

bus ride; it will provide two-dozen fruit tree saplings to local farmers for their orchards.

Later that afternoon, we hiked with QLF alumus Mirek Janik of the NGO *Kosenka*, with which QLF has worked on many collaborative projects over the years. Mirek showed us some of the upland meadows where *Kosenka* helps to maintain the traditional haying practices important to the diversity of orchids and other plants. Although it was too early in the season to see orchids, we could see across the valley to a rock outcropping called *Cerveny Kamen*, “red rock,” which towers over the Slovak village by the same name. Over the years QLF has hosted Fellows from that part of Slovakia and held local workshops there, just as we have done on the Czech side of the border. Taking in the view across the valley with so many partners from different countries was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the trans-boundary nature of QLF’s work in Central Europe and beyond.



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We spent the evening in the market town of Valasske Klobouky, visiting the traditional wooden cottage where *Kosenka* has its headquarters and enjoying a short concert by local youth. Our friends at *Kosenka* hosted the group for dinner in the town hall, where we feasted on a home-made potato-cabbage soup that is a specialty of the



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Greg Cranna

Appy

Wallachian region and lots of traditional *kolaci* (cakes) made with local fruit and poppy seeds. Back at our hotel up in the mountains, QLF Senior Vice President Tom Horn led us in a star-gazing outing, helping us to see the constellations from a different vantage point.

On the third morning we set off for Prague, stopping on the way at a Nature Park in Slavonice, which was created by the Jan Pivecka Foundation. Once in Prague, the group toured the upper grounds of the Prague Castle, and marveled at the dramatic view of Prague below the castle hill.

A Closing Reception and Dinner of the Post-Congress Tour was held at the U.S. Embassy Residence in Prague and hosted by the U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic William Cabaniss and Mrs. Cabaniss. The evening was a capstone to the QLF tour in the Czech Republic. At the reception were the post-Congress tour participants, QLF alumni from the Czech Republic, representatives of Czech conservation NGOs and government agencies, and U.S. Embassy staff. Ambassador Cabaniss spoke of the QLF mission statement and how the notion of sharing of the model is evident in the work of QLF in helping to initiate over 40 land trusts in the Czech Republic. The Ambassador welcomed us warmly in his opening speech and expressed his support for QLF’s work before turning the podium over to Beth Alling and me to say a few words to the assembled guests. Beth responded in-kind, presenting the Ambassador and Mrs. Cabaniss with QLF pins representing a lasting friendship with the Quebec-Labrador Foundation.

It was a great pleasure for all of us to spend an evening at the Residence, which is rich in history. During the reception, guests also had an opportunity to view an art exhibit arranged by Mrs. Cabaniss through the Art in the Embassies Program. Coincidentally, the exhibit on display included two paintings by Fay Chandler, college friend of Mrs.



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Appy

Cabaniss and mother of Appy Chandler who was attending the Post-Congress Tour.

Next Lada Ptacek and Blazana Huskova took the microphone, reading a letter about what their partnership with QLF has meant to them over the years. Recounting our first meeting at a workshop in the winter of 1995, in the mountains of Moravia, Blazana recalled loaning me a pair of cross-country ski boots, which were the right size, but just a little tight: “So, very early in our cooperation we both realized that

American foot not always fits in Czech boot. The match is nearly perfect, though, and a little band aid here and there does the trick.” Her anecdote captured the understanding behind the trans-Atlantic partnerships that we have built with our Central European colleagues over the years.

Our evening ended with a walking tour in Prague’s Old Town Square. And thus our tour came to a close, ending three very full days in the Czech Republic.

During the tour, our Czech hosts took advantage of the opportunity to exchange ideas with so many QLF alumni and partners. This exchange was a rich part of the



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Greg Cranna



Greg Cramma

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tour, and seemed to be something that both our visitors enjoyed. For me, personally, it was a rare pleasure to be able to share our work in the Czech Republic, and some of its very special landscapes with such an engaged, interested, and open-minded group. A special benefit of the tour was that we were able to contribute a portion of the proceeds to *Nadace Partnestvii* (Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation) in support of its Land Stewardship and Greenways Programs. And we were glad to know that the fruit tree saplings we had donated to



Greg Cramma

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## Communism – The Velvet Revolution – The Velvet Divorce

A brief note on recent history is quite dramatic and this is the backdrop of QLF's first work on the Czech Republic in 1992 not long after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.

