



Remembering Robert H. Horwich December 31, 1940- February 7, 2017

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It is with great sadness and heavy hearts that with this issue of the newsletter, we bear the sad news of the passing of Community Conservation founder and Director Dr. Robert H. Horwich. Rob passed away peacefully after a brief illness on February 7, 2017. Although we are devastated by this loss, we are committed to carrying on the important work of community-based conservation through the lens of Rob's legacy and lifetime of dedication to the cause.

Rob's significant legacy includes over 25 projects in 15 different countries, including a project he started in Cameroon before his death, which you can read about later in this newsletter. Through his work and mentorship, he demonstrated the success of his vision of conservation at the community level.

Rob's long career helping local people preserve habitat for primates began when he was a young researcher at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago. His research on primates brought him to Belize, where he realized that studying primates was not enough to satisfy him or to protect the animals. He approached the local community members and catalyzed community interest and action to protect forest habitat for the Black Howler Monkey,

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known colloquially as the baboon. This project grew into the community-managed Community Baboon Sanctuary, a process with Rob referred to as "conservation contagion". This project, which helped protect several hundred thousand hectares of forest, continues today and includes community co-management activities, student researchers, a well-developed ecotourism program that benefits the community, and a greatly increased number of Black Howler Monkeys.

In April, Rob posthumously received an award from the Crawford Community Fund, an organization that represents the local arm of the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin. As a recipient of the "Above and Beyond Award," Rob was recognized for demonstrating "out-of-the-box" thinking in terms of creative solutions to long-term problems. The award honored that in addition to Rob's impact internationally, he worked extensively with fellow Wisconsinites to protect land and water for wildlife and human communities.

What's Next for CC?

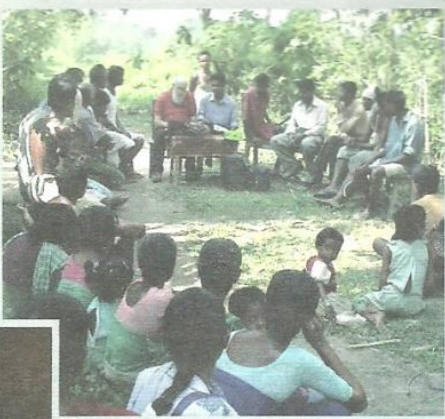
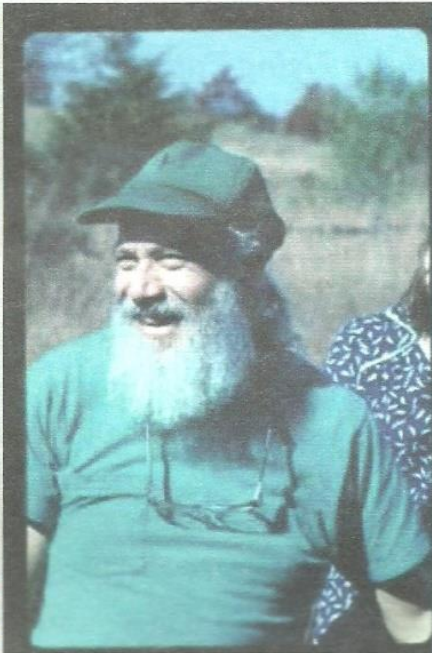
Rob's passing will have a significant effect on Community Conservation. Yet even as we grieve our loss, we are heartened, that Rob's vision was evolving from a founder-led to a more community-driven organization. He had been working along with the board for several years on preparing for this transition. One significant step was that in the last board meeting with Rob before he left for Cameroon, we decided to open a new office for Community Conservation in Gays Mills. The board has since hired an Interim Director, Dr. April Sansom, who has worked with Rob and Community Conservation for over a decade. We look to April for continued leadership as we move the organization forward in Rob's vision and our shared commitment to our mission. We look forward to keeping you informed and involved throughout our transition process. Come by for a visit to our new office and pick up a copy of *Mother Crane*.

