



# GLN

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Feature Stories of the Alumni of the Quebec-Labrador Foundation

## Alix W. Hopkins

Author, Communications and Community Conservation Consultant, Pownal, Maine

Council, Quebec-Labrador Foundation

Community Service, Labrador, 1972

Central Europe Professional Exchange, Czech Republic, 2000

QLF Alumni Congress, Hungary, 2006

Middle East Exchange Program, 2007–2010

Middle East Program Regional Meeting, Oman, 2012

*Much of Alix Hopkin's career as an environmentalist who specializes in communications and community conservation has been influenced by her work with QLF. Likewise, much of QLF's International Conservation Exchange Programs, and in particular, the Middle East Conservation Exchange Program, has been influenced by Alix. She is invaluable to the QLF community of Alumni and friends.*

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Alix first joined QLF in 1972 as an Intern working in Community Service in L'Anse au Clair, Labrador for two summer months. Alix describes being dropped off in a remote, rural community in southern Labrador where she received only the most basic instruction for the internship coupled with advice to be resourceful. As in many Internships, the experience as a "Come From Away" requires resourcefulness, humility, and a deep respect for culture, community, and conservation. "The Internship was pivotal and clearly changed the direction of my life's work. People responded to our collaborative approach and to our respect for the landscape and the culture of the place." And in retrospect, the Internship experience and others with QLF and then some, have been formative in her life and career, pushing her to explore unfamiliar terrain and reach new heights.

In recent years, Alix has worked in a variety of conservation roles. In the early 1990s, she was the first full-time director of an urban land trust in Maine called Portland Trails—her first foray into urban conservation. Ultimately, Alix discovered that trails act as a common denominator that bring together a variety of people including city government officials; environmental, social and arts non-profit organizations; schools; and other land trusts. This made Portland



Alix Hopkins, Middle East Program Field Site Visit, Pyramids of Giza, Egypt, 2007 -

Trails, at its core, a community conservation project. There, Alix learned her métier as a collaborative leader. In 2005, Alix published her first book, *Groundswell: Stories of Saving Places, Finding Community*, a collection of stories about conservation projects from around the U.S. aimed to inspire and nurture seeds of community across the country.

Alix's work as an environmentalist has transitioned into more of an advising and consulting role. Additionally, she is a board member for many conservation organizations. She has worked in these capacities with, for example, the Biddeford RiverWalk Coalition, Forest Society of Maine, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and Alix serves on the QLF Council, an Advisory Board. In addition, she continues to write and work with

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID MENTION



The Point Amour Lighthouse, L'Anse Amour, Labrador, near the site of Alix Hopkins' summer Internship. The lighthouse was established in 1897. At 109 feet, it is the second highest light tower in Canada.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA



communities to raise public and political awareness of local projects and issues.

Years after her first QLF experience, in 2000 Alix participated in a QLF professional exchange to the Czech Republic. There, she realized that conservation work was global, and this encouraged her to apply her conservation skills in a local context worldwide. The motivation to do conservation work overseas was reinforced again at QLF's 2006 *Alumni Congress*. Alix describes her participation in the *Congress* as exceedingly memorable, as it allowed her the opportunity to unite with 200 "like spirits" from all over the world, and engage in a regular stream of fascinating conversations.

From 2007 to 2010, Alix worked as the Facilitator for QLF's Middle East Conservation Exchange Program. She considers her work on the program to be among "the most expansive and extraordinary experiences" of her life. She writes, "*Nothing* has moved me as have these two Exchanges in the Middle East. I am not yet sure how, but I know I have changed again. And I am searching for ways to translate this knowledge meaningfully. The stories we heard are universal. The challenges we encountered transcend national and international boundaries. And in the end, the more of us out there, the more we can convince others to find ways of working together."

Inspired by these Fellowships, Alix is writing a book of stories about Middle East conservation leaders committed to consensus building, community collaboration and cross-border



PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

Alix Hopkins, QLF *Alumni Congress*, Kiskunság National Park, Hungary, 2006 -

conservation. Alix also highlights stories of cooperation between Arab, Jewish and Christian peoples towards a common purpose. She has visited the Middle East numerous times, traveling to Lebanon, Egypt, Israel, Oman, Jordan, and the West Bank for interviews and research. "The people and their projects have become quiet but powerful peace-building tools. And you would never have imagined, with all of the conflicts that people face in the region, that they would have the time or the inclination to undertake these meaningful projects."

Regularly throughout her career, QLF has appeared at just the right time to offer Alix support and encouragement.



PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

Conclusion of Tree Planting Ceremony, QLF *Alumni Congress* Landscape Stewardship tour, Kiskunság National Park, Hungary, 2006 -



It has had a great influence on on her professional and personal evolution. Her first QLF Internship provided the framework for all of her future work, introducing her to conservation and community work—truly a formative experience. Over time, Alix became passionate about community-based conservation as she came to see how these projects benefit rural and urban communities, and make a difference in our lives. Alix describes this work as a “win-win.”

Reflecting on her career, Alix explains, “I have never had a ‘vision for my career.’ It has simply evolved.” Alix seized opportunities as they arose, and said ‘yes’ to daunting work if the work seemed compelling or exciting. She describes her career path as more holistic than calculated. The ability to jump headfirst into new work was prompted, in part, by her Internship with QLF in the summer of 1972.

Alix recalls how, by trying new things and working in partnership with inspiring people and organizations, “I really found my voice. And I found my life’s work and my heart’s work.” All of the stories and moments from her career have contributed to how she has grown. Looking forward to the next phase of her life, Alix maintains the unbound attitude that has served her so well up to this point, declaring, “I have no idea where I am going from here!” ☺



On Medieval European maps Jerusalem was placed at the center of the world. Three faiths of one God, each looking to the same first prophet, Abraham, converge in this ancient city. Under the gilded Dome of the Rock lies the spot where Muhammed is believed to have ascended to Heaven.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES JACOBI



PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY MORRIS

Muscat, Oman. Regional Meeting participants on the steps of the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. Front row, from left: Lauren Marano, Massachusetts; Alix Hopkins, Maine; Stephanie Clement, Maine; Manal Al-Foqaha, Jordan; Dawn Leanness, Massachusetts; and Beth Alling, Massachusetts. Back row: Kristin Marano, North Carolina -



PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

Oman sent a delegation of conservation leaders to the U.S. in May 2012 as part of an exchange directed by the International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Two of the Fellows, Aida Al Jabri and Suléiman Al Salmi, had participated in QLF’s Regional Meeting in Oman three months earlier. Led by Program Coordinator, Colleen Castle (middle right), the ITAP group meets here with Alix Hopkins, QLF’s Middle East Program Alumna (center), in Freeport, Maine.



Fellowship to the Middle East, 2007. Alumni Dinner, Beit Sahour, West Bank, Palestine. From left: Ibrahim Odeh (Palestine, 2001), Alix Hopkins (U.S. 2007-2008), Haya Helal (Palestine, 2003), Imad Atrash (Palestine, 1996), and North American staff and Alumni (2007-2008) – Elizabeth Cabot, Julia Doermann, Charles Curtin, Becca Scibek, Jane Arbuckle, Charlie Jacobi, Dave Mention, and Beth Alling -