



THE CASE FOR SUPPORT

A STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF QLF'S MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM

Engaging The Global Leadership Network: Middle East Region
2013–2015

Conclusions From The Regional Meeting For Alumni

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SULTANATE OF OMAN, FEBRUARY 2012
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY
OF QLF'S MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM

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Elizabeth Alling
Executive Vice President
and
Director, Middle East Program

July 2012



*QLF exists to support the rural communities
and environment of eastern Canada
and New England
and
to create models for stewardship of
natural resources and cultural heritage
that can be applied worldwide.*

This anniversary should not pass without acknowledging three individuals whose outstanding service to the Middle East Program deserves special recognition:

- **Thomas Johnston**, recently retired from the U.S. Department of State, who recognized the virtues of citizen diplomacy and the strength and creative energy of the NGO community;
- **Ambassador George H. Walker**, who saw the potential of the QLF Alumni Congress (Hungary 2006) when others thought it too big a challenge. Ambassador Walker also exhorted QLF Alumni to realize the limitless horizon of their Network; and
- **Anne-Seymour St. John**, who, as the first Middle East Program Director, imbued the Program with its hallmark qualities of friendship and mutual respect.



QLF builds leaders at the grassroots level, and provides neutral ground for persons of diverse cultural and religious contexts to engage in sustained dialogue around a shared concern and common challenge – in both cases, the environment. Building on this strong foundation, QLF’s Middle East Program cultivates relationships of trust, mutual respect, and shared learning that has created potential for new partnerships across borders. The scale is human, the approach transferable, and the results essential. I have long believed in the ability of NGOs to be not only advocates for environmental and social causes but effectors of real change. QLF is affirmation. The Middle East Program is affirmation.

Elizabeth Cabot
Coordinator, Middle East Program, 2008 – 2009
Elected to the Board of Directors, Quebec-Labrador Foundation, U.S., 2011
Current: Judicial Law Clerk, Honorable Gilbert S. Merritt
United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

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The QLF spirit and ethic of working cooperatively and respectfully with others are always with me in everything I do.

Gregor Beck
QLF Staff Member, 1986 – 2000
Living Rivers Program, New Brunswick
Marine Bird Conservation Project, Quebec North Shore
Current: Director, Conservation and Science, Federation of Ontario Naturalists

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This report revises an earlier draft that focused more precisely on the Oman Regional Meeting. The Case for Support looks at the future of the Middle East Program based upon discussions and informal conversations that were held during the week of the Oman Regional Meeting in February 2012. Key passages have been highlighted to guide the reader to important points that define QLF’s strategy and thinking for the next three year phase of the Middle East Program, 2013-2015.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of its Middle East Program, QLF hosted a Regional Meeting of Middle East Program Alumni and friends in Oman in early February 2012. Thirty-five participants from countries in the Middle East (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine — both Gaza and the West Bank) as well as from the Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and North America assembled in Muscat, Oman, to observe this two decade benchmark for the Middle East Program. **As important on the agenda was the need to explore ways for the Program to advance to its next stage.** Representatives at the meeting included several QLF Board members, conservation leaders from the Middle East, the Gulf States, and North America, administrators and professors from Middle East universities, and Oman government observers, who wanted to learn more about QLF and what QLF was doing in that region.

The format for the Regional Meeting was much like that of the much larger 2006 QLF Alumni Congress, which convened hundreds of QLF Alumni from North America and partner regions (see the section, *International Programs*, page (10)). The Oman Regional Meeting consisted of formal opening and closing dinners; culture and conservation site visits; and meetings with the Environment Society of Oman, Oman government officials, and U.S. Embassy personnel. During the information sessions interspersed through the week, participants presented their research on subjects ranging from environmental education, conservation biology, wildlife management and the management of protected areas; ecotourism and economic development; and community empowerment. Field trips mirrored the interests of the group. For instance, overnight stays were arranged at a desert camp and a sea turtle nature reserve.

The Oman Regional Meeting provided an opportunity for Middle East Program Alumni to meet one another, showcase their work, seek broader collaboration and assistance, share innovative ideas, and explore ways of working with each other across borders.

Despite the challenges inherent in such an undertaking, QLF considers the exercise to have been a success. **Of particular note, Program Alumni acknowledged openly that the future of the Program and its Alumni Network depends on their taking charge in a new phase.** At the end of the meeting in Oman, a new Steering Committee drafted a Strategic Plan to move the Middle East Program forward.



REGIONAL MEETING IN OMAN



Source: National Geographic, Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, IPC

The meetings and interactions (both formal and informal), were positive, open, and honest. The mood was often festive and fun, generally optimistic, yet realistic in identifying some of the challenges before them. Always there was a spirit of friendship and mutual respect. At the conclusion there was an open expression of commitment and energy to the Middle East Program and to each other, and an invitation by the group for QLF to continue its active coordinating role.

On a final note, QLF and many who attended regretted the absence of Israeli (Jewish and Arab) Alumni who have played such a pivotal role in the Program over its 20 years. When QLF organized the Regional Meeting, an important consideration was the selection of a venue that would be available, safe, and secure for all Alumni regardless of nationality. With that in mind, prior Regional Meetings have been hosted in Cyprus and Turkey. Although QLF had received official word that all nationalities would be granted permission to enter the country, just days before the Meeting Israeli Alumni were denied their visas. The Regional Meeting immediately lost six participants. It is telling that during the Meeting a number of Arab country participants lamented the fact that their Israeli colleagues interested in similar subjects, such as bird migration and wildlife management, could not be there.

PROGRAM EVOLUTION IN 2012 AND BEYOND

Evolution and transition are recurring themes at QLF these days — in programs, management, board, and budget. With the Middle East Program celebrating its 20th anniversary, it was only natural that those attending the Regional Meeting in Oman should look to the future. There was an endless stream of program ideas. The problem in a world facing global economic crisis was, no surprise, how to fund them. A private foundation (which has wished to remain anonymous) supported the Middle East Program generously for nearly two decades. Their philosophy was “hands off,” allowing QLF to develop its own path by tapping its strengths of creativity, flexibility, and responsiveness. That funding, unfortunately, has now ended.

Similarly, in this climate of evolution at QLF, it is clear that QLF’s Middle East Program is embarking on a new and exciting chapter. In this next phase QLF will transfer many of the Program’s planning responsibilities to its Alumni Network. In other words, the Program will be managed by those who participated in it over 20 years.

In addition, looking to the future, QLF has demonstrated recent success in garnering support from government agencies, particularly the U.S. Department of State. Public sector support, usually in the form of contracts, is tied to federal government objectives. While complementary to QLF’s Middle East Program vision, such contracts tend to be short-term and more narrowly focused. For QLF’s Middle East Program to realize its potential, both public and private sector support is required. The resulting synergies advance the agendas of *all* sponsors, governmental and non-governmental. Furthermore, there are many other NGOs, particularly academic institutions, vying for shrinking pools of public sector support. The competition is ferocious and realistically QLF cannot plan its future based exclusively on securing government contracts. **QLF must focus again on its traditional funding source — the private sector.**

Seizing on the spirit of the Oman gathering while recognizing the need to identify new funding sources for the Middle East Program (particularly those that would invest in QLF for the longer term), QLF Alumni at the Regional Meeting came up with a plan of action. They formed a Steering Committee to look for ways to engage more effectively the broad spectrum of Middle East Program Alumni across Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Israel, North America, and now Oman and other Gulf States. Working late into the last night of the Regional Meeting, the Steering Committee drafted a plan of action called aptly *The Case for Support*.

The *Case* lists the strategic and shorter term goals and objectives of the next phase of the Middle East Program and describes opportunities for the Middle East Program Alumni Network to become a force for environmental action across the Middle East. Those serving on the Steering Committee are: Sami Backleh, Regional Representative, QLF Middle East Program and member of the faculty, Al-Quds University, Palestine; Asem Faqir, Friends of the Earth Middle East and business owner, Jordan; Nizar Hani, Manager, Shouf Biosphere Reserve, Lebanon; Jawad Hassan, member of the faculty, Al-Quds University, Palestine; Aida Khalaf Al Jabri, Specialist, Marine Conservation Environment, Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, Oman; Alix Hopkins, QLF Council Member and Author, Maine; and Stephanie Clement, QLF Council Member and Friends of Acadia, Maine.

FACING PAGE: The Sultanate of Oman is located on the southeast corner of the Arabian Peninsula and is bordered by Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Sultan Qaboos bin Said assumed the throne in 1970 and has instituted numerous reforms to modernize the country. Omanis are proud of their culture and heritage as well as their environment. In 2012, QLF hosted a Regional Meeting for Middle East and North American Alumni of its Middle East Program. The occasion was the 20th anniversary of the Program. These meetings are held every few years to keep the Alumni Network engaged and to gather consensus for future program direction.

THE CASE FOR SUPPORT

The Case for Support identifies ways in which Middle East Program Alumni can share in the leadership, strategic thinking, and programmatic responses of the Middle East Program. It reflects the fact that the “ownership” of this two-decade old program is now shifting decisively to its Alumni Network. That is as it should be.

The Opening Statement of the *Case* reads: “Changes in the Middle East will have an inevitable impact on the Middle East Program, calling for bold, innovative, and sustainable strategies. At the Oman Regional Meeting there was widespread agreement by participants that in light of funding pressures at QLF and shifting organizational needs, the Middle East Program Alumni must take increased responsibility for the future of their Program.” Translation: the Middle East Program Alumni realized in Oman that it is no longer just a QLF responsibility to raise the necessary funds to continue. It must be a collaborative effort involving the entire Middle East Program Alumni Network.

