

KREMENETS-DISTRICT JEWISH CEMETERIES PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

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Phase I Tasks

1. Obtain official surveys of the Kremenets Jewish Cemetery.

Completed. We have an official survey of the Kremenets Cemetery, signed off by the Mayor. In addition, although not part of the Hanadiv grant work, we have completed formal surveys of the two Vishnevets Jewish Cemeteries, using a small grant from the ISJM .

2. Investigate possible farm encroachments into Kremenets Cemetery.

Preliminary investigation completed. It indicates no farm or other encroachments within the Kremenets cemetery walls. The situation is different in Vishnevets. Although the Vishnevets surveys were signed off by the Vishnevets Mayor, there are significant encroachments (a road and a garbage dump) in the historically important Old Vishnevets Cemetery.

3. Obtain erosion control and landscape plans for the Kremenets Cemetery.

Collection of all field data for this task was completed by our contractor, Professor Kucheryavyi and his team before winter snows stopped field work. Prof. Kucheryavyi and his team are analyzing the data now and will submit their full report before their contract deadline, 30 April 2007. That report will include a detailed landscape plan for the Cemetery.

See the "Deliverables" section of this Progress Report for additional information about the field work and subsequent analysis that Professor Kucheryavyi's team has done.

4. Photographically document the restorations.

Valery Rozenblit, a young Kremenets Jew, who is a professional photographer, photographed approximately 3,200 gravestones in the Kremenets Cemetery and about 700 in the Vishnevets cemeteries. In addition, he has sent me 57 photos showing Professor Kucheryavyi's team at work in the cemetery. He will continue to photographically document the field work as it is done.

5. Clear trash and inappropriate vegetation from the Cemetery.

As part of the initial field work, Professor Kucheryavyi and his team cleared brush and other excess vegetation and did some light tree trimming necessary to enable them to perform their preliminary field tasks. In this work, they were extremely careful to avoid disturbing any gravesites.

6. Remove unwanted larger trees; prune remaining trees ... according to the landscape plan.

This task will not be completed until the preliminary landscape plan is approved by project management. When we are ready to do this work, we will ensure that there is appropriate Halachic oversight.

7. Ensure all work is in accordance with Jewish law and custom.

We have not yet done any work requiring Halachic oversight. We will ensure appropriate Rabbinical oversight before beginning any work involving significant disturbance of the grounds.

8. In cooperation with town government, determine whether matzevot are under the paving of former Kremenets Gestapo HQ parking lots.

We walked the grounds with Mayor Kychatyi in September 2006. He promised to have a city crew investigate by tearing up small sections of the parking lot. That work has not yet been done. Alex Dunai is following up with the Mayor. If the investigation is not done by the time I visit in mid-April, I will ensure that it gets done while I am there.

9. In cooperation with town government, identify and survey the Vishnevets mass grave sites, and develop plan and cost estimate for appropriate boundary markers and memorial.

This Vishnevets task was not funded by Hanadiv and currently is not being done.

10. Obtain Halachic review of all work in Phase 1, before and after work is done, to ensure that all activities conform to Jewish Law.

Please see Task 7 above.

11. Obtain & evaluate cost estimates and bids for the work of Phases II and III.

Professor Kucheryavyi will provide some of these estimates as part of his Phase I work. We expect to have his preliminary estimates during the first week in March. In addition, we have contacted several non-Ukrainian experts to obtain cost estimates for various levels of gravestone rehabilitation work in Ukraine. We expect to have these estimates in hand by mid-March.

12. Begin activities to involve local Jews and local school children in the restoration project.

I met with a group of the local Jews in September 2006. They are ready and willing to work on the project when we embark on Phase II. We are beginning planning for a training program for them, for city workers, and for members of Professor Kucheryavyi's team to teach them proper procedures for gravestone rehabilitation. That training will be part of our Phase II proposals. In addition, during my April visit, I will meet with the High School Principal and will discuss involvement of local school children in the project.

