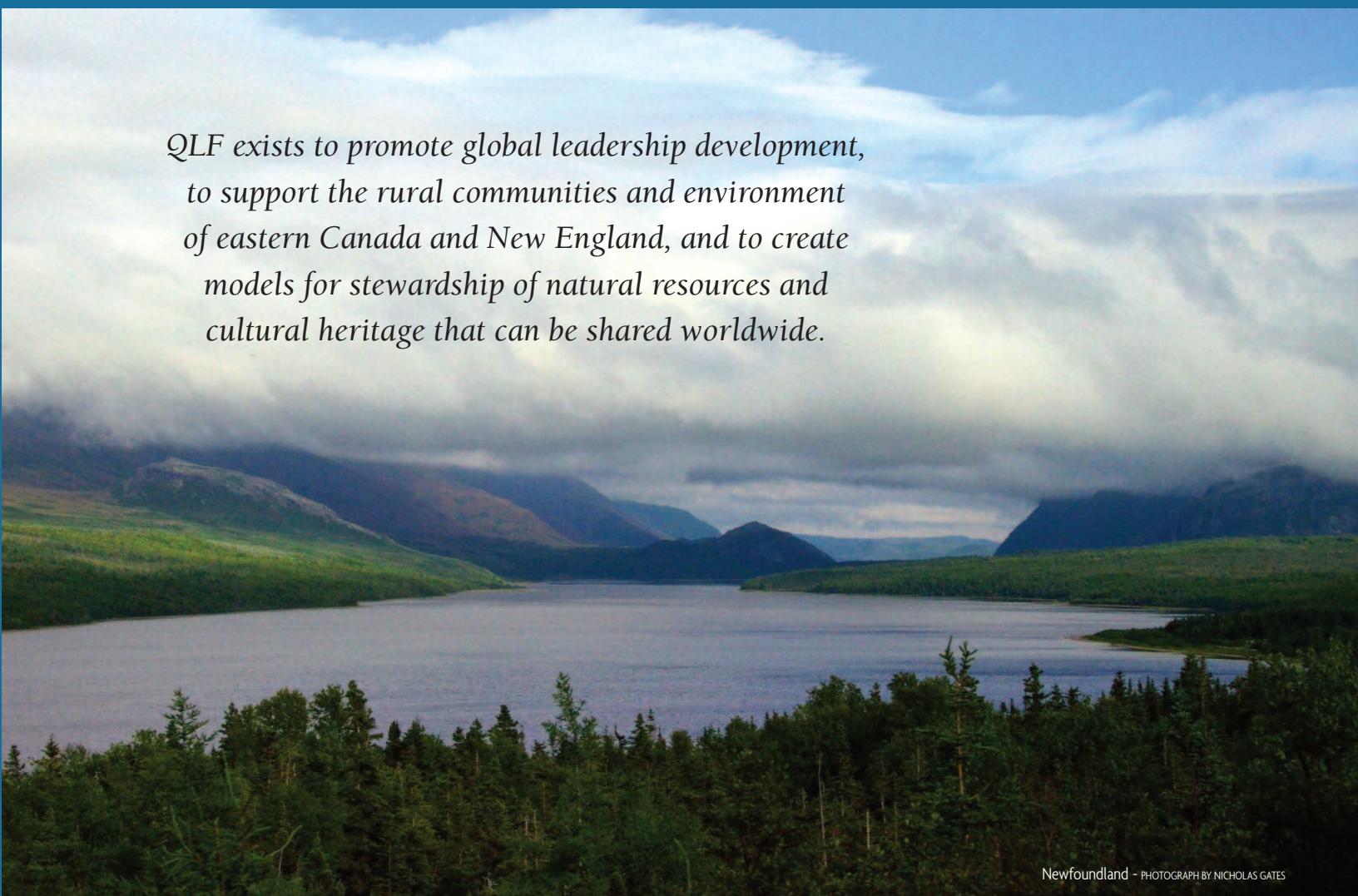


# QLF PROGRAMS 2019

LEADERSHIP - CONSERVATION - STEWARDSHIP

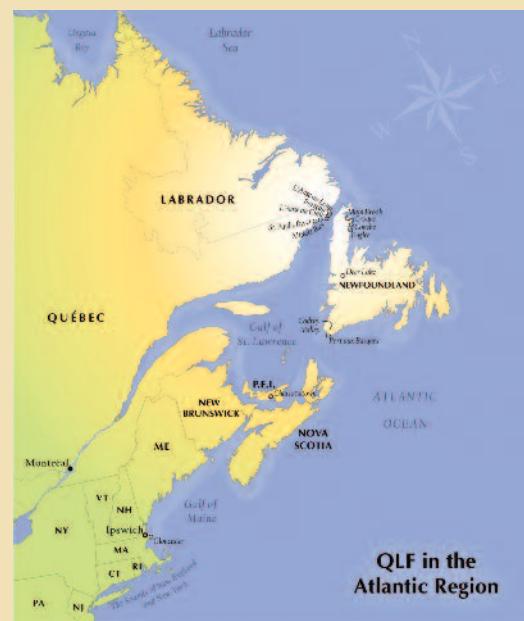


*QLF exists to promote global leadership development, to support the rural communities and environment of eastern Canada and New England, and to create models for stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage that can be shared worldwide.*

Newfoundland - PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS GATES

FOR OVER HALF A CENTURY, the Quebec-Labrador Foundation (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. In recent years, the regional model in North America is now shared with places as diverse as Central and Southeast Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

QLF is distinguished by its emphasis on connecting environmental problem-solving with associated needs of culture and community. Environmental issues cannot be addressed without making sure that solutions include people. QLF has always promoted the potential of individual initiative and leadership — that one person can make a difference. For example, QLF taps the energy and commitment of university Interns, and young professionals worldwide to provide experiential training opportunities for the next generation's leaders. QLF Alumni number several thousand.