The Case for Support calls for the Middle East Program to formalize partnerships with NGOs across the region in order to open doors for new funding sources and programmatic opportunity. It was understood by all at the Regional Meeting that without such partnerships QLF would be excluded from obtaining grants offered to Middle East environmental organizations and therefore be at a distinct disadvantage.

In an exciting follow-up to the Oman gathering, the Middle East Program Steering Committee has already begun one new initiative – *Conservation of Urban Birds in Israel and Palestine*. Funding has been secured. The new chapter for the Program has begun!

Action items from *The Case For Support* include:

1. Engage in new regional initiatives directed by QLF Middle East Alumni;
2. Encourage Middle East Alumni to expand the Alumni Network through regional contacts in the public and private sectors;
3. Expand regional initiatives of the Middle East Program to encompass work in the Gulf States;
4. Forge relationships with academic institutions across the Middle East;
5. Profile demonstration projects to publicize and promote the Middle East Program Alumni Network;
6. Sponsor eco-tours and short-term exchanges for Alumni, QLF Directors, and other friends of the organization to introduce them to the Middle East and to those involved in the Middle East Program;
7. Invest tangibly in Middle East Program Alumni, possibly by expanding the parameters of the QLF Scholarship Program;
8. Seek Middle East Alumni with marketing skills to promote the Middle East Program Alumni Network through all media and to appropriate government agencies in the region;
9. Update the QLF website along with other social media outlets to reflect the new directions of the Middle East Program; and
10. Integrate QLF’s Middle East Alumni Network with QLF’s Global Leadership Network.



LARRY MORRIS

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, among the world's largest mosques, can hold 40,000 worshippers. The Grand Mosque has 80 domes, 1,000 columns, and the world's largest hand woven carpet. Reflecting pools surround the mosque.

In recent years, QLF's Middle East Program has expanded its reach to Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. In 2013, QLF plans to host a Regional Meeting in Abu Dhabi for Program Alumni and partner organizations.



BACKGROUND ON THE MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM

Often we are asked why QLF is working in the Middle East. It appears well beyond our scope, geography, and mission. To assume that, however, would miss the point. Work in the Middle East is actually consistent with QLF's 50-year history, experience, and interests. QLF's Mission is defined in two parts with a regional component (New England and eastern Canada) and an international component, which connects our regional model to other regions. Our Mission Statement is concise: "...to support the rural communities and environment of eastern Canada and New England; and to create models for stewardship and cultural heritage that can be applied *worldwide*."

For over half a century QLF has been defined through its unique approach of working across borders. In the early days of the organization, those borders were geographic — state, provincial, and U.S./Canada. With the Middle East Program those "borders" take on a whole new dimension. QLF has also been distinguished by its emphasis on connecting environmental problem-solving with associated needs of culture and community. Environmental issues cannot be addressed, in other words, without making sure that solutions include people.



CHARLES JACOBI

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.



CHARLES JACOBI

Traffic buildup along the Israeli side of the Separation Wall near a border crossing between Israel and the Palestinian West Bank. On the far side of the Wall is the Israeli settlement of Giva'at Zae'ev. Palestinians began to participate in QLF's Middle East Program three years after its inception in 1992 and have been actively involved ever since.

Finally, QLF has always promoted the potential of individual initiative and leadership — that one person *can* make a difference. Toward that end QLF has always been about identifying those special men and women who, with help, will be even better leaders. QLF is a “glass half-full” organization. QLF is an organization based on optimism and a commitment to invest in the future. It brings that approach to the Middle East.

Private foundations in the mid 1970s invested in QLF by asking the organization to share its North American regional model, its thinking, and its experience with other regions around the globe.

The Middle East Program is in its 20th year, having been funded initially by a private foundation that wanted to see if a small NGO could have an impact when governments were not faring well in that regard. Could QLF provide a positive example for advancing meaningful dialogue by having individuals from different countries recognize their common interests in the environment?

Middle East Program Alumni consist of those individuals who have participated in the Middle East Program as visiting Fellows or as Interns (assigned to the Program as staff). Fellows come from countries across the Middle East and, because the sharing is two ways, also include men and women from North America who have taken part in exchanges to and internships in the Middle East. QLF Alumni represent leading conservation and cultural heritage organizations throughout the Middle East, academic institutions, government agencies, and the business community.

In light of the *Arab Awakening*, and what has followed, significant change is evident across the Middle East. The need for dialogue at all levels in the region is as critical today as ever. QLF has based its programs in the Middle East on its traditional pillars of supporting the individual while demonstrating a common concern for family, community, and the environment.



QLF exchanges promote trust and open dialogue in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship. Fellows are asked to look for consensus while QLF staff serve as mediators, counselors, and friends without “agenda.”

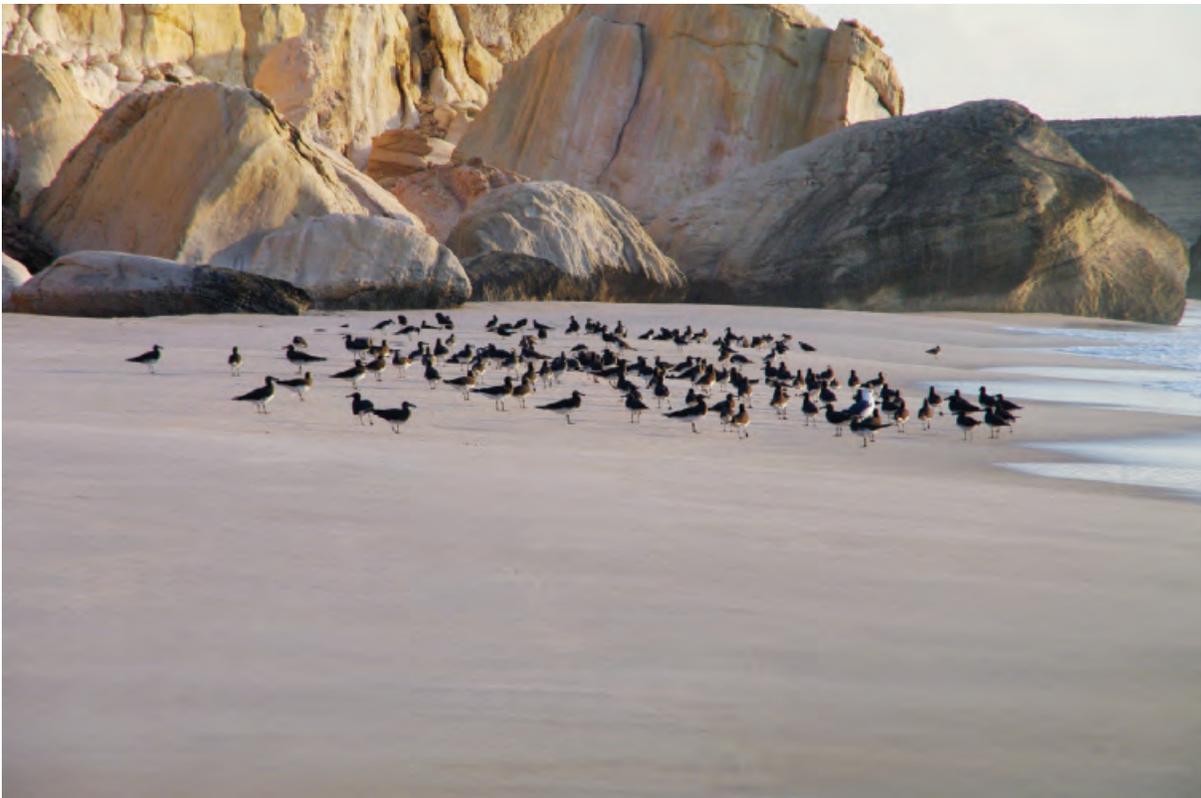
As the Program has matured over the years, Alumni have been asked to remain engaged in support of the Middle East Program and to develop on their own as a force for good to address local, regional, and global environmental concerns. The Alumni are energized through QLF support and encouragement. Regional Meetings are held to ensure that QLF remains focused in the right areas — always emanating from the organization’s long commitment to community-based conservation and stewardship.

Reflecting QLF’s interest and commitment, the Middle East Program is directed by Beth Alling, QLF’s Executive Vice President (email: EAlling@QLF.org). QLF Alumnus, Sami Backleh, based in East Jerusalem, serves currently as an In-region Program representative. Sami is also a Lecturer of Conservation Biology and Environmental Studies at Al-Quds University, West Bank, Palestine, (email: SBackleh@QLF.org).

WHY OMAN?

Every four years or so the Middle East Program Director convenes an aptly named “Regional Meeting.” The most recent, before Oman, was held in Kas, Turkey, in 2008 and was attended by 25 Alumni as well as QLF Board Member, Rosemary Furfey. Our Middle East Program Alumni Network remains engaged and active because of continuous support and communication by and through QLF Regional Meetings build enthusiasm among Alumni and allow these individuals to meet their counterparts from other years.

In 2006, QLF organized the QLF Alumni Congress under the premise that Alumni from *all* representative QLF regions should have the opportunity to meet and interact with one another. These included: QLF’s home base, the Atlantic Region (North America); Western Europe; Central and Southeastern Europe; Latin America and the



LARRY MORRIS

Ras Al-Jinz Nature Reserve, Oman. Sooty Terns (*Sterna fuscata*) and Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*), all in winter plumage, await the green turtle hatchlings as they make their way to the Arabian Sea.

Caribbean; and the Middle East. A number of subsequent Middle East Program initiatives trace their origin to conversations among Alumni at the *Congress*. One was *Stories for Environmental Stewardship*, focusing on the role of storytelling in promoting environmental awareness. This project also hoped to illustrate the common tradition of storytelling throughout all countries in the Middle East. The project was presented by Michael Caduto in Oman during the Regional Meeting in February.