In the 1946 elections the Communist party of Czechoslovakia became the republic's dominant party with 36% of the popular vote, and formed a coalition government with other socialist parties. Tension grew between democrats and communists, and in February 1948 the communists staged a coup d'Etat with the backing of the Soviet Union. A new constitution established the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's dominance, and government was organized along Soviet lines.

Thousands of non-communists fled the country. The 1950s were an era of harsh repression and decline as communist economic policies nearly bankrupted the country.

### The Velvet Revolution

The Communist regime remained in control until the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. On 17 November Prague's Communist youth organized an officially sanctioned demonstration in memory of nine students who were executed by the Nazis in 1939. But the peaceful crowds of 50,000 were concerned in Nardni triad, where hundreds were beaten by police.

In the days that followed, there were demonstrations by students, artists, and much of the population peaking at a rally of 750,000. Leading dissidents with Havel at the forefront an anti-government coalition, which negotiated the government's resignation on 3 December. A Government of National Understanding was formed with the Communists as a minority group. Havel was elected President of the Republic by the federal assembly on 29 December.

The days following the 17 November demonstration have become known as the Velvet Revolution.

### The Velvet Divorce

Free elections to the federal assembly in 1990 were won by Civic Forum and its Slovak counterpart, People Against Violence. But the Civic Forum soon split over economic policy. Meanwhile separatists headed by Vladimir Meciar won the 1992 elections in Slovakia. The two very different economic positions of Meciar and Klaus made compromise almost impossible, and both leaders decided that splitting the country was the best solution. Hence the Velvet Divorce occurred on the 1 December 1993 and Havel was elected as its first President.

Under Communist rule for 40 years, it was not until 1989, Prague was freed by the Velvet Revolution. Vaclav Havel's 13 years as President came to an end on February 2003 when his place was taken by economist Vaclav Klaus. More change was to follow with a decision on whether the Czech Republic should join the European Union. The decision was settled by a referendum — with 77% in favor — and on 1 May 2004, the Czech Republic became a member of the European Union.

*Tradice Bilych Karpaty* would soon be gracing the landscape of the White Carpathian Mountains. All of those on the tour took with them the vivid memories of a beautiful landscape and the inspiring work of Czech organizations noted for their work in land stewardship.

The Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment wishes to express our thanks to U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic William Cabaniss and Mrs. Cabaniss for joining us for much of the Post-

*Since 1989 and the "Velvet Revolution," Czech environmental agencies have raised the awareness of the Czech people as to the importance of preserving their environment. As a result of this awareness the Czechs have made great strides toward cleaner water and air. I congratulate them on their progress to date.*

WILLIAM CABANISS  
FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC  
JANUARY 2007



Greg Cramma

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Greg Cramma

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Congress tour. Recognizing the great demands on their schedule, we are fortunate and honored to have had Ambassador Cabaniss and Mrs. Cabaniss as our guests.

We also wish to extend our thanks and gratitude to Ambassador Cabaniss and Mrs. Cabaniss for welcoming QLF and our extended family and U.S. Embassy staff to the Embassy Residence for the Closing Reception. It would be difficult to find a more appropriate conclusion to the post-Congress tour than what the Ambassador and Mrs. Cabaniss gave to QLF.

With heartfelt thanks to you,  
Ambassador Cabaniss and Mrs. Cabaniss –  
The QLF Community

## PRAGUE

The Czechs call it *maticka Praha* — "little mother Prague" — their national capital, the cradle of Czech culture, and one of the most beautiful and fascinating cities in Europe.

In its time, Prague has been the capital of the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg Empire, the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938), the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the Communist Republic of Czechoslovakia, and the modern, democratic Czech Republic.

Prague is described as a "living textbook of 1,000 years of European architecture." The city's historic core is unparalleled in Europe, having escaped damage in WWII and avoided large-scale redevelopment. The city's architecture styles reflect that which is Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Czech National revival and Art Nouveau, Cubist, Modernist, and Post-1989.

## Testimonials

*What an overwhelmingly wonderful conference. Needless to say, I'd never been at one like it and feel privileged to have been invited to be part of your 50th celebration. I really enjoyed talking to everyone I met and am sorry I didn't meet everyone! Back in New York, I began reading the paper, depressing news from countries all over the world, but when I thought of the people I'd met at the Congress from these countries, it gave me hope that in a small way we really could all make a difference and make things better. Qusay Ahmad (Jordan) put it very well. I am still dreaming about the conference and still waking up at 2:00 am—makes for a good stay of the day! Thank you both for all your hard work and congratulations on your success at making your 50th a landmark meeting!*

Helen Hays  
American Museum of Natural History, New York  
Grantee, QLF's Sounds Conservancy Program  
U.S.