Phase 1 Deliverables

We have completed photography of all available gravestones ... about 3,200 of them in the Kremenets Cemetery. All readable inscriptions have been translated into English. Data entry into an Excel spreadsheet and editing of the translations also are complete. Proofreading of the edited translations is about 25% complete. After proofreading, the translations and gravestone photos will be posted on JewishGen's website, the Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR).

In addition, local governmental contacts have been made and official endorsements obtained from both the Mayor and the Town Council. Discussions with the 20 member local Jewish community were held and their enthusiastic approval and endorsement of the project has been obtained.

Our grant application to Hanadiv specified the 11 "products" of the Phase I work. This work is being done by Professor Kucheryavyi and his team from the landscaping department of Lviv Polytechnic University. Our Agreement with Professor Kucheryavyi divides the Phase I work into two Stages, comprising 3 tasks. Please see the signed Agreement previously sent to you for a description of these tasks.

- Task 1 comprised the field work that was discussed above. Professor Kucheryavyi's team has completed this field work and currently is analyzing the results. This is what he wrote about Stage 1 work.

- "a) In order to find and mark all the tombstones there were removed bushes and tall grass on the territory of the whole cemetery.
- b) There was done complete identifying and inventory of trees.
- c) There were selectively cut trees that were obstacles for counting and making inventory of tombstones.
- d) We have collected samples of soil from all the parts of the cemetery that are involved in erosion processes."

He has submitted a preliminary report on the number of gravestones in the cemetery and their condition. This is what he found:

1. Total number of identified burials: 8,305
2. Those in decent shape: 1,648
3. 2,390 are slanted. About half of these can be re-set a bit easier than the others.
4. 1,737 are broken. More than half of them can be repaired.
5. 1,155 are on the ground. More than half of them can be re-set vertically.
6. Those matsevot that are partially buried include:
 - about 80% covered with ground - 189
 - about 90% covered with ground - 74
 - about 95% covered with ground - 168
 - 233 completely (100%) covered with ground and can be identified by little hill over the ground or something similar
7. Number of gravestone bases without the vertical head stone - 1,115

- They now are working on Task 2 of Stage 1, which includes soil analysis and production of the detailed map and report. The map and report will identify the location and condition of each gravestone and gravestone fragment, and of the wall. It also will identify significant vegetation. Deadline for completion of Task 2 is 30 April. Stage 2 (Task 3 of the Agreement) includes preparation of the landscape plan and a cost estimate for implementation of the plan. Deadline for completion of Stage 2 is 30 June. Kucheryavyi and his team are interested in bidding on the implementation work (Phase II) ... which will require additional and fairly substantial grants and donations. Despite these April and June deadlines, Professor Kucheryavyi has provided us with a preliminary report (see above). He also will provide preliminary cost information in the first week of March, so that we will have a basis for estimating costs for the grant applications we will be submitting for Phase II funding (see below, "Next Steps").

Next Steps

I will return to Kremenets in mid-April, just before the Task 2 work is completed. At that time I will ensure that the product of Task 2 is what we need and I will do whatever followup is necessary to get the remainder of Phase 1 completed.

We are preparing three grant applications to obtain funding for Phase II of the project. Phase II involves actual rehabilitation of the Cemetery, including training for gravestone rehabilitation; cleaning, repairing and resetting gravestones; landscaping; erosion control; and repair of the boundary wall. Other tasks are as described in our original grant application. To ensure that gravestone rehabilitation work is done properly, we have made contact with several experts who have done similar work in Ukraine. Some of this work involves training local people in proper restoration techniques. Through these contacts we hope to develop a program to train some of the local Jewish population, some workers from the City, and people from Professor Kucheryavyi's team. Trained and certified workers then would be employed on Phase II rehabilitation work in the cemetery. Funding for this training will be included in the grant applications we currently are preparing.