Another project stemming from the *Congress* and presented as a case study in Oman was a book (in progress) on Middle East Alumni and conservation leaders. QLF Alumna Alix Hopkins is examining the challenges confronting Middle East Program Alumni dealing with critical environmental issues in a region torn by so much political discord.

In October 2011, only a few months before the Regional Meeting, QLF was approached by representatives of the International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) at the U.S. Department of the Interior. ITAP sought QLF assistance in hosting conservation leaders from Oman in New England (summer 2012). Stewart Fefer (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and David Manski (U.S. National Park Service, Acadia) are North American Alumni of QLF's Middle East Program. As part of their professional responsibilities, they had taken several recent consulting trips to Oman for the U.S. Government to advise the Omanis on such topics as parks management and environmental education. Stewart and David advocated for QLF's involvement in the ITAP-sponsored Oman exchange slated for late spring 2012.

The U.S. Government's interest in Oman and the promotion of QLF in helping in the ITAP exchange influenced QLF's thinking in hosting its Regional Meeting in Oman in February. One program would, we thought, play into the next. Furthermore, the thinking was that there would be an enormous benefit for Omani conservationists, especially those designated as participants in the later North American exchange, to meet fellow Middle East environmentalists who had come to North America through QLF's Middle East Program over the past 20 years. During QLF's Regional Meeting in Oman a number of Omani "observers" took part in the program and were in that way given an unofficial orientation to the later visit to North America. They also discovered that because of the QLF Middle East Program and their introduction to it they were instantly a part of a regional network of like-minded professionals across the Middle East.

Oman was chosen as the site for QLF's Regional Meeting because in the aftermath of the *Arab Awakening* it was important that the venue be secure and that the sponsoring country would accept *all* nationalities represented in QLF's Middle East Program. Always the concern — the Israelis. For that reason Cyprus and Turkey (twice) had been chosen for previous Regional Meetings.

As late as December 2011, only a month before the meeting, QLF was notified that all visa applications, including those of the Israelis, would be accepted. A few weeks later, however, all that changed as current events caught up with us. Visa applications were refused for nearly everyone. It was only after intense negotiations that most were reinstated, except the Israelis. In looking back for positives, it is gratifying how many of the Arab Middle East Alumni at the Regional Meeting in Oman openly expressed regret that their Israeli colleagues were not in attendance. It has always been true that a common love for the environment can trump political differences — a twenty year old premise of the Middle East Program and confirmed, once again, in Oman.



QLF Alumni Congress, Hungary, 2006. Participants on the Environment and Landscape Stewardship Field Visit conclude the tree planting ceremony in Kiskunság National Park.

GREIG CRANNA



QLF'S INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

In the 1960s QLF's Founder, Robert A. Bryan, expressed a genius for convincing friends to support his emerging community service and educational organization. In the late 1970s it was the marriage of that entrepreneurial talent with a professional staff's ability to write effective program proposals that was the making of QLF. To many foundation program officers their interest in QLF was in the "model," apparent by 1985, of a unique, North American-based, community service and conservation organization working in ways and in places that few others did. QLF had a track record for traversing "frontiers," both geographic and philosophical. Foundations treated QLF as an experiment in venture philanthropy and invested in it in order to see how well QLF could expand on its bioregional approach to environmental problem-solving.

QLF's model was based on its advantage as a *private* organization – an international NGO able to cross borders through its community service and conservation programs to address regional and global environmental concerns. Governments could not do that so easily and found QLF a convenient resource to complement their own agenda.

Today, QLF's niche, and its experience, are based on a half century of experimentation; its many and varied global information and human networks; and its financial resources beginning with a generous endowment. Consistent with QLF's historical Mission, the intent of its international programs is to identify, support, and develop leaders and to connect these leaders in what is described best as QLF's Global Leadership Network (GLN). The potential of this Network as a potent international force to address broad environmental problems will be further explored and emphasized in the years ahead by QLF.

The first international exchange effort was in 1981 when a fisheries officer from the Turks and Caicos Islands (Caribbean) joined a group of Atlantic Region participants to explore shared problems with marine resources and to discuss alternative solution in fisheries management. Soon thereafter, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in New York began to promote actively the notion of QLF as a model of local action working in a global context. "Think globally, act locally" was a popular expression at that time. QLF was, and remains, a shining example.

As the years went by, partner regions were identified through different windows of opportunity. In Central Europe, for example, prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, QLF was asked to introduce that region to the work of North American NGOs dealing with land stewardship – in other words to showcase the role of and explore the potential in Central Europe for an emerging private sector.

Based upon its demonstrated track record in region-to-region conservation exchange, QLF was approached in 1992 to run similar exchanges for conservation leaders in the Middle East and their counterparts in New England. A funder (who remains anonymous even after 18 years of funding) was convinced that Middle East environmental leaders with very different political views might come together through a common concern for the environment — making *conservation* a possible common language to promote peaceful coexistence. That funder asked QLF to be the host of the new program. Earlier, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund had asked grantees like QLF to promote the policy of "constructive engagement" — supporting social, even political change within a country while keeping lines of communication open. By 1992, QLF had employed this working construct in Central Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Why not in the Middle East?

QLF's approach in the Middle East has been to bring participants from different countries, now including the Gulf States, to focus (through stewardship exchanges, study tours, and workshops) on topics such as the promotion of multinational marine parks and protected areas; and the shared concern for migratory wildlife, including birds and many marine species. These subjects, in fact, dominated the conversations among participants during the Oman Regional Meeting.



PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES (As prepared for the Middle East Program Regional Meeting)

29 January 2012 – 2 February 2012

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In 2006, Mounir was awarded a Ph.D. in Biodiversity Management from the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, Canterbury, U.K. (Mounir is the first scientist in Lebanon awarded a Ph.D. on wildlife conservation). In 1989, Mounir received his B.Sc. in Agriculture from the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut. He received his M.Sc. in Animal Sciences in 1991. While completing his Masters, Mounir worked as a Research Assistant at the American University of Beirut. Afterwards, he established an agricultural company with a focus on organic farming.

Mounir has been awarded the Fiona Prize for the best Ph.D. research by the University of Kent in 2006; the Young Scientist

Award from UNESCO in 2002 and 2003; and he was the first recipient of the QLF President's Award in 2002, which provided support for his graduate research.

In 1995, Mounir attended the Middle East Program in New England. This broadened his interest in wildlife conservation. Shortly thereafter, and with his wife, Mounir established the Animal Encounter Educational Center for Wildlife Conservation in Aley just north of Beirut. The education center was designed to promote awareness (for students) of wildlife conservation, animal rehabilitation, and some captive breeding.

Mounir is a member of several committees and organizations including the National Council for Hunting, Ministry of Environment, and he is the co-founder of several environmental NGOs in Lebanon.

In 2010, and representing the American University of Beirut, Mounir worked in partnership with QLF's Middle East Program, *Community-based Natural Resource Management* funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State. Mounir has attended the Middle East Regional Meeting in Cyprus in 2001, and the QLF *Alumni Congress* in Hungary in 2006.

Mounir is married to Diana Marrouche and they have two children, Ashraf (12) and Karim (9).

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Amr Ali writes.... *My introduction to Red Sea conservation began over fifteen years ago when I was owner of a live-aboard company called Conquest Fleet. It was this, more than anything, that endowed our community with a strong sense of stewardship over this natural environment.*

He continues, *I have witnessed firsthand the kind of social change environmental activism can bring about within communities. But it has been the time I spent as Managing Director of HEPCA, which has proven that community-based environmental*



DIANA ABI-SAID

Mounir Abi-Said and Larry Morris standing in front of Canterbury Cathedral, England, 2007. Mounir received his doctoral degree in Wildlife Conservation from the University of Kent based on his research on the striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*). QLF provided a modest grant, an example of investing in our Alumni.



PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

management and protection could be the answer to saving our planet from ecological destruction.

In 1992, twelve members representing the diving community came together to discuss the issues of reef damage due to boat anchoring. The proposed solution consisted of a mooring buoy system that had proven to significantly reduce reef damage and eliminate the need for anchoring on the reef. The meeting resulted in the design and installation of approximately 100 mooring buoys, which inaugurated HEPCA's inception as an Egyptian NGO. Our founding objectives were aimed at the conservation of marine ecology and the underwater environment of the Red Sea.

Since 2002, I have served on the Board of HEPCA, and in 2005 I became the Managing Director. Over seven years, we have lead a variety of internationally recognized environmental projects and campaigns, including what has become the largest mooring system in the world. What grew as a local community initiative to establish mooring points to protect the reef systems has now been successfully adopted in Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

As a direct result of our protests and demands, President Mubarak issued a decree reaffirming Giftun Island's status as a protectorate and that no development would be permitted on any of the 36 islands in the Red Sea.

At the core of HEPCA has been community development. A number of community development projects to encourage sustainability among local Bedouins have been some of our most important achievements.

Aside from creating employment, generating income, and properly managing waste, the recycling and reuse of waste by the MRF saves 65 tons of CO² pollutants from entering the atmosphere every month.

Under our team's guidance, HEPCA's reputation has reached international status as a progressive movement based around community solidarity and environmental protection.



Muscat, Oman. Regional Meeting participants at the entrance of the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. Front row, left to right: Amer Kanaan, West Bank, Palestine; Sami Backleh, East Jerusalem; Nizar Hani, Lebanon; Kamal Abou Assi, Lebanon; Michael Caduto, Vermont; Larry Morris, Massachusetts; and Mounir Abi-Said, Lebanon. Back row: Jawad Shoqeir, West Bank, Palestine

ELIZABETH ALLING

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Beth Alling is the Executive Vice President of the Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment (QLF). Since 2004, Beth has served as the Officer-in-Charge of QLF's Middle East Program. Now in its 20th year, the program works with Conservation Leaders in the Middle East, the Gulf, and North America. Most recent programs have been funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State to include *Developing Capacity for New and Emerging Conservation Organizations in Syria*, a Syria/North America Exchange, 2006 – 2011; *Developing Strategies for Community-based Natural Resource Management*, a Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine, and North America Exchange, 2008 – 2010; and *Developing Approaches to Preventing and Mitigating Community Conflict*, an Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, and North America Exchange, 2006 – 2008.