*Emails have been flooding in to us regarding the extraordinary success of the first international Congress. I cannot find words that adequately express my admiration and respect for all you accomplished. Your tireless work, unbelievable commitment and continual enthusiasm was something to behold. With love and admiration, Bert*

George H. Walker  
U.S. Ambassador to Hungary  
Budapest, Hungary

*It was a privilege to be in Hungary with you and all your associates. It was both stimulating and inspiring to connect with such a diverse group of passionate and caring people. I felt very optimistic about QLF and its mission and also about our global environmental movement. There is hope—or has to be with so many talented and caring people at work. Third, I was touched and honored to be recognized by you and QLF for the very small part I have played in the process.*

Jameson S. French  
President and CEO  
Northland Forest Products, Inc.  
QLF Board of Trustees (U.S.)  
U.S.

*Thank you so much for the exceptional few days we spent together, it was really wonderful. It was wonderful knowing that there is so much potential, hoping we could all do something together for the benefit of nature individually in our different parts of the world or possibly together. It was great knowing the real strength of QLF and makes us even prouder to be a part of the super 'undercover' team that made this exceptional Congress happen so successfully, paving the way for all of us through a new dimension of a new vision. In short, I came home loaded with memories of great people and energy for working in my area for the environment.*

Sarkis Khawaja  
Association Libanaise pour Patrimoine et le Développement  
Lebanon

*Quite simply, that was the BEST conference I have ever attended. And I have been to a LOT of conferences in my time! Together we wove an exquisite tapestry filled with threads of many textures and colors. Who know what will be possible as a result? How exciting and how challenging! To the many people I talked with, it was an honor to meet you. Alas, there was just not enough time to meet everyone, so I will look forward to the next Congress! Somehow I knew it was important to be there at this inaugural event, when details and synergy were untested, genuine, inclusive, non-bureaucratic, and, in essence, most pure. Yet masterfully designed! Now you know what works well and not as well. But I, for one, loved the mix of scripted and spontaneous interactions. I am proud to have been a part of this AMAZING experience. Until next time... Cheers, and please keep up your wonderful work.*

Alix W. Hopkins  
Environmental Consultant, Author  
U.S.

*Thanks a lot for a wonderful time in Budapest. It was a great pleasure to meet all of you. I hope it was the first meeting from, I do not know, hundreds that will be in the future. And NEVER GIVE UP! I forward my thanks especially to QLF staff that made it possible for us to meet.*

Ewa Kozłowska  
Project Coordinator  
The North Podlasie Society for Bird Protection  
Poland

*The pleasure is mine and I cannot express enough the honour I felt in getting an opportunity to share with everyone an overview of my work in southern Belize. The thanks go to you guys at QLF for organizing such a magnificent and educational event. Please convey my heartfelt gratitude to Larry for bringing this huge conservation family together. And to those who were in our workshop, thanks for the renewed energy and the experiences you shared. I came back reinvigorated and will certainly never give up.*

Bartolo Teul  
Ya'axche Conservation Trust  
Belize

*The Congress period passed swiftly without noticing that it has come to an end. We left overwhelmed with emotions, those of happiness for achieving what we came for and others of sadness for the short-lived good times when we had to bid farewell to everyone. I believe now that QLF is an organization with a future mandate and everybody in the Congress is part of this future. My best wishes for the success of QLF and all the members within the net of QLF.*

Qusay Ahmad  
Managing Director  
Via Nova Group  
Jordan

*It was a great conference, very well organized and such a great crowd. I was in many conferences, but people at this one seemed to be the most open minded and friendly.*

Laszlo Potocky  
Director, Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation  
Romania

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Greig Cranna

*And, finally, we extend our gratitude to a special friend of QLF,  
 U.S. Ambassador to Hungary George H. Walker.*

*Ambassador Walker,  
 we could not have done the Congress without you.*

*– With heartfelt thanks from the QLF Community*

# Special Thanks

FIRST ANNOUNCED AT THE QLF BOARD MEETING IN MAY 2005, the *Alumni Congress* was just a promise. In the months that followed our fundraising strategy and efforts set forth at an accelerated pace. The planning and logistics began in January 2006. In two



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months time, the largest and most ambitious QLF program set forth.

