



Connor Hedges

Institutional Sales Teams, WisdomTree Asset Management, New York City

GIS Mapping, Belize, 2011

Ridge to Reef Tour, Belize, 2011

Middle East Program Regional Meeting, Oman, 2012

Tour for the Governing Boards, Canada, 2012

Piping Plover Conservation Project and Hare Bay Biodiversity Conservation Project, Newfoundland, 2014

Connor Hedges, who worked at QLF for over three years, first embarked on his QLF journey in summer 2011, when he led a team of QLF Interns through the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area in northern Belize to map a series of Mayan trails. Connor and the Interns worked closely with a local community in the rainforest to create illustrations, take photographs, and write narratives of each trail. In recalling this first collaborative experience with QLF, Connor writes, We learned the art of the possible. That summer kicked off the beginning of Connor's career with QLF as Coordinator of Regional and International Programs.

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A few months later, Connor tackled his second project as Coordinator: a *Ridge to Reef Tour* in southern Belize for the U.S. and Canada Governing Board Members. This tour not only exposed Board Members to the various protected areas and field sites that QLF Alumni have secured in Belize, but also mobilized a massive conservation effort to protect 1,100 acres of critical rainforest in the Maya Mountain Marine Corridor, an effort that was jointly coordinated by QLF Alumni and the Toledo Institute for Environment and Development.

In 2012, Connor returned to the home region, where he coordinated QLF's Tour for the Governing Boards in the historic French Shore communities in Newfoundland. There, they visited the French Shore Historical Society, which was co-founded by QLF Alumna Dr. Candace Cochrane. That same year, Connor traveled to Oman to assist QLF Executive Vice President Beth Alling in managing the *Middle East Program Regional Meeting* in Muscat, Wahiba Sands desert region, and at the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Sanctuary on the Arabian Peninsula in Oman. In response to his experience organizing the Oman meeting, Connor reflects, *It was inspiring to meet the Middle East Alumni who share a passion for the environment, a respect for each other, and a commitment to address regional conservation challenges.*

In 2014, Connor returned to Newfoundland to help manage the Piping Plover Conservation Project and Hare Bay



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHESSYE MOSELEY

La Milpa Research Station, Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area, northern Belize, June 2011. Connor Hedges with Melvis Valdez, Nature Guide, La Milpa Research Station. Connor holds a Global Positioning System device to collect data for a GIS map of Mayan trails that originate at La Milpa.

Biodiversity Conservation Project. Connor has since settled in his current position with the Institutional Sales Teams at WisdomTree Asset Management in New York City. For Connor, his experience with QLF was "transformative," one that influences him in his current work. *The benefits of QLF's Internships are two-fold, Connor writes. The communities benefit from the environmental education projects; and Interns benefit from being part of their community.* Connor continues, *At the heart of Internships is an expectation that Interns who are "Come From Aways" serve as ambassadors of the organization. My commitment was to serve in this capacity...I hold this organization in the highest regard, and it was always important to me that others do as well. On the flip side, I always felt that the organization was committed to my professional growth. My time with QLF has been transformative in my career, and I wouldn't trade my time here for anything. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve.* ☺

As part of an environmental education initiative for youth directed by Dr. Kathleen Blanchard, Connor Hedges assists in managing a bird count in Main Brook, Newfoundland, adjacent to the Hare Bay Islands Ecological Reserve.



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