



For more information, contact:

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

## Great Ape Trust cancels 2008 member tours as efforts focus on flood recovery

Des Moines, Iowa – June 26, 2008 – Great Ape Trust of Iowa is working its way back from record flooding and resuming normal operations in programs involving the orangutans and bonobos, but full recovery won't occur soon enough to resume member tours this year.

When the Des Moines River crested on June 13, the entire 230-acre campus was affected, and some parts of it were under 12 feet of water. Full recovery is expected, but it won't occur quickly enough to resume member tours this year, said Communications Director Al Setka.

Life has returned to normal for Great Ape Trust's resident orangutans and bonobos, who remained safe and dry throughout the ordeal, but the receding floodwaters have revealed significant damage to The Trust's infrastructure. The southeast Des Moines campus won't be ready for guests for weeks or months.

Members who had signed up for the now-canceled tours will be given priority in the 2009 tour season if their memberships are current, Setka said.

Refunds will not be made, as a membership did not guarantee a tour, given the limited availability of tour spots. More membership information is available at <https://members.greatapetrust.org/>.

# NEWS RELEASE

“Right now, support from our current members and new members is more important than ever before,” Setka said. “We appreciate their patience and understanding.”

Great Ape Trust evacuated its administrative offices on June 10 after a weak spot in an agricultural levee spilled floodwaters over Southeast 45<sup>th</sup> Street, which borders The Trust’s property on the east, and quickly flooded the campus. When Saylorville Reservoir, located several miles upstream, began releasing water from the emergency spillway on June 11, Great Ape Trust’s flooding worsened.

At the crest of the flood, all of the 230-acre campus was under water. Ape homes are now dry, but the receding floodwaters are revealing significant damage.

## ***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 Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). To learn more about Great Ape Trust of Iowa, go to [www.GreatApeTrust.org](http://www.GreatApeTrust.org).

####

Insights Through Collaborations with Apes