Before joining the Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment, Beth held a 25-year career in journalism as a Producer/Director/Writer of documentary films with ABC News 20/20 and Public Broadcasting System. Beth is the Author and Editor of a book on a Lead Pilot in the 8th Air Force, World War II. Beth has her B.A. in English Literature from the University of California, Berkeley.

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Kamal Abou Assi is the Communication and Ecotourism Coordinator of the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, the largest reserve in Lebanon. Kamal grew up in a village surrounding the reserve and naturally has much local knowledge, which works to the benefit of the management of the reserve. Kamal first began working as a Guide at Al Shouf in 2008 and then served as a Technical Assistant in the Project Development Unit. His current position involves coordinating trips with tour operators and travel agencies, eco-tourism, strategic planning, and programs in environmental education and outreach.

Recent conferences, workshops, and programs that Kamal has attended are: Wildfire Assessment and Prevention (2011); Regional workshop for Biosphere Reserves in Arab countries (2011); the QLF Middle East Conservation Program, *Community-based Nature Resource Management* (2010); and the Protected Areas Exchange Field Visits (2009).



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Imad Atrash is the Executive Director of the Palestine Wildlife Society, a non-profit organization established to focus on research on nature conservation and environmental education in and among the Palestinian society and the region. The organization was established in 1999 to provide environmental education and biodiversity conservation. The organization has been instrumental in raising environmental awareness in local communities and the region working in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Palestine and Ministry of Environmental Affairs, Palestine.

Imad holds numerous professional affiliations to include: Tourist Guide, Ecotourism, Ministry of Tourism; Vice President, Ornithological Society for the Middle East – UK; Global Councilor, Birdlife International – UK; General Secretary, OISCA – Japan – Palestine Chapter; Steering Committee Member – Italy, The Mediterranean Protected Area; The Natural Heritage Expert for the Ministry of Tourism – PNA; Steering Committee Member, The National Protected Areas in Palestine Committee – Ministry of Agriculture; and Regional Councilor for West Asia, International Union for the Protection of Nature, IUCN.

Imad has a diploma in Agriculture from the Khadory Institute, in Tulkarem, Palestine (1979).

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Based in East Jerusalem is Sami Backleh, Senior Adviser of QLF's Middle East Program. From 2008 to 2011, he served as the Regional Coordinator of the Program.

Sami works as an environmental consultant with the Friends of the Earth Middle East in Palestine and other regional environmental organizations. As well, Sami is a Lecturer at the

Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences of the University of Al-Quds in Palestine. There, he teaches classes on Conservation, the Management of Biodiversity, and Environmental Science. At Dar Al Kalima College in Bethlehem, he teaches courses in Ecotourism.

From 2002 – 2005, Sami was the Biodiversity Field Researcher with the Palestine Wildlife Society. In this capacity, he organized a number of environmental awareness campaigns on nature conservation and protection that were launched in many Palestinian communities. From 2002 on, Sami has focused his work on bird conservation in the Palestinian Territories. Over the past decade, he has worked with UNESCO on areas of universal value (in Palestine) for nomination by the World Heritage Convention.

Sami has a Master's in Conservation Biology from the University of Kent, in Canterbury, England. Sami was awarded a Master's with Distinction for his Thesis, *Conservation of Terraced Landscapes in Palestine through Integrated Conservation Policies and Legislations*.



Sami Backleh, Senior Adviser, Middle East Program, East Jerusalem



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Michael Caduto – Author, Environmental Educator, Storyteller, and Ecologist – is well known as the creator and co-author of the landmark, *Keepers of the Earth*® series. He recently worked at the United Nations as a member of the Education Caucus of the Commission on Sustainable Development in preparation for the 2012 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. As a journalist, Michael's environmental feature stories and perspectives have been published by *Reuters International* and in major newspapers and magazines, including *Haaretz*. His most recently published books are *Catch the Wind, Harness the Sun: 22 Supercharged Science Projects for Kids*, and *Riparia's River*. His many awards include the Brimstone Award (National Storytelling Network); Teacher's Choice Award; Aesop Prize; and NAPPA Gold Award. Michael's programs and publications are described on his website: www.p-e-a-c-e.net.

Michael is also the Director of QLF's *Stories for Environmental Stewardship Program*. He recently completed an anthology of traditional stories – gathered by QLF Alumni in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine and named, *The Garden of Wisdom: Middle Eastern Stories for Environmental Stewardship*. The educational model of integrating storytelling and environmental activities for the *Stories for Environmental Stewardship Program* was first developed by Michael during his graduate research at the University of Michigan, and subsequently published by UNESCO/UNEP as *A Guide on Environmental Values Education*. Translated into English, French, and Spanish, this guide is used in the United Nations International Environmental Educational Training Programs.

(Michael Caduto appears in a group photograph on page 12.)



Stephanie Clement

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Stephanie Clement has been Conservation Director with Friends of Acadia since 1997. Friends of Acadia is a non-profit organization based in Bar Harbor, Maine, established to *preserve, protect, and promote the stewardship of the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality, and distinctive cultural resources of Acadia National Park and surrounding communities for the inspiration and enjoyment of current and future generations.*

At Friends of Acadia, Stephanie develops and executes conservation programs, advocacy, policy, and planning. She is the primary contact with Acadia National Park staff on conservation policy. Stephanie serves on the Board of Directors of the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce and Downeast Transportation, which operate the free, propane-powered Island Explorer bus system in the park and surrounding communities. She previously has served on the Board of the Sunrise Trail Coalition and the Advisory Committee of Healthy Acadia. Representing Friends of Acadia, she lobbies Congress, the state legislature, federal and state agencies. Stephanie staffs the Resource Protection, Advocacy, Wild Gardens, and Schooling Committees and oversees the Ridge Runner Program.

Stephanie holds an M.S. in Natural Resources Planning from the University of Vermont and a B.A. in Biology/Environmental Studies from Colby College.

Stephanie is a Member of the QLF Council, an Advisory Board.



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Asem Faqir is the Co-Founder of the Friends of the Environment Society, Jordan. The organization was established in 1995, and since that time, Asem has served on its Board and as its President from 2002 – 2004.

The Friends of the Environment Society is committed to advance the private sector's capacity to protect the environment. The organization also seeks to address Jordan's environmental issues by collaborating with NGO's to reach comprehensive solutions and to network with members of the government, business, and industry to achieve sustainable environmental community development.

Currently, the organization is focused on environmental education, awareness, and outreach with programs for students (of all ages), business, and industry in Jordan.

Privately, Asem is the owner of an industrial equipment company that was established in 1982. The company markets automotive testing and diagnostic equipment for the public and private sector. The company is committed to best environmental practices and as such, supplies Jordan's environmental police with equipment to test and diagnose automotive exhaust for gasoline and diesel vehicles.



Asem Faqir

ELIZABETH ALLING



ELIZABETH ALLING

Dima Radwan, Environment Society of Oman (left) and Manal Al-Foqaha, Jordan River Foundation

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Manal Al-Foqaha received a B.A. in Science from Kuwait University in 1989. In 1999, she earned her Master's in Local Communities and Development from Boston University in Massachusetts.

Since 2007, Manal has been working as a Senior Project Coordinator at the Jordan River Foundation. She provides training at the regional, national, and international level. Manal has been certified by her organization as a trainer and specializes in mobilization and building capacity of local communities.

The Jordan River Foundation is a non-profit organization established in December 1995, founded and chaired by Queen Rania Al-Abdullah.

The Mission of the Jordan River Foundation is to promote the development of a dynamic Jordanian society in partnership with stakeholders, by initiating and supporting sustainable social, economic, and cultural programs that empower communities and individuals based on their needs and priorities. A leading Jordanian NGO, the foundation is committed to making a difference in the lives of children and families through its national programs: the *Community Empowerment Program* and the *Jordan River Children Program*.



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Nizar Hani is the Manager of the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, Lebanon's first declared biosphere reserve. There he manages the reserve's five programs: research, awareness, rural development, ecotourism, and capacity building.

Nizar is a Protected Areas and Biodiversity Conservation Specialist with ten years of relevant field experience. He was one of four Field Coordinators on the Lebanon Mountain Trail Project responsible for delineating and mapping 100 km of footpaths between the mountain villages of Ain Dara and Niha. Nizar is widely acknowledged for his expertise on trail planning and design, natural resource management, environmental awareness and education. Over many years, Nizar has lead many workshops and has facilitated conferences and meetings.

Nizar has participated in more than a dozen regional workshops on biodiversity and protected areas including, most recently, the III Congress of Biosphere Reserves organized by UNESCO in Spain (February 4 – 9, 2008).

Nizar Hani has a B.S. in chemistry.



Nizar Hani

ELIZABETH ALLING



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Raed Abu Hayyaneh has a B.Sc. in Environment and Geology from Yarmouk University and a Master's in Education and Human Resources Development from Huddersfield University in the UK. Raed holds several professional certificates. He has worked in a number of posts in the field of development including health, education, refugees, community awareness, environmental outreach, and consulting. Raed was formerly a Community Mobilization Specialist in a Health and Family Planning Program with Save the Children and the Jordan Health Communication Partnership, a USAID initiative. This professional experience has allowed him to focus on social and environmental justice in his work.