PROMOTING GLOBAL LEADERSHIP – ONE PERSON AT A TIME – THROUGH CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE. INSPIRED IN THE ATLANTIC REGION, SHARED WITH THE WORLD.



# QUEBEC-LABRADOR FOUNDATION

## SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REPORT

### I. LEADERSHIP

#### CONSERVATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

QLF provides Internships for university and high school students who, throughout the year, are based in Ipswich, Massachusetts; Montréal, Québec; Newfoundland and Labrador; and the Maritimes.

#### SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

QLF provides scholarship awards for students from the Quebec North Shore, Newfoundland and Labrador, and provides stipends for Interns working in QLF's home region

### II. CONSERVATION – EASTERN CANADA & NEW ENGLAND

#### BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The program consists of the Recovery of Marine Species at Risk & Restoration of Coastal Habitats (Newfoundland and Strait of Belle Isle); Conservation of Seabirds, Sea Ducks and Important Bird Areas (Newfoundland and Labrador & Quebec Lower North Shore); Composting to Reduce Greenhouse Gases (Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland); Next Generation's Conservation Leaders (Newfoundland and Southern Labrador); and Piping Plover Conservation (Southwest Newfoundland).

#### THE SOUNDS CONSERVANCY MARINE PROGRAM

The Sounds Conservancy Martine Program provides research grants to marine researchers affiliated with leading universities and organizations in New England. Each year Staff amend and update an extensive electronic publication, which archives the program research over the last 22 years; and facilitate webinars and convene meetings through the program's interactive website.

### III. CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMS – REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

Conservation Exchange Programs foster knowledge, experience and innovation across borders while promoting international cooperation between organizations and individuals facing common

conservation challenges and opportunities. Each exchange has a focus such as biodiversity conservation, community-based natural resource management, migratory birds, forest stewardship, privately protected areas, and wildlife conservation.

#### IV. STEWARDSHIP – LATIN AMERICA, U.S., CANADA, GLOBAL

QLF created International Programs nearly 40 years ago to foster an exchange of experience and innovations among organizations and individuals in other parts of the world where communities and regions face similar challenges and opportunities. Organized around a thematic focus on stewardship — *efforts to create, nurture, and enable responsibility in landowners and resource users to manage and protect land and its natural and cultural heritage* — the program works on a regional basis, nationally within the United States, and also inside global frameworks.

#### V. QLF GLOBAL PROGRAM

Qlf Global is a global conservation consulting program. Consulting assignments promote innovative solutions to shared local and regional conservation challenges worldwide that result in measurable, beneficial social and environmental return on impact.

QLF Global regional consulting teams draw from QLF's Alumni base (~5,000 representing 75 countries). Tapping this highly diverse knowledgebase, QLF Global is able to staff a broad range of projects. Binding QLF's programs together is its commitment to leadership development through community service; community-based conservation; and stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage. The QLF Global program is also an opportunity for QLF to amplify its mission, vision, and values with potential access to new, diversified sources of funding to support growth.



Minke whale in the early morning fog off Deer Island, New Brunswick. This species is being monitored in the Labrador Straits as part of QLF's *Marine Species At Risk Program*.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

*As QLF evolves in a 21st century world, training a new generation of environmental and community leaders, building leadership capacity, convening leaders to meet with one another, sharing information and experiences should be the highest priority for this organization.*

## **QLF At Fifty**

*A special publication of the Quebec-Labrador Foundation (2008)*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Report written on behalf of the Committee on Mission and Programs includes Program Narratives corresponding with Fiscal Year 2018. The narratives are organized by the following groupings: Leadership; Conservation, and Stewardship.

The Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment (QLF) is a not-for-profit organization in the U.S. (incorporated in 1963) and Registered Charity in Canada (1969). With its headquarters in Ipswich, Massachusetts, QLF has an office in Montréal, Quebec, and Field Desks throughout Eastern Canada. QLF has a Staff of twenty-five with Consultants. QLF has a Board of Directors in the U.S. and Canada, Honorary Directors, and a Council that serves as an Advisory Board.

QLF's Mission is defined by a regional component (New England and Eastern Canada), and an international component, which ties our regional model to a global network. The mission is *to promote global leadership development, 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 shared worldwide.*

For more than five decades, QLF has been a model of what cooperation can achieve: politically, between two countries; geographically, within a bioregion; and locally, among the mixture of religious denominations and ethnic identities, which make up the rural population of eastern Canada and New England.

QLF began as an organization providing community service and leadership programs for young people living in isolated fishing communities along the Quebec-Labrador coast. In the mid-1970s, programs were expanded both geographically and programmatically when QLF offered residential camp programs and experiential outdoor leadership opportunities for youths, adults, and families. In 1977, the Atlantic Center for the Environment was created to develop environmental programs throughout our Home Region of New England and Eastern Canada.

More than thirty years ago, QLF recognized that its regional programs could be an effective model for countries seeking ways to address increasing concerns about environmental issues that cross geographical borders. In 1981, QLF created its International Programs to foster an exchange of experience and conservation innovation among organizations and individuals in other regions that face similar challenges and opportunities. Today, our program model of cross-border, bioregional conservation is practiced in Europe; Central and Southeast Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; the Middle East, North Africa, the Gulf States; and Southeast Asia.

