciated the opportunity to feature her beautiful work.

RCN cover artist Irina Filus. *Photo by O. Mitrofanov.*

Compiled using text prepared by Oleg Mitrofanov, Senior Scientist at Altaisky Zapovednik.

Note from the editors: *In February, we at* RCN *were extremely sorry to learn of Irina Filus' untimely passing.*

Six years ago, when I had just begun working at *RCN*, the layout and first printing of the journal were done in the United States. After a month or two, a CD with the layout files would reach Russia, and only then, when it was printed a second time—this time in Moscow—would the journal reach its readers in Russia and the former Soviet Union. It was a very complicated arrangement. We editors in Russia had no control over the appearance of the journal, and couldn't correct mistakes that had gone hitherto unnoticed. Moreover, the quality of printing in the United States and Russia were completely different. We made a concerted effort to have all publishing, including layout and printing, done in Russia, and made sure that the quality of printing was no lower than in the United States or anywhere else in the world. That's how the journal received a new face, and secretly, I'm rather proud of that.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of the sponsors, editors, analysts, authors, and friends, who have helped *RCN* over the past decade.

Altaisky Zapovednik, where *RCN* Managing Editor Nikolai Maleshin and frequent *RCN* cover artist Irina Filus met and worked together. *Photo by D. Laurens.*

Lisa Woodson, Editor, 2000-2002, Summers 2003 and 2004

Lisa Woodson.
Photo by B. Bisson.

When people learn that I work for a journal about nature protection in Russia, their inevitable reaction is first to look at me with disbelief, and then to mutter, "Must be a pretty depressing job." And on some days it is, when you watch protected areas marginalized, or when you can't get in touch with some remote corner of Russia to verify a few facts. If memory serves me correctly, I've tried to quit working at *RCN*, for various reasons, about three times in as many years, but something always draws me back to our office on 8th floor of 32 Nakhimovsky Prospect in Moscow. Even though I moved from Russia to Canada over two years ago, I've had the pleasure of returning to Russia each summer to work for *RCN* and its partner project, Wild Russia. The journal has become a sort of home-away-from-home for me. Over the years we've had many different people working at *RCN*—I've been privileged to know a handful—but I always find that our office is staffed with friends who, even though they may come from completely different cultures, nonetheless share a love of Russia's nature. We work together, drink tea together, travel together, and learn together.

But as much as I enjoy the cozy atmosphere of the Moscow office, some of my favorite memories of working at *RCN* involve visiting zapovedniks and national parks with my colleagues, Nikolai Maleshin and Laura Trice. Traveling in general was one of the best perks of working at *RCN*, because it was by visiting individual nature reserves that I actually began to make some sense of the scattered puzzle pieces I collected in Moscow. While editing articles in Moscow, I saw glimpses of these puzzle pieces—conflict between nature reserves and local populations, nature protection initiatives, particular endangered species and landscapes, colorful and influential individuals—but it was only by seeing these elements together in action that I began to develop composite picture of Russian nature protection. Each reserve has its own history, its own people, its own ideas of how nature should be protected both in Russia and throughout the world. And by meeting the people who have spent their lives in these wild areas, trying to make sure they remain so, as well as locals who may even be opposed to living next to a zapovednik, I began to understand the depth of layers of complexity involved in Russian nature protection. What has often struck me is the combination of passion and patience required for the complicated business of keeping nature protection initiatives afloat. So no, my job is not depressing, not for the most part, at least. It's a lesson in passion and patience.

Laura Trice, Assistant Editor, 2002-2003

Laura Trice.
Photo by V. Gorshunin.