Raed has served as an Environmental Awareness Specialist with the World Health Organization – United Nations in Erbil, Iraq, and the Head of Environmental Education and Awareness Department with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). At RSCN, he developed conservation strategies and designed an environmental education curriculum. As well, he has worked as a Regional Environmental Consultant and an Environmental Awareness Specialist with organizations based in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden Conservation Program, the Saudi Environmental Society, and Massar Society, Syria.

Raed has participated in many training courses given by local and regional training institutions with studies on environmental education, ecotourism, community mobilization, human resource development, family planning, and conflict management skills. Raed is published in a number of conservation journals.



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Connor Hedges graduated from Colgate University in 2011 with a B.A. in Environmental Geography. During the summer of 2011, he served as an Intern with QLF where he spent fifteen days in the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area in northern Belize. Along with other Interns, Connor developed a GIS map and brochure to be used by Programme for Belize, the non-profit that manages the protected land. Following this trip, Connor was an Intern at QLF's Center for Community Mapping and GIS. Since the fall 2011, he has worked with Beth Alling and has served as the Coordinator of QLF's *Ridge to Reef Tour* in Belize (November 2011), the Middle East Program Regional Meeting in Oman, and the QLF Canada Tour (July 2012).



Muscat, Oman. QLF Middle East Program Alumni gather on the first day of the Regional Meeting. QLF's Connor Hedges is seated in the center.



Alix Hopkins

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Alix Hopkins has more than 30 years of experience in communications, community and political organizing, and collaborative land conservation. Inspired by QLF's Middle East Alumni and her extensive travels in the region, Alix is researching and writing a book on conservation leaders in the region.

Alix is the Founding Executive Director of Portland Trails and the Founding Chair of the Mountain Division Alliance. As Project Director for the Biddeford RiverWalk Coalition, Alix is partnering on a citywide effort to envision, build, and promote a spectacular urban river walk along the Saco River in Biddeford, Maine. This project included economic and community development, historic preservation, affordable housing, community arts and public art installation, and interpretive programs. Along with two colleagues, she co-created an Irish – U.S. Land Use & Leadership Network to share information and build support between peers in Ireland and northeastern United States.

Alix is currently on the Council of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, a nationally recognized statewide land conservation organization working to conserve coastal and other lands that define Maine's distinct landscape, protect its environment, sustain its outdoor traditions, and promote the well-being of its people. She is on the Board of Directors of the Forest Society of Maine. Alix is a consultant on collaborative land conservation and community engagement and in this capacity works with land trusts, trails groups, municipalities, broad-based coalitions, and community environmental arts programs. She advises communities, agencies, and organizations on environ-

ing, launching, or refreshing their ideas or Mission, turning them into collaborative, multi-dimensional projects. In addition, Alix serves on the QLF Council, an Advisory Board. Alix has served as staff, board member, consultant, and volunteer for non-profits of all sizes.

In 2010, Alix worked as a Consultant on QLF's Middle East Program, *Developing Strategies for Community-based Natural Resource Management*. In 2008 – 2009, Alix served as the Facilitator of a QLF Middle East Program, *Consensus Building and Collaborative Conservation*, leading a group of North American Conservation Professionals throughout the Middle East along with Beth Alling, Program Director, and Elizabeth Cabot, Program Coordinator. Both programs were funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. In 2006, Alix attended the QLF *Alumni Congress* in Hungary. She also participated on a QLF international exchange program to the Czech Republic.

Alix is the author of *Groundswell: Stories of Saving Places, Finding Community*, a book designed to inspire and train a broad range of community activists to undertake collaborative, community-based land conservation projects across the country, using experiences from Portland Trails and incorporating stories from five other case studies in the U.S. *Groundswell* was published by the Trust for Public Land (2005) and was co-sponsored by the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy.

In 2006, Alix was honored with the Women's Environmental Leadership Award from Unity College.

Alix received her Bachelor of Arts with a Major in English from Goucher College, Towson, Maryland (1976).

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Amer Kanaan is the Head of the Scientific Research Committee of the College of Science and Technology at Al-Quds University and a member of Al-Quds University Scientific Research Council. From 2005 to the present, Amer has served on the Faculty of the Environment and Earth Science Department of Al-Quds where he teaches a number of classes covering Environmental Pollution and Prevention, Environmental Education and Awareness, and the Environment and Public Health. Also, Amer is the Coordinator for the Master's Program in Environmental Science at the University and the Coordinator of the university course, *Nature and the Environment of Palestine*.

Amer's specialty is water science. He earned his Ph.D. from



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

LARRY MORRIS



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Clemson University in the United States. His Thesis is titled: *Occurrence and Formation of Disinfection By-Products in Indoor Swimming Pools Water*. Amer is a contributor to scientific journals and publications.

Amer is a Directing Committee Member of Children of the Protection of Nature in Palestine.

(Amer Kanaan appears in a group photograph on page 23.)

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Mohammad Said-Al-Khatib is the Deputy Manager of the Community Empowerment Program of the Jordan River Foundation. The foundation is a non-profit organization established in December 1995 to empower society, especially women and children, and in turn, improve the quality of life for all Jordanians. The foundation was founded by and is chaired by Queen Rania Al-Abdullah.

The Mission of the Jordan River Foundation is to promote, in partnership with stakeholders, the development of a dynamic Jordanian society by initiating and supporting sustainable

social, economic and cultural programs that empower communities and individuals based on their needs and priorities. A leading Jordanian NGO, the foundation is committed to making a difference in the lives of children and families through its national programs, the Community Empowerment Program and the Jordan River Children Program. Since Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah established the Jordan River Foundation in 1995, it has been directly involved in empowering local community members.

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Nader Al-Khatib is the Director of the Palestine Office of Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME). The Mission of the organization is to promote cooperative efforts to protect environmental heritage. In so doing, the organization seeks to advance both sustainable regional development and peace in the region through convening Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian conservation leaders over common conservation issues. Friends of the Earth Middle East has offices in Amman, Bethlehem, and Tel-Aviv, and employs 40 staff and manages hundreds of volunteers. It is a member of Friends of the Earth International, the largest grassroots environmental organization in the world.

Recent initiatives by FoEME are the restoration and conservation of the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, mountain and coastal aquifers. The organization also builds awareness of the regional impact of climate change through scientific research, national and regional advocacy campaigns, and grassroots community development. FoEME's prominent program, the *Good Water Neighbors Project*, engages residents of all ages, mayors, and municipal representatives in seventeen communities throughout Israel, Palestine, and Jordan in a united effort for the protection, restoration, and conservation of the regions' shared water resources.

(Nader Al-Khatib appears in a group photograph on the back cover.)



Mohammad Said-Al-Khatib

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Dawn Leanness is the Director of Development for Codman Academy Charter Public School in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

Between 2008 and 2009, Dawn worked in foundation grant-making for The MENTOR Network and the Barbara Lee Family Foundation, focusing on youth and women in politics program areas.

A QLF Alumna, Dawn worked on the Middle East Program in 2009 in a fundraising capacity. In 2011, Dawn was voted to the Board of Directors of the Quebec-Labrador Foundation, U.S. Since 2006, she has served on the Board of Directors of the Princeton University Class of 1969 Community Service Fund where she formerly worked as Office Manager (2003 – 2006).

Dawn graduated from Princeton University, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in International Politics and Certificates in Gender Studies and Latin American studies.



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Nidal Mahmoud Al-Majali works with Ayla Oasis Development company, the largest real estate firm in Aqaba, Jordan. He is the Director of Relations and Social Responsibility. As such, Nidal works with community leaders and officials in the region to address issues of environmental, social, educational, and socioeconomic justice.

An active Alumnus of the Middle East Conservation Exchange Program, Nidal has participated in many regional gatherings and Alumni Meetings.

(Nidal Al-Majali appears in a group photograph on page 24.)

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A friend of QLF, Kristin Marano M.S., M.P.H., CPH is an epidemiologist and lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Kristin received a Master of Science in Analytical Chemistry from Emory University (1997) with a focus on analysis of neurotransmitter uptake in *in vitro* models. Kristin holds a Master of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health (2002) with a focus in Epidemiology and a Certificate in Health Policy and Management. She is certified in Public Health (since 2008) by the National Board of Public Health Examiners and has worked for more than ten years in the areas of human health risk assessment and regulatory oversight, focusing on food, drug, environmental, and occupational exposures.

Recent contributions to peer reviewed scientific literature include: *A Probabilistic Risk Assessment Approach used to Prioritize Chemical Constituents in Mainstream Smoke of Cigarettes Sold in China* (Xie, Marano et al. 2011. Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology Epub Nov. 6), *Differential exposure biomarker levels among cigarette smokers and smokeless tobacco consumers in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 1999-2008* (Naufal, Marano et al. 2011. Biomarkers 16(3):222-35), and *Arsenic Exposure and Tobacco Consumption Related Disease* (Marano et al. 2012. Food and Chemical Toxicology submitted and under final review).

In 2011, Kristin worked in Bimini, Bahamas, with researchers tracking and studying the endangered and protected *Epicrates striatus fosteri* (Bimini Boa). She has a personal interest in herpetology and ornithology.



Kristin Marano

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Lauren Marano is the Budget Analyst at the Quebec-Labrador Foundation. As such, Lauren has a comprehensive knowledge of all QLF programs and the budget implications of each one. With an interest in travel, conservation, and QLF's international exchange programs, Lauren is now spending time on site and in the field with Alumni and partner organizations to see their accomplishments firsthand.

Prior to QLF, Lauren was a Business Manager in Development at the WGBH Educational Foundation. She managed the administrative and financial components of a varied and integrated portfolio of marketing and fundraising business. Prior to working in Development, Lauren was a Business Manager for the Local Productions and Archives Departments at WGBH. From 1998 to 2001, she worked at VADUS, Inc. as a Director in Resources and Services.