*Binding all programs together is QLF's commitment to leadership development through community service; community-based conservation; and stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage.*

## I. LEADERSHIP

### CONSERVATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM EASTERN CANADA AND NEW ENGLAND

*“This is the kind of experience you cannot find anywhere else. QLF has done an incredible amount to propel me on my path to environmental policy work. The Conservation Internship Program empowered me as a young professional, and the Congress provided an inspiring network of mentors and colleagues as I take the next step toward becoming an environmental lawyer.”*

~ Grace Weatherall, QLF Intern 2013, 2014; 2016 Congress Staff Member; 2017 Consultant

The Quebec Labrador Foundation fosters leadership to advance community-based conservation and the stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage. Conservation leadership is among QLF's highest priorities and has historically been a hallmark of our programs. QLF invests in the next generation of environmental leaders through a robust Internship Program for undergraduate and graduate students. Each year, QLF supports up to 24 Interns who represent academic institutions worldwide and who are assigned to programs in QLF's home region: Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Quebec North Shore along the Gulf of St. Lawrence; and New England.

Internships provide hands-on, experiential training in Biodiversity Conservation, Marine Bird Conservation, Conservation and Stewardship of Marine Environments, Privately Protected Areas, and Wildlife Conservation. Internships are directed in partnership with NGOs in-region. As an example, QLF Staff manage a Biodiversity Conservation Program in partnership with the Nature Trust of New Brunswick in the Greater Saint John Area, the Kingston Peninsula and Fredericton. Staff and Interns worked in the preserves owned and managed by the Nature Trust, and provided environmental education workshops for youth on the monitoring of shorebirds and seabirds, marine species, adaptation to climate change, and marine stewardship.

Internships based at QLF Headquarters in Ipswich, Massachusetts, and the Office in Montréal, Québec focus on communications, new regional and global initiatives, and special assignments. Simply put, QLF provides an array of experiential learning that often result in a transformative experience lasting a lifetime. The philanthropic impact of the program stretches far beyond a summer, the semester, or the year. Supporting the Conservation Internship Program is an investment in the next generation leaders in conservation and stewards of our environment.

### THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM MANAGED BY QLF STAFF

Bob Bryan established The Scholarship Program in 1964 to provide educational opportunity and academic support for promising undergraduate and graduate students from the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Quebec North Shore. Over five decades, the program has expanded its reach providing financial assistance to students across QLF's home region. As such, the program has provided more than 1,200 scholarships to nearly 1,000 students to pursue studies in aviation, business, conservation, education, law, medicine, and science.

The Scholarship Program has been restructured commensurate with current programs designed to address and meet the needs of rural communities in our home region and beyond. The revised program allows for quick turnaround and is more cost effective.

The Scholarship Program operates as a revolving fund, whereby discretionary awards are to be directed by Beth Alling for educational purposes to include academic scholarships, fellowships, study tours, and



Alongside Dr. Kathleen Blanchard (right), 2018 Conservation interns conduct a survey of nesting Black-legged Kittiwakes off Conche, Newfoundland. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

and therefore must serve other objectives through their creativity, availability, and as a pathway to the vast QLF resource network worldwide.

This new approach reduces administrative costs while merging the interests of programs, Staff members, and financial support for education. This reconfigured program represents an expanded 21st century version of the historic Scholarship Program, a flagship program of the organization. As QLF's Mission has adapted globally, so too must its programs.

## II. CONSERVATION – EASTERN CANADA & NEW ENGLAND

### BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

#### DR. KATHLEEN BLANCHARD, SENIOR CONSULTANT NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, THE QUEBEC NORTH SHORE

Dr. Kathleen Blanchard is a Senior Consultant with the Quebec-Labrador Foundation through a collaborative relationship with Intervale Associates Inc., a not-for-profit organization incorporated in Newfoundland and Labrador. Its mission is to conserve biodiversity, interpret heritage, and protect the integrity of rural livelihoods. Intervale conducts programs that focus on fish and wildlife conservation and the recovery of species at risk, working with regional networks of communities, industry, development associations, university, and citizens.

QLF encourages local communities to take an active role in managing natural resources, promoting initiatives to secure sustainable development, and participating in conservation education and outreach. Interns learn about the many challenges of species conservation while they witness first-hand the impacts of pollution and climate change that affect rural communities as well as wildlife.

One model for addressing these challenges is QLF's Marine Bird Conservation Program, which was established by Dr. Blanchard in 1978 to address the rapid decline of seabird populations along the North Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Through this program, she developed effective conservation strategies that empowered people and worked within the cultural context. The program, which ran for over two decades and involved more than 100 interns, was featured in an hour-long television documentary on CBC and the Discovery Channel. Over time, the award-winning program became recognized internationally for testing and proving the effectiveness of community-based strategies in achieving conservation objectives. Threats to seabirds were reduced, nesting populations increased, and people were empowered as stewards of their resources.

other educational opportunities. In addition, the program continues to offer standing grants to universities as QLF has historically done with Memorial University of Newfoundland, as managed by Beth Alling.

As part of the program's restructuring, awards are provided by Program Directors. Representing the Quebec North Shore, Newfoundland, and Labrador is Serena Etheridge who works closely with Bob Bryan to identify scholarship recipients. Awards are modest

Continuing in the spirit, legacy, and vision of the Marine Bird Conservation Program, Dr. Blanchard is managing a series of projects under the umbrella of the Biodiversity Conservation Program to include the following:

### **Recovery of Marine Species at Risk & Restoration of Coastal Habitats Newfoundland and Strait of Belle Isle**

For nearly a decade, QLF has been working with communities, fish harvesters, and Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans to help in the recovery of marine species at risk, specifically wolffish, leatherback sea turtle, and several species of whales. The threats facing these magnificent creatures are numerous, including accidental catch, entanglement in fishing gear, ingestion or entanglement of plastic marine debris, pollution, and disturbance. For years QLF coordinated a network of observers, consisting of fish harvesters and tour boat operators, who contributed their sightings to a QLF-led database. QLF produced colorful and detailed identification charts in English and French and distributed them throughout the region. QLF also encouraged live release of species accidentally caught in fishing gear. More recently, the focus has been on mitigating the threat caused by plastic marine debris. Due in part to the effects of climate change in the warming of the oceans, the critically endangered leatherback turtle has been traveling farther north during late summer and is a regular visitor to waters off Newfoundland and Labrador. One of the most dangerous threats to the leatherback turtle is plastic bags drifting in the ocean. It is widely believed that the leatherback may mistake plastic bags for jellyfish—a favorite food.