When I was asked to comment on what I liked about working at *RCN*, I had a hard time formulating anything that sounded like an honest answer. Certainly there were many things I could have said, and which would have been true: experiencing the diversity of Russian wilderness, untangling the language of Russian science writing, drinking endless cups of tea with Nikolai {Maleshin, then *RCN*'s Managing Editor.}

But the overwhelming experience of working for *RCN* was, for me, one of frustration: frustration with the difficulty of communications over Russia's eleven time zones, with access to and quality of information, with the Ministry of Natural Resources, and so on. While I will never forget the beauty of Prielbrusye National Park, what has proven perhaps more valuable about visiting Russian national parks and zapovedniks is the firsthand experience of the near impossibility of the work they try to accomplish. It's not just the lack of funding, though that's a part of it. Rather, there seems to exist a web of social and political conditions that continually frustrates hard work and good intentions. The same is true everywhere, but the poverty of the Russian zapovednik system, its ever more centralized political structures, and the social and political disenfranchisement of so much of the Russian population all conspire to make nature conservation qualitatively more difficult in Russian than in the US or Western Europe.

I think it's easy to understand this theoretically, but without having experienced the material reality facing Russia's national parks, or NGOs, or anyone working for social change, it is far too easy to forget both the intransigence and the particularity of these frustrations. This kind of forgetfulness all too often renders Western aid ineffective in Russia and all over the globe, not least of all within the impoverished communities of the Western nations themselves. Any of us who hope to effect change anywhere cannot afford to forget the entrenched frustrations of the regions or communities in which we work. I'm counting on *RCN* to help me remember.

Melissa Mooza, Assistant Editor, 2003-Present

I think what I like most about my work with *RCN* is the view. From our small office in Moscow, a window opens up, it seems, on all of Russia. To wild, far away places where I have never been, and may likely never go; to more familiar haunts, which I see, as if for the first time, through the eyes of an author, or a photographer's camera lens. My colleagues here in the office, first Nikolai Maleshin, and now Natalya Troitskaya, have patiently helped me interpret much of what I have seen. Their knowledge of the natural world, of Russia's protected areas system, and of the country's conservation community has helped bring the vista into focus. I haven't traveled much for *RCN* and haven't visited many reserves, but every day some fascinating story or acquaintance offers a stolen glimpse into another time, or another way of life, or a world I'm only just beginning to understand. And for that opportunity, I am very grateful.

Melissa Mooza. *Photo by I. Trukhanova*

Natalya Troitskaya, Managing Editor, 2004-Present

Natalya Troitskaya. *Photo by M. Troitskaya.*

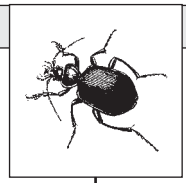
A good portion of my adult life I spent in Barguzinsky Zapovednik, on Lake Baikal, where I began working as a scientist after having received my degree in Biology from Gorky State University in 1982. It is with great fondness that I recall those splendid years I spent on botanical expeditions in the taiga and in the mountains of the Barguzinsky Range—one of the least easily accessible regions of Siberia.

In 1997, I returned with my family to Moscow, where I worked for several years as an official within Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources, organizing research and environmental education activities for Russia's federal zapovedniks and national parks. I feel fortunate to have had the colleagues and supervisors that I did; these were real professionals, enthusiasts, people very dedicated to their work. I also traveled much with that job, and in my time with the Ministry I visited more than sixty zapovedniks and national parks. All those trips were very helpful in smoothing out the transition from life in the field to life living in Moscow.

The half year or so that I have been working as an editor for *Russian Conservation News* has offered me yet another opportunity to view protected area affairs in Russia from a new perspective. And although it seemed that my previous experience would have prepared me for work with *RCN*, I am finding that there are still new challenges and new things to learn. But the work is interesting! I am very grateful to *RCN* for offering me new knowledge, new emotions, and new friends.

ABSTRACTS IN RUSSIAN

Аннотации статей, представленных в номере.



Раздел I. RCN. Взгляд на прошедшие десять лет.

«Создание и история Russian Conservation News». ***Маргарет Вильямс.*** Основатель и главный редактор журнала Маргарет Вильямс вспоминает о его создании осенью 1994 года, дает историю и краткий обзор публикаций за 10 лет. Маргарет рассказывает о своем личном опыте работы в России в Центре охраны дикой природы, знакомстве с молодыми энтузиастами охраны природы. Первым номером журнала стала подборка природоохранных материалов на английском языке для русской делегации, направлявшейся в Америку. Идея понравилась, прижилась и трансформировалась в настоящий журнал.