Lauren received a B.S. in Communication from Northwestern University and attended graduate classes in Business Administration at Harvard University.

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QLF President Larry Morris has worked for the organization since the summer of 1975 when he initially served as the Director of the *Living Rivers Program*, QLF's first environmental education camp in Tabusintac, New Brunswick.

Post graduate school (1977), he joined QLF full-time, becoming the first Director of the Atlantic Center for the Environment, the emerging environmental division of QLF.

Eleven years later, Larry was named President of the organization as a result of a board-driven, long-range planning exercise. In the decades since, QLF has continued to develop its regional program model (combining community service and conservation in North America) with extensive environmental stewardship exchanges with overseas regions such as the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Southeast Europe.

Larry holds a B.A. in History from Princeton University (1969) and M.S. and Ph.D. in Natural Resources Management from Cornell University. After college, he served as an Officer in the U.S. Army including a year in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

Larry has participated on a number of non-profit boards including: The New Hampshire Audubon Society, the New England Salmon Association, the International Council for Bird Preservation (U.S. Section), The St. John River Society (New Brunswick), the Cornell University School of Agriculture's Advisory Council, and the National Intern Advisory Committee for the Environmental Careers Organization (ECO). Larry is a former Director of the Princeton University Class of 1969 Community Service Fund and Camp Pasquaney (New Hampshire).

Larry and his wife, Tina, live on a 300-year old farm in Boxford, Massachusetts, which was saved from development by the Trust for Public Land. Under Larry and Tina's tenure, Witch Hollow Farm combines local conservation and agricultural initiatives to demonstrate that the two can work together for common purpose, enhance biodiversity, and achieve effective and healthy community and environmental priorities for the future.

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Abdel Fattah Nazmi Abd Rabou is a Lecturer at the Islamic University of Gaza where he has been affiliated since 1996. He works both with undergraduate and graduate level students pursuing studies on environmental sciences, ecology, and biology. Abdel serves as the Managing Editor of BIODIVERSITAS (Journal of Biological Diversity) and Editor of the Environment Page of the FELESTEEN newspaper.

His continued and current research is focused on zoology and ecology resulting in recent published articles to include: *On the Palestinian Reptilian Fauna Caged or Preserved at Gaza Zoological Gardens* (2011); and *Environmental Impacts Associated with the Beit Lahia Wastewater Treatment Plant, North Gaza Strip, Palestine* (2011).

Abdel has a B.Sc. in Biology from the Islamic University of Gaza (1989). In 1996, he completed his M.Sc. in Environ-

mental Studies at the Institute of Environmental Studies, University of Khartoum, Sudan. Abdel was awarded a Ph.D. in Environmental Studies at Al-Neelain University in Khartoum, Sudan, where he delivered his Thesis, *An Ecological survey and assessment of Wadi Gaza Nature Reserve, Gaza Strip – Palestine, with particular emphasis on wildlife.*

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Yasser Saied is a marine biologist. Yasser has a B.Sc. in Marine Sciences from the Marine Biology Department, Suez Canal University in Egypt (1994); a postgraduate diploma in Marine Ecology from Suez Canal University (1997); and an M.Sc. in Marine Environmental Protection from the School of Ocean Sciences, University of Wales (2003).

After graduating from the Suez Canal University, Yasser worked as a marine researcher at Suez Canal Authority Research Center and water treatment facility in Ismailia,



Muscat, Oman. Participants of the Regional Meeting at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. From left: Sami Backleh, East Jerusalem; Jawad Shoqeir, West Bank, Palestine; and Amer Kanaan, West Bank, Palestine

ELIZABETH ALLING

Egypt. In 1997, he joined the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency as an Environmental Officer and was promoted to the top senior managerial position at the Department of Red Sea Protected Areas. The Red Sea Protected Areas comprise a network of three marine terrestrial protected areas located on the Egyptian Red Sea coast and includes 25% of the Red Sea Governorate.

Yasser's work involves implementation and enforcement of the national environmental laws to secure biodiversity conservation. He has experience in cooperation and dealing with extensive Egyptian and USAID funded projects.

Yasser is a member of several national and international scientific and environmental organizations dedicated to the conservation of nature and wildlife protection (IUCN, MEDPAN, IRF, SSP, HEPCA and the Abu Salama Society).

Over the past fifteen years and during his work as a marine biologist with the Red Sea Protected Areas, Yasser has directed several marine science surveys, and research on sensitive ecosystems, habitats, and endangered species in the Red Sea to include coral reef systems, mangroves, sea grass, marine birds, turtles, sharks, dolphins, and dugongs. His work also consists of monitoring coastal development and tourism along the Red Sea coast to ensure coastal zone management and sustainable development.

During his career Yasser has attended several international expeditions, conferences, workshops, and symposia in Europe, U.S.A., Africa, Asia, and Australia. He is a contributor to scientific papers and journals.

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Jawad Shoqeir is the Head of the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Al-Quds University. An Assistant Professor in Hydrogeology, his interests are integrated water resources management, groundwater quality, watershed hydrology, soil hydrochemistry, wastewater treatment and reuse. Jawad has worked extensively on soils and water quality issues to include the transport of pollutants in streams and groundwater. His work in the Dead Sea Basin is focused on the



Muscat, Oman. Regional Meeting Participants. Left to right: Asem Faqir, Jordan; Michael Caduto, Vermont; Raed Hayyaneh, Jordan; Amer Kanaan, West Bank, Palestine; Nidal Al-Majali, Jordan; and Jawad Shoqeir, West Bank, Palestine

LARRY MORRIS



PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

restoration of transboundary pollutants, wastewater reuse, and solid waste management.

Since 2009, Jawad worked as Academic Council at Al-Quds University, and a member of the Scientific Committee of the Center for Chemical and Biological Analysis. His published studies are considered invaluable in the field of water studies in Palestine and the region.

Current projects include: *Geoelectrical and Hydrogeological Investigations in Marsaba-Ein Feshcha, Dead Sea basin*, funded by the German Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology; and *Waste Water from Olive Oil Mills: Interactions with Soil, Organic Contaminants, and Organic Cation-Modified Clay Sorbents*.

HASSAN AL-TAWARA

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Hassan Al-Tawara works for the Jordan River Foundation as the Wadi Araba Cluster Officer of the Community Cluster Program. He assists in project design, implementation, evaluation, and impact assessment.

Prior to his work with the foundation, Hassan served as Head of the Unit for Variety of Income for the Aqaba Agriculture Department and an Animal Production Engineer for the Free Zone in the Aqaba Agriculture Center. He has also worked on a poultry production farm.

The Jordan River Foundation is a non-profit organization established to empower society, especially women and children, and in turn, improve the quality of life to secure a better future for all Jordanians. The Foundation was founded by and is chaired by Queen Rania Al-Abdullah.

Hassan received a B.S. in Animal Husbandry from Jordan University (1996).



LARRY MORRIS

Dr. Nimer Safi, Middle East Program Alumnus (1995) was one of the first Palestinians to attend the program. He later received his Ph.D. in Biogeochemistry from the University of Oldenburg, Germany. He has been active in the Middle East Alumni Network and has participated in Regional Meetings. He now lives with his wife and family in Saudi Arabia where he is on the faculty of a Saudi university. (Please note, Nimer Safi's biographical profile was not available at publication.)



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NATURE RESERVES IN OMAN



The Empty Quarter (*Rub al Khali*), Arabian Peninsula

ELIZABETH ALLING



NATURE RESERVES IN OMAN

NATURE RESERVES IN OMAN
(As prepared for the Middle East Program Regional Meeting)

29 January 2012 – 2 February 2012

Ras Al Hadd Turtle Reserve

The Ras Al Hadd Turtle Reserve is located in the Wilayat (governorate) of Sur in the Sharqiya Region of the Sultanate. The reserve area is 120km² with a coastline of 42km. The Ras Al Hadd Peninsula is of great importance as it attracts 6,000 – 13,000 sea turtles annually from the Arabian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the east African coast.

Contained within the reserve are research sites for sea turtle conservation and restoration located at Khawr Al Jamarah, Ras Al Khaba, and Ras Al-Jinz.

Al Saleel National Park

The Al Saleel National Park, covers an area of 220km² and is located in the Wilayat of Al Kamil w'al Wafi in the Sharqiyah Region of Oman. The park consists of acacia woodland and provides a safe habitat for indigenous mammals. There are three areas of the park: the alluvial plain covered in acacias; the wadis in the mountains; and the sparsely vegetated hills and rocky outcrops that form the northern boundaries and higher elevations. As well as the acacia trees, the reserve is known for its shrub, Maresaraas, which has scented flowers that bloom in the summer. In the park are Arabian gazelle, Gordon's Wildcat, and red fox.

Future plans for the park include sustainable use of the vegetation for feeding Arabian oryx and the rheem gazelle. These animals will be introduced once the vegetation improves. Additional Arabian gazelles may be introduced to enhance the genetic base of the species within the park.

Al-Dimaaniyat Islands Nature Reserve

This group of nine islands lies to the north of Muscat, along the coast of the wilaya of Seeb and Barka. The islands cover a total area of 203km² and can only be reached by boat. Migratory birds nest here in the summer and there are various species of fish found in the coral reefs making the islands attractive to scuba divers. Large numbers of hawksbill turtles (a globally endangered species) lay their eggs here. Green turtles also nest on the islands' sandy beaches.

The islands are made from limestone rocks and coral reefs. At their northern side, they slope steeply under water to depths of more than 25 metres. To the south, they shelf gently into the sea and are flanked by extensive coral reefs.



UPPER RIGHT: Green turtle hatchlings emerge from the sand and make their way through a gauntlet of predators to the Arabian Sea. Green turtles can venture as far as the Red Sea and to the remote shores of the Indian Ocean.