This year, the Government of Canada is particularly focused on recovery actions for the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale, whose total population is only a few hundred individuals. For the past few summers, North Atlantic Right Whales (NARW) have been observed increasingly in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where previously they were thought to concentrate in waters of the Bay of Fundy. In 2017, some NARW were found dead and washed ashore in western and southern Newfoundland. The most common cause of death appears to be associated with ship collisions and/or entanglement in fishing gear.

These threats point to the immediate need for citizens and industry to take concrete actions to reduce marine debris and to find solutions to the problem of fixed gear used especially in lobster and crab industries. QLF and its partner Intervale have been working with lobster harvesters along the Gulf shores of the Northern Peninsula to divert plastic bait box liners (essentially a large plastic bag) from being discarded at sea, which has been too common a practice in the industry. Through frequent communications with harvesters, and a successful pilot study in two fishing stations of Newfoundland during 2017, harvesters are now returning their bait box liners to shore, thus preventing more than 2,500 plastic bags from entering the ocean. This is only the beginning. QLF has plans to expand the program in 2018 and it is the harvesters themselves—the champions of the project—who are spreading the word.

Interns have been playing a very important role in this project by coordinating several beach clean-ups in areas where plastic marine debris washes onshore and recording the volume and weight of that debris. These data have substantiated the extent of the problem and helped inform the action strategies that are being implemented. Meanwhile, interns teach youth in schools and summer workshops about steps they can take to prevent marine debris from occurring.

### **Conservation of Seabirds, Sea Ducks, and Important Bird Areas Newfoundland and Labrador & Quebec Lower North Shore**

The coastal waters of the Northern Gulf of St. Lawrence, southern Labrador, and Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland are ecosystems that contain important food resources for over two dozen species of seabirds and sea ducks, which return to the ice-free waters each spring to feed and/or to nest on islands.



Atlantic Puffin. Dr. Kathleen Blanchard directed QLF's Marine Bird Conservation Program for 20 years, beginning in the 1970s. Seventy-five interns and volunteers began their careers in wildlife research and environmental education working for this program. PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

Seabirds such as Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, and Common Murre and sea ducks such as Common Eider nest in dense colonies and congregate in bays and other areas that are rich in food such as capelin and blue mussel. They are considered by scientists to be excellent indicators of the health of the marine ecosystems and their behavior often signals that studies may be needed into the impacts of climate change on the ocean.

Although their value is recognized, many seabird populations in the region are not monitored by government agencies, and the protection of their nesting habitats and feeding areas

often fall to citizens, sometimes indigenous groups, that live nearby. QLF is working with Intervale, Environment Canada, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Bird Protection Quebec, Nature Canada, and Bird Studies Canada, and a host of community groups to monitor and protect these birds. Some of the areas where the birds nest or otherwise congregate are designated Important Bird Areas (IBAs), part of a network of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas worldwide.

Under Dr. Blanchard's direction, QLF interns help monitor seabirds in Hare Bay, islands near Conche, and in waters of the Strait of Belle Isle. In 2017 QLF researched and installed a new interpretive panel at Ile aux Perroquets, near Blanc Sablon, Quebec, and produced an informational brochure that was immediately used by staff at the nearby Visitors' Centre. With funding from Bird Protection Quebec, in 2018 Dr. Blanchard will travel to communities of the Quebec Lower North Shore, including Harrington Harbour, to investigate ways to re-engage residents of Lower North Shore communities in the conservation of the important migratory bird sanctuaries of that coast. Following a tourism forum that was held on the coast last October, several residents have approached Dr. Blanchard to seek her assistance in helping to build the capacity of residents to offer birding opportunities to a growing number of tourists visiting the area.

## **Composting to Reduce Greenhouse Gases Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland**

Prime Minister Trudeau and the provincial Premiers from across Canada have made reducing the impact of climate change a national priority. Composting of organic wastes offers a practical and effective way for citizens and rural communities to contribute substantially towards the reduction of greenhouse gases, and therefore reduce the negative impacts of global warming. In 2017 QLF launched a multi-year project on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions originating from organic waste that was being sent to landfills. With funding from Environment Canada's EcoAction program, the project engages more than 30 households and businesses in composting their organic waste and encourages them to use the compost in ways that are beneficial to their communities. The project distributes compost bins, trains users, educates youth,

and promotes composting through a set of video clips featuring residents of the town of Main Brook. A refrigerator chart prompts continued composting, while the town and school are planning community gardens. Residents are discovering that composting organic waste helps fertilize the soil, beautify their landscape, reduce costs, and address a fundamental issue of food security. Meanwhile interns learn about the more immediate dangers to northern communities from climate change and how a simple practice such as composting will help mitigate the impacts.

### **Next Generation's Conservation Leaders**

#### **Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland and Southern Labrador**

With funding from the International Grenfell Association, QLF is coordinating a multi-year program of conservation leadership training for youth, in conjunction with its partners Intervale, the Community Youth Network, Point Amour Lighthouse Provincial Heritage Site, the Town of Main Brook, and Tuckamore Lodge. Each year, more than 300 youth are given training at presentations and workshops in schools and summer programs run by QLF and its partners. The topics are carefully organized to address the important environmental topics of the area and to meet the needs of youth as future community leaders. The program is designed to build in youth the knowledge, skills, motivation, and sensitivities to make informed decisions that will protect their resources and environment while maintaining vibrant, sustainable communities. For the past few years, QLF has been running workshops in Main Brook, Roddickton, Conche, Flower's Cove, Plum Point, St. Anthony, Point Amour, Blanc Sablon, Lourdes-de-Blanc Sablon, and St. Paul's River.