«Газета «Заповедный вестник». ***Светлана и Алексей Поповы.*** Редакция газеты «Заповедный вестник» поздравляет своего ровесника и коллегу – журнал «RCN» с юбилеем, вспоминает удачи и проблемы прошедшего десятилетия.

Древнее дерево и молодой росток. Размышления о проекте «Зеленая стена России». ***Сергей и Елена Пономаренко.*** Инициаторы проекта восстановления дубовых лесов Европейской части России вспоминают о своих планах, описанных в RCN в 1994 году. Идея проекта состояла в том, чтобы создать сеть особо охраняемых природных территорий, соединенных между собой экологическими коридорами, помогающими связать разрозненные участки ареалов различных видов флоры и фауны.

«Бизнес для природы». ***Арина Габа.*** Подводя итоги многолетней работы российского представительства WWF с бизнесом, автор с уверенностью утверждает, что такое сотрудничество взаимовыгодно и имеет большие перспективы.

«План, которому не суждено было реализоваться». ***Виктор Рогоцкий.*** В № 3 RCN была опубликована статья о планах постройки высокоскоростной железной дороги из Москвы в Петербург, трасса которой проходила через Валдайский национальный парк. После активной многолетней борьбы природоохранной общественности с этим антиэкологическим проектом, он был отменен.

Раздел II. Наши ровесники. Заповедники и национальные парки России, отмечающие свой десятилетний юбилей в 2004 году.

«Национальный парк «Югыд-ва». Самый большой национальный парк России имеет большие проблемы, связанные с интересами золотодобычи на его территории. Вместе с Печоро-Илычским заповедником они представляют первый в России объект Всемирного наследия.

«Ботчинский заповедник. Экологическое просвещение в стране амурских тигров». ***Ирина Дунайцева.*** Необыкновенное богатство и разнообразие дальневосточной природы сочетается в Ботчинском заповеднике с уникальными памятниками природы мирового значения. В течение 10 лет заповедник создавал систему экологического просвещения, которая в настоящее время становится весьма эффективной.

«Хвалынский национальный парк». ***В.Савинов и Л. Серова.*** Территория созданного 10 лет назад национального парка чрезвычайно мала и не включает многие уникальные природные участки, расположенные в непосредственной близости от его границ. Поэтому одной из важнейших задач парка является научное обоснование расширения его территории.

«Национальный парк «Орловское полесье». ***Иван и Наталья Мизины.*** В статье рассказывается о типичной для средней России и в то же время уникальной природе национального парка «Орловское полесье», о его истории, интересных программах и перспективах.

«Непроходимая урема». ***Игорь Воробьев.*** Молодость Воронинского заповедника, непонимание и неприятие частью населения его целей и задач, сложнейшая экономическая ситуация в регионе... Эти и многие другие проблемы создают чрезвычайно сложные условия для работы дирекции и сотрудников Воронинского заповедника. Тем не менее, за прошедшие десять лет коллективу заповедника удалось достигнуть определенных успехов.

«Заповедник Нургуш». Организован 10 лет назад на территории бывшего заказника, для реакклиматизации нескольких видов животных. Сейчас популяции этих животных настолько увеличились, что, например, медведи – частые гости в поселке.

«Полистовский и Рдейский заповедники». Эти два заповедника являются двумя половинками единого водно-болотного комплекса, одного из самых значительных в Европе. Известны многими ценными видами птиц, включая редких и исчезающих. Планируются к внесению в Рамсарский список.

Раздел III. Герои охраны природы России.

«Нина Литвинова. Жизненный путь одного из лучших директоров заповедной системы.» ***Дмитрий Бондарев.*** Девочка из далекой Ленкорани с детства мечтала стать орнитологом, и ее мечта осуществилась: в 1974 г. она с отличием окончила Ленинградский государственный университет. Вся жизнь ее связана с орнитологией, охраной природы и заповедным делом. Став в 1998 году директором Астраханского заповедника успешно доказывает всем, что фраза о том, что заповедники России являются национальным достоянием, не пустые слова, а констатация факта.