On the cusp of our 50th, we believed that it is time to take a bold step forward to acknowledge the past, celebrate the present, and affirm the mission of the organization and its relevance for the future of the organization; and our relevance in a global community. We took a risk and believed this was the right time. Indeed it was. None of this was possible with support from our



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Board, staff, and friends.

The *Congress* is described by many as a milestone event; a watershed event. The *Congress* celebrated the vision of QLF Founder The Ven. Robert A. Bryan who has spent nearly fifty years flying to the Coast (the Quebec North Shore). The *Congress* celebrated the transformation of an organization that has grown in ways Bob Bryan has told us, "could not be imagined."

There are many who are to be acknowledged for their efforts. We wish to thank the U.S. Ambassador to Hungary, George H. Walker for his commitment to the *Congress*, his genuine enthusiasm from the start, and his willingness to host the *Congress*. Without Ambassador Walker and his capable, and dedicated staff, the *Congress* would not have been possible. In particular, we wish to acknowledge Karyn Posner-Mullen and Anett Zellei for their commitment to the visioning and planning of the *Congress*. And we are deeply grateful to Ambassador Walker and to Mrs. Walker for extending their gracious hospitality to all *Congress* participants to a Closing Reception in Budapest, the final night of the *Congress*.

There are many in Hungary we wish to acknowledge including the Keynote Speaker for the Welcoming Reception and Dinner Mikos



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Persanyi and Ambassador Andras Gulyas, Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Office of the President of Hungary.

We are deeply grateful to the U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic William Cabaniss and Mrs. Cabaniss who kindly hosted QLF alumni, partner organizations, staff, and friends at the Closing Reception at the Embassy Residence in Prague, Czech Republic. Thank you for hosting QLF on a number of visits to Prague and for the



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time you have devoted to QLF alumni and their important work in conservation in a country you know so well.

We wish to thank Obie Clifford for his key leadership role with QLF and for believing in the *Congress* and providing inspiration to all of us. We wish to extend our thanks to the QLF Board of Trustees and for all QLF Trustees, Directors, Members of the Corporation for their important participation in the *Congress*. We will not forget your efforts.

As evidenced at the *Congress*, our alumni, partner organizations, and friends are grateful for their friendship with QLF President Larry Morris. As a staff, we wish to acknowledge Larry Morris, his vision for the *Congress* and his commitment to take a leap of faith the future of QLF, dedication and commitment to the First QLF Alumni *Congress*, and to QLF.

And, to the QLF staff — thank you, each one of you, for your efforts in leading Stewardship Workshop streams and for hours of work in preparation for the *Congress*.

We would like to extend our deep gratitude to Jessica Brown and Brent



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Mitchell for leading and directing the Stewardship Workshop. The great success of the workshop — the most important part of the *Congress* — can be attributed to your commitment to alumni and partner organizations, your commitment to QLF and vision for a better world and a civil society. We applaud your fine efforts for QLF and for conservation and stewardship that is recognized internationally.

And finally, we wish to thank and acknowledge our *Congress* team for an exception job and collectively they are instrumental in the organization of the *Congress*. Thank you, Stephanie Tuxill, Myles Lawler, Kate Cook, and Julia Judson-Rea.

The magnitude of the event was significant. There were inevitable language barriers and other complications in the planning of such a gathering six time zones away. Flights were cancelled leaving our Interns stranded for nearly a day in Germany with 17 boxes of *Congress* publications that were assembled late in the evening in time for the registration to open the following morning.

We moved 170 people around the country carting and organizing three tons of luggage out of Budapest to a national park in the northeast and back to Budapest.

Our return to Budapest was complicated as the city experienced the worst flooding in 150 years in Hungary. The major roads bordering the Danube were closed and bridges were temporarily shut down. Even with the floods and the associated complications of what we could not control, *Congress* participants maintained a wonderful spirit throughout the entire gathering.

The heart and soul of QLF is its Internship Program. The *Congress* Interns are an intelligent and motivated group. They recognized this task represented an unusual opportunity. Each naturally fell in stride and worked to their strengths. They worked together as



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a team — they were supportive of each other, honest

with each other, and shared a wonderful sense of humor that sustained them under duress.

The light burns bright and now is time to capture that energy in a series of Post-*Congress* initiatives and programs that keep us engaged and connected here and there — not only in our home region but between all the regions in which we work.

Beth Alling  
On behalf of QLF

# QLF: The People

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