The spectacular setting of the Point Amour light station in the Labrador Straits serves as location for a week-long youth program each summer. Students travel from southern Labrador and the Quebec Lower North Shore to attend the program that accommodates up to 40 youth. They learn practical information and skills in bird and whale monitoring, impacts of climate change on ice and icebergs, marine debris, protecting wetlands, and wildlife conservation.

### **THE SOUNDS CONSERVANCY MARINE PROGRAM**

**ELIZABETH ALLING WITH STAFF**

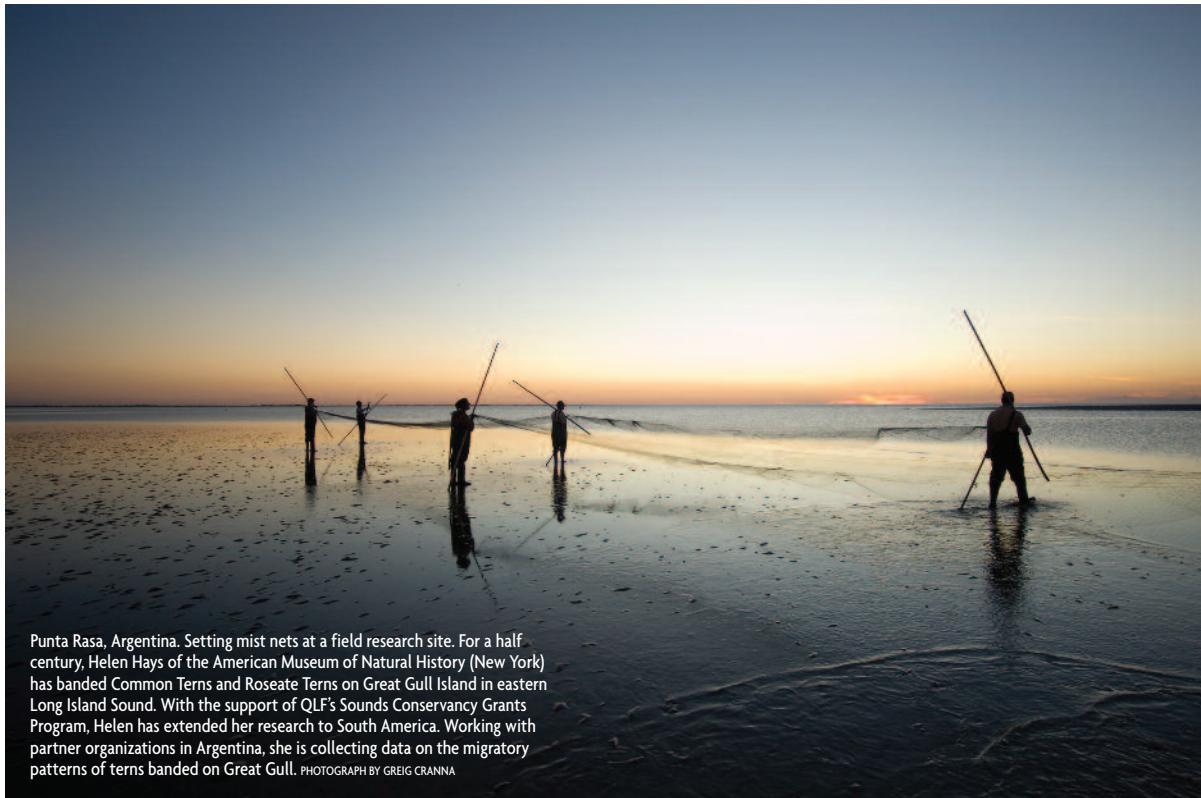
#### **THE SOUNDS AND COASTAL WATERS OF NEW ENGLAND AND NEW YORK**

The Sounds Conservancy is a marine research Program along the six Sounds, estuaries, and coastal waters of southern New England and New York. From south to north, the Sounds are Long Island, Fishers Island, Block Island, Rhode Island, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket. The program is designed to work with practitioners and researchers to protect the Sounds and its coastal waters, and to support marine research, environmental policy, and environmental education and outreach.

Each year, The Sounds Conservancy awards supplemental research grants to graduate students, Fellows, and practitioners in marine conservation. Grantees are affiliated with some of the leading universities and organizations along the Sounds to include: University of Connecticut, Avery Point; Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies; University of Rhode Island; and the American Museum of Natural History; Audubon (Massachusetts and Rhode Island); and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Ongoing, Staff update The Sounds Conservancy's electronic publication with reports on the research of current grantees, thus documenting twenty-two years of work by Sounds Conservancy Fellows, and furthermore archiving the research by Sound, year, and subject. An archival piece, the publication serves as reference guide for grantees and QLF Staff.

Under the direction of Stephen Engle, Senior Consultant, Community Mapping and GIS Specialist, QLF launched the program's interactive website, The Sounds Conservancy Grants Explorer in 2014, which maps the work of program grantees over the last two decades including a narrative of the research, affiliation, year of research, and geography. Each Sounds Conservancy grantee now has



Punta Rasa, Argentina. Setting mist nets at a field research site. For a half century, Helen Hays of the American Museum of Natural History (New York) has banded Common Terns and Roseate Terns on Great Gull Island in eastern Long Island Sound. With the support of QLF's Sounds Conservancy Grants Program, Helen has extended her research to South America. Working with partner organizations in Argentina, she is collecting data on the migratory patterns of terns banded on Great Gull. PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

access to their own personal account, which contains information on their research during their grant period, along with more current professional information. Grantees are encouraged to update their profile with up-to-date material and information. The website is a useful tool for former grantees to network with other grantees, as well as learn about other ongoing research in their field, marine conservation, and share conservation innovation.