«Елена Шатковская. Северная звезда». ***Екатерина Липницкая.*** Русское северное чудо - так называют Кенозерье чужеземные гости и российские знатоки. Десять лет назад этот уголок реликтовой Руси стал заповедным. С первых дней национальный парк возглавляет Елена Флегонтовна Шатковская. И то, что удалось сделать ей за эти годы в заповедной глубинке, можно тоже считать чудом.

«Галина Седова. Гроза браконьеров». ***Василий Сутула.*** Галина – интересный человек, яркая, многосторонняя личность. По окончании Московского лесотехнического института уехала на Байкал и начала работать в службе охраны Байкальского заповедника. Здесь она прошла все ступени «рейнджерской» служебной лестницы и вот уже пятый год успешно возглавляет службу охраны заповедника.

«Страницы заповедной истории: знаменитое открытие в Кроноцком заповеднике». ***Интервью с Татьяной Устиновой.*** Геолог по образованию Татьяна Устинова начала работать в Кроноцком заповеднике на полуострове Камчатка со своим мужем в 1940 году. Одно из ее полевых обследований принесло открытие живописнейшей речной долины с многочисленными гейзерами, ставшей известной всему миру как «Долина гейзеров». В своем интервью Татьяна Устинова делится подробностями этого фантастического путешествия.

«История историографа». ***Интервью с Феликсом Штильмарком.*** Известный российский деятель охраны природы и заповедного дела, один из лучших знатоков их истории Феликс Штильмарк рассказывает о своей судьбе и работе. Это одно из последних интервью Феликса Робертовича и наша последняя встреча с этим замечательным человеком, которого больше нет с нами...

«Владимир Флинт. Воспоминания об известном российском деятеле охраны природы и великом ученом». ***В.М.Галушин, В.Г.Кривенко, Е.Н.Куровкин, А.Г.Сорокин.*** Воспоминания о Владимире Евгеньевиче Флинте, ушедшем из жизни прошлой весной. Флинт был талантливым орнитологом и одним из пионеров в деле охраны природы России. Более четверти века он работал над сохранением редких и исчезающих видов птиц. Одним из его больших достижений было создание в 1993 году Союза охраны птиц России.

Раздел IV. Приключения иностранцев в России и русских за рубежом.

«Судьба, которой я никак не ожидала». ***Лора Вильямс.*** Американка Лора Вильямс вспоминает о своей работе в сфере охраны природы в России, в создании российского представительства WWF. С 1997 года она работала в заповеднике «Брянский лес» директором экоцентра. Там она живет и работает и сейчас вместе со своим мужем – известным фотографом Игорем Шпиленком и сыновьями.

«О миграциях». ***Интервью с Еленой Смиренской.*** Родом из России, Елена многие годы живет в США и работает в Международном фонде журавлей. Елена со своим мужем Сергеем Смиренским являются основателями Муравьевского природного парка на Дальнем Востоке. Елена делится с RCN своими мыслями о пользе обмена опытом и необходимости сотрудничества между специалистами разных стран в области охраны природы.

«Журавлиный полет». ***Интервью с Джорджем Арчибальдом.*** Джордж Арчибальд – один из основателей Журавлиного фонда в штате Висконсин (США). С начала 70-х годов сотрудничает с российскими организациями в работах по сохранению обитающих в России журавлей. С юмором вспоминает о проблемах, возникавших во время его работы в России в период холодной войны.

«Обмен через границы». ***Интервью со Стивеном Колом.*** Один из руководителей Американской Службы управления ресурсами рыб и диких животных Стивен Кол рассказывает о российско-американском сотрудничестве в области особо охраняемых природных территорий в последнее десятилетие. Чем отличаются российские ООПТ от американских? Какой заповедник России самый красивый? Чем занимаются российские бюрократы? На эти и многие другие вопросы с большим знанием дела отвечает Стивен Кол, лично посетивший более 30 российских заповедников.

Раздел V. Правдивые истории всех редакторов RCN.

Маргарет Вильямс, Татьяна Пятина, Анна Меннер, Мэри Рис, Стефании Хицталер, Николай Малешин, Лиза Вудсон, Лора Трайс, Мелисса Муза, Наталья Троицкая рассказывают о себе и своей работе в RCN.

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