***Your Work Has Touched So Many, Rob. You will be missed!!
Goodbye.***

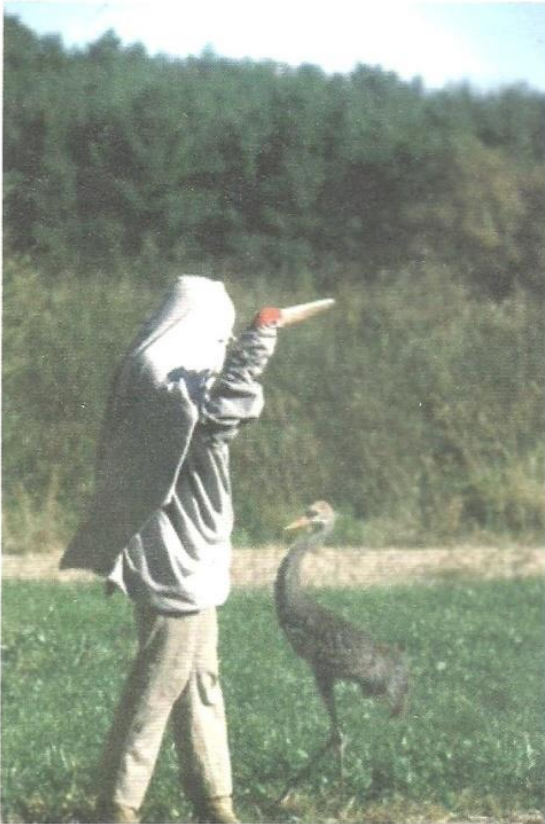


"Have you ever known how a simple action of yours influenced someone's life in a powerful way that in turn led to a chain of events and changes in that person's life? This is the power of individual action. We all have it. Some of us use it more than others. All of us need to use it more than we do."

Rob Horwich, Tales of Mother Crane and the Flying Puppet Show



Tales of Mother Crane and the Flying Puppet Show Published



Horwich & "Horwich", the first experimental costume-reared crane

Although Rob focused on community conservation issues over the past 21 years, his earlier research focused on infant development in a wide variety of birds, rodents, hoofed animals and primates, including humans. One of his main discoveries was that birds and mammals developed in a spiraled manner with infants moving away from their mother and then returning in a regressive fashion at specific ages. These regressive patterns allowed infants periods of security as they mentally digested all the new events that they were experiencing. While this regressive/spiraling concept was not easily accepted by scientists, human mothers always nodded and agreed when they heard about the spiral growth process.

While Rob never knew the concept would have practical value, he was given a chance to show that it would, when he worked in the 1980's with the International Crane Foundation on the problem of how to rear crane chicks raised in isolation from crane adults.

Infant birds and mammals learn their parents' characteristics early in life and how they generalize affinity to their own species seems to solidify during these regressive periods. This has importance when the infant reaches maturity and begins to think of choosing its mate and reproducing with its own species.

In precocial (well developed at hatching) birds, it is thought that species identification with the parents happens quickly so that the young birds may follow the parents out of the nest within the first few days. This is what noted Austrian ethologist Konrad Lorenz called "pragung", which means stamping in or imprinting. If a crane (or another bird or



Young Sandhill Crane orients most strongly to the puppet's moving bill tip

mammal) becomes imprinted on the wrong species, when it becomes an adult, it may orient to and court individuals of that species instead of its own.

Rob's study of regressive periods in cranes prompted Dr. George Archibald, co-founder and then Director of the International Crane Foundation, to ask Rob if he would develop a method of hand-rearing cranes so they would orient normally to other cranes. Rob adopted the crane puppet, which was already used to hand-rear cranes--but significantly added a costume that would alter the appearance of the human caretaker so the chicks would orient to the crane head puppet and not the attractive face of a human which was hidden. At the same time the crane chicks could also identify and interact and perhaps "imprint" on their siblings as they grew up together.