This year, QLF will continue to facilitate online communication between program grantees. It is our hope that all Sounds Conservancy Fellows – now Alumni – explore this website, review the research and programs of marine conservation professionals over the last two decades, and sign onto this secure site. Our goal is to continue with The Sounds Conservancy Grants; encourage online communication among our network of Sounds Conservancy Alumni; convene Program Alumni online; and establish new partnerships and collaborative efforts among Alumni working on common conservation projects along the Sounds and coastal waters of New England.

Throughout the year, staff facilitate online discussion with Sounds Conservancy grantees resulting in new program partnerships. This past year, Sounds Conservancy Fellow, Helen Hays, Director, Great Gull Island Project of the American Museum of Natural History, and Katharine Parsons, Director, Coastal Waterbird Project, Massachusetts Audubon, have established a working partnership to monitor and protect Common and Roseate Terns that breed on Great Gull Island (off the Connecticut coast on eastern Long Island Sound) and migrate thousands of miles each fall to Argentina and Brazil. Great Gull Island is the largest nesting colony of Common and Roseate Terns in the Western Hemisphere. The Sounds Conservancy Explorer Grants provides an online tool for both Helen Hays and Katharine Parsons to upload timely research on the Common and Roseate Terns, and coastal nesting birds to include the Least Tern, Piping Plover, and the American Oystercatcher.

In the coming months, program staff will facilitate discussion between Sounds Conservancy Fellows and other Alumni through QLF's Global Leadership Network. By connecting with conservation leaders online, there is great potential to share conservation innovation worldwide.



Great Gull Island is the largest nesting colony of Common and Roseate Terns in the Western Hemisphere. Common and Roseate Terns breed on Great Gull and migrate thousands of miles each fall to South America.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

The Sounds Conservancy was founded in 1984 by Chris Percy. A Connecticut resident with a home on Long Island Sound, Chris dedicated his later years cultivating the next generation of marine stewards

along the geography of the Sounds, coastal waters, and marine resources of southern New England and New York. Upon his retirement in 1995, QLF assumed the Conservancy's assets consisting of four named endowed funds: The Charles W. Kitchings Fund, The Norcross Wildlife Fund, The Sounds Conservancy Fund, and The Sounds Conservancy Dedicated Operating Fund.

### III. CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMS – REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

Conservation Exchange Programs are among QLF's highest priorities and have been a hallmark of our programs over four decades. These programs foster the exchange of knowledge, experience, and innovation across borders while promoting cross-border, international cooperation between individuals, communities, and regions worldwide that share conservation challenges and opportunities. Historically, International Fellows who have participated in QLF's Conservation Exchanges represent 75 countries and six regions across the globe. Exchange programs consist of study tours; site visits with colleagues; meetings, seminars, and workshops with local and regional practitioners; and special assignments with regional conservation organizations. Between assignments there is ample time for discussion, building professional relationships, and sharing best practices. The impact of Conservation Exchanges is far reaching to the individual participants, partner organizations, QLF's Global Network of Alumni who share a conservation ethic that is critically important today.

#### BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION EXCHANGE FOR CONSERVATION LEADERS FROM MONGOLIA CRICKET WILBUR, SENIOR CONSULTANT, NEW ENGLAND

This Biodiversity Conservation Exchange will be directed by Cricket Wilbur, QLF Consultant, Conservation Exchange Programs is scheduled to take place in New England in the fall of 2018. In September, QLF will lay groundwork for a new exchange for conservation practitioners from Mongolia. This exchange will expand QLF's program reach from Southeast Asia into East Asia. Its focus is Sustainable Communities through Biodiversity Conservation and Management. Mongolia is a biodiversity-rich country with conservation challenges similar to the United States, in particular habitat loss and fragmentation, loss of biodiversity, water-stress impacts each amplified by climate change. Start-up funding is essential for program growth. This program will only take place with funding from the Trust for Mutual Understanding. This year, the Trust's geographic focus is Mongolia.

## MIDDLE EAST CONSERVATION EXCHANGE ELIZABETH ALLING WITH STAFF, NEW ENGLAND

*"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 challenges—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 is 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

Since 1992, QLF has directed annual Conservation Exchange Programs for conservation leaders from the Middle East and North America, and has held program Regional meetings every four years. Meetings – held in-region – are designed to inspire new program partnerships. Middle East Program Alumni now represent leading environmental organizations across the region—the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf States. A central theme of the program is using the environment as a bridge to mutual understanding, allowing for collaborative conservation across borders—across geography, political boundaries, cultural frameworks, and socioeconomic borders.

The Middle East Conservation Exchange Program has traditionally focused on specific themes that impact conservation leaders in-region, including Migratory Birds; Consensus Building and Collaborative Conservation; Environmental Conflict Resolution; Environmental and Social Justice; Natural Resource Management; and Wildlife Conservation. In the aftermath of a recent Israeli/Palestinian conflict (spring and summer 2014), there is an ever-pressing need for dialogue between Israelis, Palestinians, and their Arab neighbors. This is where QLF can make a difference. A small non-profit like QLF has accomplished much as a convener, bringing together leaders who share a common commitment to the conservation and stewardship of their community, region, and the global environment *despite their cultural and political differences.*

QLF is setting plans for a Conservation Exchange Program in New England in the fall of 2018 for conservation practitioners from Israel. This program is held in partnership with the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel and is funded by the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. The focus of the program is community-based conservation and stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage.