LOWER LEFT: Turtle tracks at sunrise, Arabian Sea, Ras Al-Jinz Nature Reserve, Oman. During the night, a green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) has come ashore to lay her eggs.



NATURE RESERVES IN OMAN



LARRY MORRIS

With the cliffs of Ras Al-Jinz in the background, sanctuary beaches like this one have long been the favorite nesting site of green turtles of the Indian Ocean. The Ras Al-Jinz beaches were formally protected in 1996 as part of the Ras Al Hadd Turtle Nature Reserve. The 120-square kilometre reserve has great archaeological value with human influence dating back thousands of years.

Thousands of marine birds nest on the islands throughout the year, including terns, ospreys, and Red-billed Tropicbirds. The islands are free from predators such as fox, cats, and dogs.

The Dimaaniyat Islands Reserve was established to protect its coral reefs and provide safe nesting for turtles and birds.

Jebel Samhan Nature Reserve

This reserve is in the Governorate of Dhofar and covers an area of 4500km². It is predominantly made of limestone highlands rising from the coastal plains. Jebel Samhan is a range of craggy peaks separated by wadis and canyons. Hasik village, accessible only from the sea, lies on a small gravel area east of the Jebel. The sea has eroded much of the coastline and the limestone cliffs are dramatically sculptured and undercut at the base.

The reserve is noted for its Arabian leopard, Nubian ibex, Arabian gazelle, striped hyenas, caracal, wild cats, foxes, and wolves.

Khawrs Reserve of Dhofar Coast

Lagoons abound in Dhofar Governorate and vary in size from a few hectares to more than one hundred hectares. Some of these lagoons have been established as nature reserves. There are eight reserves, namely:

- Khawr Ruri is the largest reserve in the Governorate of Dhofar. It is considered the most attractive to tourists as it contains Khawr Ruri port known as Samharam. Nearby, there are important ruins that date back to prehistoric times. The port is mentioned in Greek, Hellenic, and Arabic historical scrolls for its export of frankincense in Dhofar. The khawr (lagoon) has gained special status, as it is not only a



nature reserve, but an important heritage reserve and has been included on the World Heritage List.

- Khawr al Baleed lagoon takes its name from the ancient city, which lies on the banks of this lagoon. The lagoon flanks the city on the east and north. In ancient times, this lagoon was connected to the sea and used as a natural port due to its depth in some parts.

The region is currently on the World Heritage List and the Khawr is protected. The importance of this place lies in its combination of archaeology, history, and nature. The archaeological park is considered to be the first of its kind in the Sultanate, serving to protect natural resources, attract tourists to the site, and inform people of this important ancient city in the Governorate of Dhofar.

- Khawr Sawli, located in Wilayat Taqa in the Governorate of Dhofar, is a most important lagoon noted for its biodiversity.
- Khawr Al Maghsayl lies at the eastern end of Jabal Al Qamar (Moon Mountain) in the Governorate of Dhofar. The lagoon is half a square kilometre; its length is three kilometres and width is 150 metres.
- Khawr Al Qurm Al Sagheer and Al Kabeer lagoons are located near the Hilton Hotel Salalah in the Governorate Dhofar. They have acquired their names from the dense mangrove trees that cover the two lagoons and obscure the waters from the main road.
- Khwar Awqad lagoon is located in the Dhofar Governorate at the outskirts of the ancient Awqad city. Its area is about 16 hectares (40 acres).
- Khawr Ad Dahareez is located at the eastern entrance of Salalah City in the Governorate of Dhofar. Its waters converge with the Salalah basin waters. This lagoon is also noted for its biodiversity, and it is frequented by migratory birds.
- Khawr Taqah lagoon (two square kilometres) is located at the western entrance of Taqah City in the Dhofar Governorate.

Al Jabal Al Akhdar Sanctuary

The Al Jabal Al Akhdar Sanctuary is known for its variety of fruit: apricots, plums, figs, grapes, apples, and pears, as well as almonds, walnuts, and saffron. The pomegranate that grows here is classified among the finest of its kind in the world. The sanctuary rises to a height of 2,980 metres with a wide plateau at the summit.

Samhan Mountain

Samhan Mountain is an all important mountain in the Governorate of Dhofar with a maximum height of 2,100 metres. Samhan Mountain consists of plateaus punctuated by narrow and deep gorges, some of which are about 1,000 metres deep.

Various plants grow in the plain of Jabal Samhan such as acacia and gum trees. The narrow mountain passes have little water but there are a number of streams, which are an important source of water for most animals found in the region. These mountains are home to Arabian leopard, Arabian gazelle, foxes, and the Nubian ibex.

Leopards best adapt to the surrounding environment and are often smaller and lighter in color than their African counterparts. Arabian leopards have survived for a long time in the northern mountain range of the Arabian Peninsula.

Oman Botanic Garden

The Oman Botanic Garden consists of 425 hectares in Wilayat Al Seeb in the Muscat Governorate. It is one of the largest botanic gardens in the Gulf.



Natural Living Sanctuary (Arabian Oryx Reserve)

The Jiddat al-Harasis desert region in al Wusta is an area of great interest to scientists and environmentalists. It is here that the last sightings of the Arabian oryx were recorded. The species was in decline because of hunting, and as a result, in 1974, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos established the Arabian Oryx Reserve.

Efforts to save and restore the Arabian oryx were sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and the Society for the Preservation of Animals (SPA). In 1962, the SPA established 'Operation Oryx' to protect the animal from extinction. An SPA research group flew to the Hadrah-mut and captured two males and one female oryx. Other oryx were donated by Sheikh Jabir bin Abdullah al Sabah from Kuwait, King Sa'ud bin Abd Al'Aziz Aal Sa'ud from Saudi Arabia, and the London Zoo, which had received its oryx from Sultan Said bin Taimur. Nine oryx were sent to Phoenix Park in Arizona, which has a similar climate to

the Jiddat al-Harasis, and a breeding program was started to reintroduce sufficient numbers of the oryx to the wild.

In 1980, the original nine oryx returned from Arizona, and together with four from Salalah, the oryx were transported to the reserve by the Royal Oman Air Force. Toward the end of 1980, a second group of oryx arrived from the U.S. In January 1992, Sultan Qaboos realized his goal to return the Arabian oryx back to its natural habitat, and subsequently, the first herd was released into the wild.

Reintroduction of the oryx into the wild begins by placing the animals in 100m² pens until they become accustomed to the climate and indigenous plants. The Arabian oryx is well suited to the arid conditions of the desert and is able to travel without water for up to 22 months, drinking only the dew from the Samr and Ghaf trees.

The sanctuary is home also to the Arabian gazelle, the Reem gazelle, the Nibian ibex, Arabian wolf, Arabian hare, sand fox, and the caracal lynx.



Early morning desert shadows

ELIZABETH ALLING



Wadi Sireen Reserve

The reserve is located in the Al Hajar Mountains 45 kilometres south of Muscat. The Arabian tahr lives among its cliffs and rocky slopes, the only habitat for this species in the Arabian Peninsula. The Arabian tahr has a short body, hooked horns, reddish-brown hair, as well as a dark line that extends along the back. The male tahr has a long

mane that covers its neck and continues to grow as the animal advances in age.

Sources: Ministry of Information, Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Tourism, Sultanate of Oman
UNESCO



Wadi Sireen Reserve, Al Hajar Mountains, 45 kilometres south of Muscat, Oman. Wadis (dried up river beds) spring to life after heavy rains.

LARRY MORRIS



POINTS OF INTEREST IN OMAN

(As prepared for the Middle East Program Regional Meeting)

29 January 2012 – 2 February 2012

MUSCAT

Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque

In 1992, Sultan Qaboos directed that his country have a Grand Mosque. A competition for its design took place in 1993 and a site was chosen at Bausher. Construction of the mosque took more than six years. The mosque is built on a site occupying 416,000 square metres; its complex covers an area of 40,000 square metres. The Grand Mosque was dedicated by the Sultan of Oman on 4 May 2001.

Key points of interest ~ The mosque was built with more than 300,000 tons of Indian sandstone. The main musalla (prayer hall) is square (external dimensions 74.4 x 74.4 metres) with a central dome rising to a height of fifty metres above the floor. The dome and the main minaret (90 metres) and four flanking minarets (45.5 metres) are the mosque's primary visual features. The mosque has a capacity for 20,000 worshippers.

A major feature of the design of the interior is the prayer carpet, which covers the floor of the prayer hall. The carpet consists of 1,700,000 knots and weighs 21 tons. It is the second largest single-piece carpet in the world. The carpet consists of classical Tabriz, Kashan, and Isfahan traditional design and was created at the order of the Diwan of the Royal Court of Sultanate of Oman.

Al Alam Royal Palace

The Al Alam Royal Palace is the ceremonial palace of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos of Oman. Located in Old Muscat, the palace is the most important of the six royal residences of Sultan Qaboos. Although not open to the public, the Al Alam Palace can be viewed from beyond its iron gates. There is a boulevard leading up to the palace with government buildings on either side of the walkway. The Al Alam Palace is surrounded by the Jalali and Mirani Forts.



Minaret, Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, Muscat, Oman

LARRY MORRIS



Old Muscat with Fort Mirani (left) and Al Alam Palace

LARRY MORRIS

The Portuguese Forts of Jalali & Mirani

The Jalali and Mirani Forts, constructed in the 16th century by the Portuguese, guard the entrance to Muscat and serve as sentinels to the Sultan's palace. The forts were built on hills with views over the city, its harbor, and the open ocean. Both remain in use by the police and military and are not open to visitors.