Wattled Crane puppet feeds young crane colts

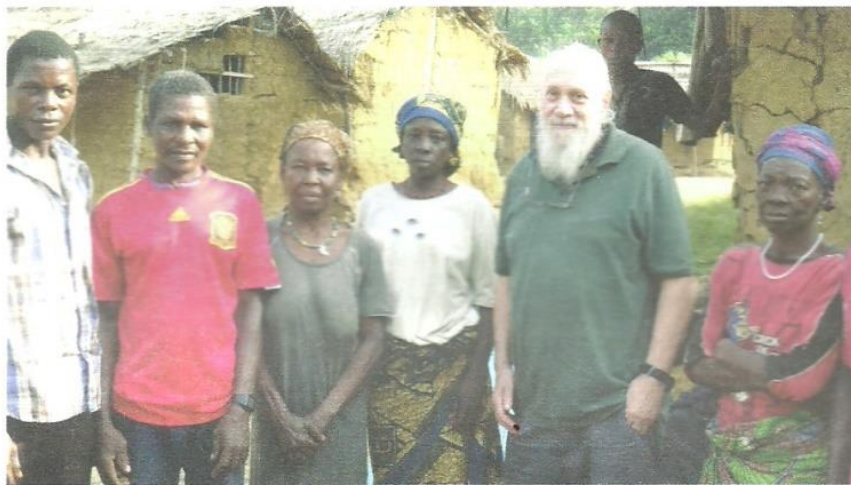
Tales of Mother Crane and the Flying Puppet Show is the story of Rob's ideas and experiences in fostering cranes, beginning with Rob's raising Sandhill Crane chicks as experimental models for more rare and endangered crane species. Once Rob's chicks joined the flocks of Sandhill Cranes migrating from Wisconsin to Florida and found their way back to their native Wisconsin place of hatching, the stage was set for others to use the successful method. Using Rob's method, projects were initiated with Whooping Cranes in the USA, Eurasian Cranes in England, Wattled Cranes in South Africa, and Siberian Cranes in Russia. His pioneering efforts offered much hope for the cranes of the world and the methods can be used in other species of birds and mammals.

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Thanks so much for considering!

CC Initiates Cameroon Project to Protect Cross River Gorillas

Rob's brief illness began in Cameroon, where he was doing what he loved best: catalyzing locally-based conservation. He was collaborating with Dr. Denis Ndeloh-Etiendem, Director of Great Ape Field Research at The Gorilla Foundation to reach out to villagers in the Cross River area and work closely with them to catalyze the creation of a community forest reserve. Rob's final overseas journey resulted in a successful initial phase of this project, with Rob and Denis having reached out to villagers who responded with enthusiasm about creating and managing such a reserve. Rob and Denis also worked closely with staff at the Resource Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (RCESD), including Executive Director Mbunya Francis Nkemnyi. Denis explained that the initial phase of the project produced encouraging results and a desire on the part of community members to move forward with creating a reserve. He also expounded upon his willingness to work together with Community Conservation and the local people to take the steps necessary for doing so.



Rob and community members in Cameroon, Dec 16, 2016

The overall goal for the on-going project in Cameroon is to involve Cross River communities in active community protection of the Cross River gorillas and their habitat.

The objectives of the Cameroon project are to:

- a) Initiate community-based conservation groups in the Cross River area, which Rob and Denis accomplished.
- b) Encourage community protection of corridors between areas of gorilla habitation.
- c) Carry out reforestation of corridors between areas of gorilla range sites where forest linkages exist but are tenuous.
- d) Initiate the creation of community reserves as corridors between gorilla populated forests.

The project activities which Rob and Denis initiated and are on-going, are to:

- a) Work together with community members to create a map of the potential forest reserve using GPS technology.
- b) Discuss the creation of community groups in selected areas and hold workshops to help create them.
- c) Assess and discuss with communities where corridors need to be protected and possibly replanted.
- d) Involve communities in creating tree nurseries and plantations in corridors between gorilla populations.



Dr. Denis Ndeloh-Etiendem, Director of Great Ape Field Research working with community members.

- e) Initiate meetings to discuss creating community reserves and meetings with the government staff of Cameroon about the possibility of creating community reserves. Begin the application process for official designation by the Cameroonian government of a Community Forest Reserve.



Staff of partner organization Resource Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (RCESD)

The next steps for this exciting new project are underway, thanks to our partners in Cameroon. And our long-

time associate from work in Peru, Noga Shanee (Neotropical Primate Conservation) is visiting aiming to develop further collaboration.

Gifts in memorial to Rob's memory and on-going projects in Cameroon and elsewhere can be sent to:

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