## GLOBAL FLYWAYS CONSERVATION EXCHANGE ALONG THE RIFT VALLEY/RED SEA FLYWAYS ELIZABETH ALLING WITH STAFF, JORDAN



QLF is planning a Conservation Exchange Program on Global Flyways. This Exchange will take place on the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyways in Jordan. The Exchange has three components: a Study Tour along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway; Middle East Summit on Transboundary Conservation along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway; and a program publication to document new conservation partnerships and transboundary initiatives that emerge during the program.

Middle East Program Senior Consultant, Sami Backleh, rescues a Kestrel chick (*Falco tinnunculus*) in the Judean Desert, 2003. PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY MORRIS

The overarching goal of the program is to share effective transboundary, bioregional conservation strategies and policies developed for the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway with conservation practitioners within the Middle East region and conservation practitioners worldwide, and build international relationships and partnerships to promote regional and global flyway conservation. Program participants are conservation leaders representing partner organizations along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway and the Great Flyways beyond the region.

This program is tremendously exciting as the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway is one of the most important bird migration corridors in the world. Each spring, more than 500 million birds (consisting of 350 species) follow the Great Rift Valley where they diverge to Europe and Asia. Of these migrating birds, one and a half million are soaring birds.

#### IV. STEWARDSHIP – REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

BRENT MITCHELL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
LATIN AMERICA, U.S., CANADA, GLOBAL

##### National Park Service Stewardship Institute

QLF is the principal partner in the National Park Service Stewardship Institute. The Institute helps NPS leaders move the organization in new directions through collaboration and engagement; leadership for change; and research and evaluation. Current projects include:

**Urban Matters** ~ For the past four years Mr. Mitchell has been working with the National Park Service to develop and activate an “Urban Agenda,” a broad action plan for the agency to more fully support and leverage the potential of its urban parks and programs. Through extensive consultation the Urban Agenda evolved, around three principles: Be relevant to all Americans; Work as One NPS (rather independent parks and programs); and Nurture a culture of Collaboration. QLF’s role is to facilitate an engagement process to crowd-source a two-year proof-of-concept experiment, involving 10 cities nationwide, concluded this summer. The Institute is evaluating the experience and determining next steps, including pushing the principles out beyond urban application.

In the last six months QLF’s major contribution has been to respond to a request from the Department of the Interior, under our agreement with NPS, to support a national urban parks conference in Chile (see below).

**New Parks/New Partnerships** ~ In the decade 2006-2016 23 new national park units have been added to the National Park System, bringing the total to 417 nationwide. The practical process for standing up each of these units has been somewhat different in each case, though all depend on a much higher degree of partnership with local state and national nongovernmental partners than in the past. QLF and the Stewardship Institute have been working with a cohort of new-park superintendents and regional support staff to pull out lessons learned on both new park establishment and community partnerships. QLF is taking the lead on compiling a comprehensive report. Though no new parks are anticipated by the Department of the Interior in the near future, it is important to capture the lessons learned.

We also continue to provide support to the new unit in the heart of the Atlantic Region, Katahdin Woods and Waters. In August we helped facilitate a community meeting to discuss possible infrastructure in the Lower Shin Pond area of the new national park. Input from the meeting will inform the emerging General Management plan. Our next phase of work with NPS is designed to provide support to Katahdin and other new parks and partnerships in the Northeast Region.



Marsh Billings Rockefeller Park, Woodstock, VT. May 2017. The National Park Service Stewardship Institute is a collaborative for change, from the way it is organized, to how it works. The origin of the Stewardship Institute is rooted in the idea that the National Park Service is an organization of great public purpose and that its people – charged with the stewardship of some of America's greatest treasures – need to be supported, challenged, and provided opportunities for renewal.

PHOTOGRAPH: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**Culture Change in the National Park Service ~ NPS** has been plagued by allegations of sexual harassment and toxic workplace environments. Without getting involved in specific cases, QLF and the Institute are working with the Washington Office on a program to improve institutional culture that enables inappropriate behavior. Our key contribution has been to convince the organization that they cannot address the issue on their own, and that they need outside expertise. We organized a workshop for NPS and seven experts in fields such as organizational psychology, institutional behavior, human resources and communications. It was held at Gettysburg National Military Park in June. Three of the experts are now working on follow-up projects: listening sessions on the workplace survey response; an ethnographic study of NPS workplace culture, and staff workshops on how to communicate the organization's response effectively. We are currently evaluating our role in helping different parts of the agency coordinate their response, and have proposed convening a workshop with frontline supervisors to assess the worthiness of proposed training and procedural changes.

**Scaling Up** ~ For several years, QLF and the Stewardship Institute helped develop a program with the NPS on landscape-scale conservation, assisting especially with communications and building relationships outside the agency. With that work complete, we are refocusing on collaborative conservation with park units and programs in the Northeast Region.

**Stewardship Today** ~ When the National Park Service established the Conservation Study Institute (now Stewardship Institute) at the opening of Vermont's only national park, they commissioned a feasibility study. Two QLF staff served on the seven-member team that researched and produced a report, *The Landscape of Conservation Stewardship*. On the 20th anniversary of the Institute and Park, QLF is taking the lead on a project to take another look at the topic, asking the question, "What Does Stewardship Mean Today?" Plans are underway for a convening this summer, a lecture series at the University of Vermont, and a new set of interpretive panels for the Park.

## Latin America

This Program seeks to share models for stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage across the Western Hemisphere. QLF has developed the capacity of many environmental professionals in the region through Fellowships, workshops and other exchanges. Today we are following up with those alumni to advance our shared conservation objectives.

