



For more information, contact:

Al Setka
Director of Communications
Great Ape Trust of Iowa
515.243.3580
515.720.7430 (mobile)
asetka@greatapetrust.org

Flood damage at Great Ape Trust will likely exceed \$1 million

Corps of Engineers analyzing contributing factors to record flooding

Des Moines, Iowa – August 27, 2008 – Flood damage earlier this summer to Great Ape Trust of Iowa’s 230-acre southeast Des Moines campus will likely exceed \$1 million, but the full financial impact of the record flooding may not be known for another year.

Great Ape Trust’s losses include damage to buildings and infrastructure, but also those related to business interruption issues, said Director of Operations Jim Aipperspach. Operations at Great Ape Trust’s campus have essentially returned to normal from a research standpoint, but the full extent of The Trust’s losses may not be known for some time. The Trust’s losses will be fully covered by insurance.

“This is a thoughtful, step-by-step process requiring a significant amount of due diligence and discipline, and it takes time,” Aipperspach said. “The entire financial impact of the flood may not be realized for a year or more.”

Officials at The Trust are eagerly awaiting the release of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hydrologic analysis of factors contributing to record flooding in June in the Lake Red Rock water storage area, of which Great Ape Trust is a part. The report could come as early as next month, said John Holt, Lake Red Rock’s assistant manager.

NEWS RELEASE

Officials at The Trust have speculated that the U.S. 65/Iowa 5 bypass around Des Moines, completed after the Floods of 1993, may have trapped and impeded the flow of floodwaters, but other factors, including reinforcement of levee systems upstream and the frequency and intensity of rains in both the Des Moines and Raccoon river basins, may have affected the flooding situation as well.

Other nearby properties that remained dry in the 1993 floods were under water this summer, including a Union Pacific Corp. railroad line west of Great Ape Trust, a MidAmerican Energy Co. substation at the corner of Southeast 44th Avenue and 45th Street, and agricultural land. U.S. 65/Iowa 5 was closed in both directions from U.S. 69 (East 14th Street) to Iowa 163 (University Avenue) for about a week in mid-June due to the rising Des Moines River.

“From what we observed during the flood, it looks like things have changed in the floodway, so we’ve asked hydrologic engineers from the Rock Island District office to take a good hard look at it so we’ll know what to be prepared for and what to expect,” Holt said. “Predicting the future is really what it amounts to.

“We’re being very aggressive about pursuing this analysis,” he continued. “A lot of people have interests in there, and I’m very optimistic about the speed of the attention this is getting.”

The least of those with interests is the Corps of Engineers itself, which owns and is under contract to maintain a levee system on the north side of the Des Moines River to protect a 540-megawatt power generating plant owned by MidAmerican Energy Co., a 2 million gallon petroleum pipeline owned by Magellan Midstream Partners, a city of Des Moines’ sewage treatment plant and a number of smaller customers in southeast Des Moines.

The levee held during the flood, but just barely, according to Holt. “There wasn’t much freeboard (the distance between the 1993 high-water mark and the top of the levee) left,” he said. “We are very interested in this analysis from that standpoint.”

Great Ape Trust is located on the south side of the river and is outside of the levee protection area, but stands to be greatly affected by the levee’s performance, according to Holt.

Some flooding was anticipated in 2003 when construction began at Great Ape

NEWS RELEASE

Trust, located on land donated by the city of Des Moines and MidAmerican Energy Co. Building pads for the orangutan and bonobo buildings were placed at an elevation of 786 feet, a foot above the highest water level recorded in the 1993 floods. This year, the river crested at an elevation of 790 feet, flooding both of the ape homes, as well as administrative buildings. At the same time, flood levels in downtown Des Moines, which was swamped in the 1993 floods, were lower than 15 years ago.

“The Corps of Engineers acknowledged that if we built above the 785-foot flood plain, it would reduce our risk significantly,” Aipperspach said. “Great Ape Trust took that into consideration, but during this flood, the ape buildings had almost four feet of water in them and the administrative buildings were submerged.”

Precautions were taken during the flood to maintain water levels inside the buildings at levels ensuring maximum stability. The orangutan and bonobo residents of Great Ape Trust moved to the upper levels of their homes and were never in danger. Their lives returned to normal within days of the flood’s crest, and most of the inconveniences were to humans.

Aipperspach said the hydrologic analysis will be important as he and other members of the Great Ape Trust’s management team determine the best design for an administrative building to replace four modular structures lost in the flood, as well as additional facilities for apes.

GREAT APE TRUST BACKGROUND

Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a scientific research facility in southeast Des Moines dedicated to understanding the origins and future of culture, language, tools and intelligence. When completed, Great Ape Trust will be the largest great ape facility in North America and one of the first worldwide to include all four types of great ape – bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans – for noninvasive interdisciplinary studies of their cognitive and communicative capabilities.

Great Ape Trust is dedicated to providing sanctuary and an honorable life for great apes, studying the intelligence of great apes, advancing conservation of great apes and providing unique educational experiences about great apes. Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization and is certified by the Association of

NEWS RELEASE

Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). To learn more about Great Ape Trust of Iowa, go to www.GreatApeTrust.org.

####

Insights Through Collaborations with Apes