Bait Al Zubair Museum

Bait Al Zubair (House of Al Zubair) is a private museum that opened its doors to the public in 1998. The museum is funded by its founders, the Zubair family. On display is the family's collection of art primarily from the Al Busaidi Dynasty. In 1999, the museum received the Award for Architectural Excellence by his Majesty Sultan Qaboos.

WAHIBA SANDS

Sharqiya (Wahiba) Sands

To the south and east of Muscat, the Hajar Mountains give way to the dunes of Wahiba Sands. Described as a "perfect sand sea," the rolling dunes of the Wahiba Sands are 100-150 metres high.

The Wahiba Sands or Ramlat al-Wahiba or Sharqiya Sands are a desert region named for the Wahiba tribe. The area is defined by a boundary of 180 kilometres (110 miles) north to south, and 80 kilometres (50 miles) east to west; an area of 12,500 square kilometres (4,800 square miles). A 1986 expedition by the Royal Geographical Society documented the diversity of the terrain, flora and fauna, and its 16,000 invertebrates.

RAS AL-JINZ

Ras Al-Jinz Nature Reserve

Located on the easternmost point of the Arabian Peninsula, Ras Al-Jinz is an important turtle nesting site for the endangered green turtle. Marine researchers consider Ras Al-Jinz the largest turtle nesting site in the Indian Ocean. Correspondingly, at Ras Al-Jinz, the olive ridley sea turtles lay their eggs in February; the hawksbills in April; loggerheads in June; and the green turtles in July-August. (See photo on page 28.)

PROGRAM & SCHEDULE



ELIZABETH ALLING

PROGRAM & SCHEDULE

THE MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM REGIONAL MEETING
FOR QLF ALUMNI, PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, AND FRIENDS

~ Muscat ~ Wahiba Sands ~ Ras Al-Jinz Nature Reserve ~

Sunday, 29 January 2012 – Thursday, 2 February 2012





PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE

(As prepared for the Middle East Program Regional Meeting)

29 January 2012 – 2 February 2012

The Program and Schedule corresponding with the five-day Regional Meeting included cultural and environmental site visits. The Meeting was held in Muscat, Wahiba Sands, and Ras Al-Jinz Nature Reserve, and included presentations by Alumni and our Omani partners: the Environment Society of Oman and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs. As well, we were joined by staff of the U.S. Embassy in Muscat.

Presentations covered: *Environmental Education; Ecotourism and Economic Development; Conservation Biology; Community-based Natural Resource Management; Parks and Protected Areas; and Wildlife Conservation.*



Wahiba Sands, Oman. A scene from Camel-lot

ELIZABETH ALLING

FACING PAGE: Mutrah Corniche, Muscat, Oman. The Al Hajar Mountains dominate the landscape of Muscat. The city lies along the historic trade routes of the Arabian Sea, the Arabian Gulf, and the Gulf of Oman.



PROGRAM & SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, 29 JANUARY 2012

~ MUSCAT ~

ARRIVAL Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah

REGISTRATION ~

5:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M. Turtle Beach
Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah

WELCOMING RECEPTION & DINNER

6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. Turtle Beach

LODGING AT SHANGRI-LA

~ ~ ~

MONDAY, 30 JANUARY 2012

~ MUSCAT & WAHIBA SANDS ~

7:00 A.M. – 8:15 A.M. Breakfast

8:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Cultural Site Visits in Muscat

12:00 P.M. – 1:30 P.M. Lunch in Muscat

1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. Cultural Site Visits in Muscat

3:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. Drive to Wahiba Sands

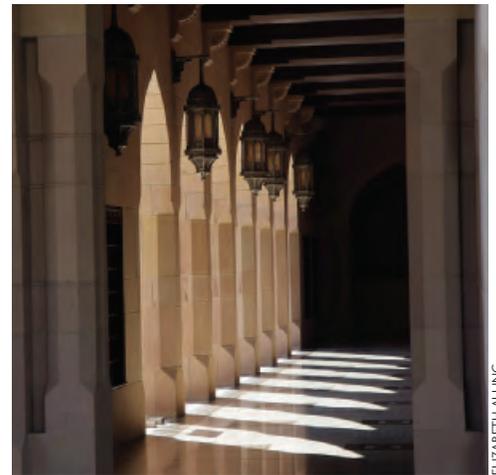
6:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M. Dinner & Lodging at Wahiba Sands

~ ~ ~



ELIZABETH ALLING

Turtle Beach, Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah, the location of the Welcoming Reception and Dinner



ELIZABETH ALLING

Muscat, Oman. Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque



LARRY MORRIS

Muscat harbor has been a port of call for centuries.



PROGRAM & SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2012

~ WAHIBA SANDS & RAS AL-JINZ NATURE RESERVE ~

- 6:30 A.M. – 7:30 A.M. Explore the Desert on Camel
- 7:30 A.M. – 8:30 A.M. Breakfast
- 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Presentations by Alumni & Partner Organizations

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Michael Caduto with Sami Backleh & Alumni ~
 Stories for Environmental Stewardship Program
 Raed Hayyaneh ~ Environmental Education
 Asem Faqir, Friends of the Environment Society, Jordan

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Alix Hopkins ~ Author, Alumna, Member of the QLF Council
 Manal Al-Foqaha ~ Jordan River Foundation
 Mohammad Al-Khatib ~ Jordan River Foundation
 Jawad Shoqeir ~ Al-Quds University
 Amer Kanaan ~ Al-Quds University
 Nidal Majali ~ Ayla Oasis Development Company



On the way to Wahiba Sands, the desert venue of the Regional Meeting

ELIZABETH ALLING



PROGRAM & SCHEDULE



LARRY MORRIS

Wahiba Sands, Oman. Morning session to explore next steps for QLF's Middle East Program

12:00 P.M. – 1:30 P.M. Lunch

1:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. Presentations by Alumni & Partner Organizations

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION & CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

Mounir Abi Said ~ Animal Encounter, American University of Beirut

Abdel Fattah ~ Islamic University

Sami Backleh ~ Al-Quds University

COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION

Nader Al-Khatib ~ Friends of the Earth, Middle East

Stephanie Clement ~ Friends of Acadia

Kamal Bou Assi ~ Shouf Cedar Reserve

Hassan Al-Tawara ~ Jordan River Foundation

3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. Drive to Ras Al-Jinz

6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M. Dinner & Lodging at Ras Al-Jinz

9:00 P.M. – 11:00 P.M. Turtle Watching

~ ~ ~



WEDNESDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2012

~ RAS AL-JINZ NATURE RESERVE & MUSCAT ~

4:00 A.M. – 6:30 A.M. TURTLE WATCHING
~ Optional at this hour! ~

7:00 A.M. – 8:00 A.M. Breakfast

8:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. Presentations by Alumni & Partner Organizations

ECOTOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Qusay Ahmad ~ ViaNova Group

MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS

Nizar Hani ~ Shouf Biosphere Reserve

Amr Ali ~ Hurghada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association

Yasser Said ~ Red Sea Islands Protected Area

CHARTING THE NEXT DECADE OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM

Dialogue with Alumni & Partner Organizations facilitated by Alix Hopkins



LARRY MORRIS

Muscat, Oman. Increased tanker traffic and pollution have affected the fisheries in the Arabian Gulf. Coastal communities in Oman have the same concerns about their future as their North American counterparts. Addressing these common concerns is the basis for QLF's international conservation exchanges.



PROGRAM & SCHEDULE

- 12:30 P.M. Lunch at Ras Al-Jinz
- 1:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. Drive to Shangri-La, Muscat
- 6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. Closing Dinner
Bait Al Bahr
Shangri-La Al Jissah

LODGING AT SHANGRI-LA

~ ~ ~

THURSDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2012

~ MUSCAT ~

DEPARTURE & OPTIONAL MEETINGS



ELIZABETH ALLING



ELIZABETH ALLING



TOP PHOTO: Aida Al Jabri of the Oman Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs. Aida was one of the Omani participants of QLF's Regional Meeting.

MIDDLE PHOTO: Saleh Al-Saadi (left), Environment Society of Oman, the largest environmental NGO in the country; and Suléiman Al Salmi, Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, attended QLF's Regional Meeting.

BOTTOM PHOTO: Oman sent a delegation of conservation leaders to the U.S. (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.



FRONT COVER: Ras Al-Jinz Nature Reserve, Oman. Middle East Program Alumni from left: Mohammad Said-Al-Khatib, Jordan; Younis Al Balushi, Oman; Yasser Said, Egypt; Manal Al-Foqaha, Jordan; and Aida Al Jabri, Oman

PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

INSIDE FRONT COVER: In the heart of the Atlantic Region. Caribou in Gros Morne National Park, Western Newfoundland

PHOTOGRAPH BY CANDACE COCHRANE

INSIDE BACK COVER: Old City, Damascus, Syria. A five-year effort by QLF's Middle East Program to initiate a separately tracked Conservation Leaders Exchange to support emerging Syrian environmental NGOs ended abruptly in 2011 with the outbreak of civil unrest and political turmoil in that country.

For half a decade QLF staff made frequent trips to Syria to convince the government there to support our proposal to bring Syrians to the U.S. on environmental exchanges. We traveled extensively in country; and, in so doing, we made many friends along the way. QLF applauds the hard work of those dedicated Syrians we have come to know who are involved in wildlife conservation and environmental stewardship.

We were optimistic as recently as March 2011 that our efforts would be rewarded by a delegation of Syrian NGO Fellows coming to New England. A few months later all that fell apart. The situation continues to look bleak. Nevertheless, change will ultimately come. When that happens, QLF stands ready once again to support conservation efforts with the Syrian people.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

BACK COVER: Wahiba Sands, Oman. QLF Middle East Program Alumni from left: Asem Faqir, Jordan; Nader Al-Khatib, West Bank, Palestine; and Raed Abu Hayyaneh, Jordan

PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