## Systems Planning for Protected Areas

Belize is one of only a dozen countries to have met its protected areas commitments under the Convention, actually substantially exceeding with more than 1/3 of its land area under some form of protection. Brent Mitchell was the lead author on a paper reviewing the protected areas system of Belize. Based on over 16 years of programs in the country, and co-authored with two in-country experts, the paper looks at the system from a governance perspective, examining how a small, poor country can manage such an extensive system with very limited resources. It does so through a heavy

reliance on co-management, privately protected, and indigenous- and community-conserved areas, in that order.

Most of the remaining conservation opportunities and needs to connect exist protected areas and habitats are, not surprisingly, on private lands. QLF is currently working to revive a moribund organization, the Belize Association of Privately Protected Areas (BAPPA). A growing group is newly motivated by new park legislation that recognizes private reserves for the first time. In April 2017 we facilitated the first BAPPA meeting in years and, at the group's request, are compiling a white paper on the opportunities and international context of private conservation. We convened a follow-up meeting in February of this year, followed by constructive meeting with the CEO of Natural Resources, Dr. Percival Cho. QLF's visit precipitated this first organizational meeting with the top civil servant for oversight of protected areas.

In April Brent was one of two speakers on a webinar for the United National Development Programme – Biodiversity Finance Initiative, drawing on a case study of the new Northeast Biological Corridor in Belize, alongside descriptions of the 1,500-strong PPA network in Brazil, the US land trust movement, and Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya.

### **Urban Parks – Chile**

Based on our work with the NPS Urban Agenda, and at the request of the Department of the Interior's International Training and Assistance Program (ITAP), QLF has been advising Chile on their urban parks. 2017 is the centennial of PARQUEMET, the landmark urban park in Santiago. To develop an urban agenda for Chile's urban parks, a centennial seminar and workshop is being planned. QLF has provided many US examples to the Chileans, and consulted on the program agenda. Brent Mitchell presented on behalf of the National Park Service, one of only two non-Chileans invited to participate.

## **V. QLF GLOBAL PROGRAM**

A new program endorsed by the Board of Directors (Board Meeting, May 2017), QLF Global is a conservation consulting program with special assignments that promote innovative solutions to shared local and regional conservation and stewardship challenges worldwide with social and environmental outcomes for society. Consulting assignments promote innovative partnerships and solutions that advance successful conservation outcomes and strengthen a global commitment to caring for our environment.

QLF Staff and Alumni possess a depth and breadth of skills and experiences that, along with their trademark community-based approach to environmental stewardship, uniquely positions them to provide value for diverse stakeholders, including governments, corporations, individuals, and other NGOs.

Binding QLF's programs together is its commitment to leadership development through community service; community-based conservation; and stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage. QLF Global is also an opportunity for QLF to amplify its mission, vision, and values with potential access to new, diversified sources of funding to support continued growth.

### **QLF GLOBAL PROJECTS MANAGED BY BRENT MITCHELL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**

#### **Privately Protected Areas**

Brent Mitchell chairs a Specialist Group of the World Commission on Protected Areas on private approaches to conservation and nature stewardship within IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). The group published a first global assessment of privately protected areas (PPAs) in 2014. They built on that to publish a paper, *Privately Protected Areas: Advances and Challenges in Guidance, Policy and Documentation* (PARKS 2017).

Last autumn QLF introduced an official resolution for all IUCN members—which includes most governments—to support privately protected areas (PPAs). The resolution also called for global guidance on PPAs. The specialist group led by QLF is now preparing that guidance. In June we organized a workshop to frame it, which will take the form of a manual in IUCN's Best Practice Guidelines service. The workshop, hosted by the German *Bundesamt für Naturschutz*, brought 23 experts from 15 countries around the world to an island retreat in the Baltic Sea. The guidance, to be published this year, is timely, as countries race to meet their protected area commitments in 2020 under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Outcomes include: Global guidance on privately protected areas, a first Raising awareness of PPAs as often the best option for protecting particularly underrepresented habitats (e.g., temperate grasslands) and to connect existing protected areas; continuation of educational outlets such as *The Stivardr* newsletter; continued maintenance of a global network of PPA experts. Impact can be measured through the contribution to biodiversity conservation through expanding protected areas; increasing acceptance of, and incentives for PPAs by governments that currently do not recognize them; helping to insure that protected areas are truly protected, and not “paper parks.”

## World Heritage

QLF is developing competencies as an advisor to the World Heritage Convention, which recognizes sites of “Outstanding Universal Value” to mankind. We are often called on to consult on questions of governance of sites, and of lowering the conceptual boundary between natural and cultural heritage. The Convention is managed by UNESCO, advised by two organizations: IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) for nature and ICOMOS (International Counsel of Monuments and Sites) for culture. In 2018, QLF participated in a workshop on “Connecting Practice,” an effort to align the two. Brent Mitchell was sent by IUCN to participate in workshops at the triennial conference of their counterpart, ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites). That meeting was held in December in New Delhi, India with QLF participating in many sessions, especially on topics of governance.

Brent Mitchell undertook a mission for IUCN to an area nominated by Canada for World Heritage inscription. Pimachiowan Aki is an area of the boreal shield on the border of Manitoba and Ontario. Larger than the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the land has been managed by First Nations people for 7,000 years. Stewardship of its nature is intricately entwined with the culture of these people, and QLF worked alongside an ICOMOS counterpart in an example of “connecting practice.” More recently he has repeatedly reviewed IUCN’s advice to UNESCO in preparation for the 42nd session of the World Heritage committee in Bahrain in June.

Brent Mitchell also serves on numerous other international bodies including the Protected Landscapes Specialist Group; the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy; joint task forces with the Species Survival Commission and Commission on Environmental Law.

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