QLF PROGRAMS 2020

LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

On the eve of the 60th anniversary, QLF affirms its commitment to Biodiversity Conservation and Stewardship of our Natural Resources to address the most pressing environmental issues in our home region and beyond.

Gros Morne National Park, Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, a site of one of QLF's Environmental Education Programs
PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS GATES

Gros Morne National Park, Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland. PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS GATES

We believe the organization's six-decade record of achievement is derived from the vision and service of our Founder, Robert A. Bryan, expressed over decades through the collective efforts of Alumni who have served with distinction. Today, QLF is recognized for its pioneering work in community-based conservation and its Network of 5,000 Alumni – former Volunteers and Interns who have served with the organization in our home region (Eastern Canada and New England), and International Fellows who have participated in region-to-region Conservation Exchange Programs and who represent 75 countries beyond North America. On the Eve of our 60th Anniversary, we continue to reach for the standards of excellence inspired by our Founder and set forth by Larry Morris, President *Emeritus*. Our vision is to invest Biodiversity Conservation programs in-region and shared worldwide; a strategy to adapt to and build resilience to a changing climate.

Through CONSERVATION INTERNSHIPS, we offer experiential learning to share knowledge as young professionals meet the challenges of accelerated environmental change.

Through regional BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION programs, we work with rural communities to set strategies that address our changing climate.

Through region-to-region CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, we work in collaboration with conservation leaders and practitioners to meet the most pressing environmental challenges of our time.

And through the QLF GLOBAL PROGRAM, we work in public/private partnerships such as BirdLife International, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), UNESCO, and government agencies worldwide to meet critical conservation challenges with strategies for a renewable environment.

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.

Maps by Stephen Engle

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REPORT

I. LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION

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 & Strait of Belle Isle); Aquatic Species at Risk (Newfoundland and the Labrador Straits); Conservation of Seabirds, Sea Ducks, and Important Bird Areas (Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec North Shore); Composting to Reduce Greenhouse Gases (Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland); Next Generation's Conservation Leaders (Newfoundland and Labrador); and Conservation and Stewardship (Maritimes).

THE SOUNDS CONSERVANCY MARINE PROGRAM

The Sounds Conservancy Marine 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's research over the last 25 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. Exchanges focus on biodiversity conservation, community-based natural resource management, migratory birds, forest stewardship, privately protected areas, and wildlife conservation.

IV. STEWARDSHIP – LATIN AMERICA, U.S., & CANADA

QLF created International Programs nearly 40 years ago to foster an exchange of experience and innovations among organizations and individuals in communities and regions facing 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 inside global frameworks.

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

IV. QLF GLOBAL PROGRAM

QLF Global is a global conservation consulting program. Consulting assignments promote innovative solutions to local and regional conservation challenges shared worldwide which 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.

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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QUEBEC-LABRADOR FOUNDATION: THE ORGANIZATION

The Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment (QLF) is a Not-for-profit Organization in the U.S. (incorporated in 1963) and a Registered Charity in Canada (incorporated in 1969) with offices in Ipswich, Massachusetts, and Montréal, Québec. QLF's program mission is defined in two parts: a regional component (New England and Eastern Canada), and an international component, which ties our regional model to a global network. *QLF exists to address pressing environmental issues through pioneering community-based conservation programs in eastern Canada, New England, and rural communities worldwide. QLF continues to promote leadership development and share successful models for Biodiversity Conservation, and the stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage across the globe.*

Founded by The Ven. Robert A. Bryan, for nearly six decades, QLF is distinguished by a unique approach of working across borders: politically, between two countries; geographically, within a bioregion; and locally, among the mixture of religious denominations and ethnic identities, which comprise the rural population of Eastern Canada and New England. A Bush Pilot and Archdeacon of the Quebec North Shore, The Ven. Robert A. Bryan held a lifelong commitment to the people and communities along the Quebec-Labrador Coast through his work in Aviation and Ministry. Bob Bryan inspired young men and women to follow his example. Initiating many decades of work to train a new generation of leaders throughout New England and Atlantic Canada, Bob led high school and college students north to teach swimming, provide recreational opportunities, and community service.

He furthermore began, through QLF, to provide scholarship funds that have supported more than 1,000 promising university students across Eastern Canada, giving them the opportunity to study and develop their own leadership skills.

By the 1970s, QLF and its Atlantic Center for the Environment were working with Interns throughout the region to foster a deep respect, grounded in local culture, for the natural environment. Programs were expanded both geographically and programmatically when QLF offered experiential outdoor leadership opportunities for young adults. In 1977, the Atlantic Center for the Environment was created to develop Community-based Conservation Programs and Conservation Internships across Eastern Canada and New England – now QLF's flagship programs.

In 1981, QLF recognized its regional programs could be an effective model as countries looked for ways to address environmental issues over an international border and established International Conservation Programs to foster an exchange of experience and conservation innovation among organizations and individuals in other regions that share similar challenges and opportunities. Today, our program model of cross-border, bioregional conservation is shared beyond our home region of Eastern Canada and New England – with conservation leaders and practitioners in Europe; Central and Southeast Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; the Middle East, North Africa, the Gulf States; East and Southeast Asia.

Binding all programs together is QLF's commitment to conservation and the stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage, which serve to address the most pressing environmental challenges in-region and worldwide.

I. LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION

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 work in the preserves owned and managed by the Nature Trust, and provide 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 conservation assignments. Simply put, QLF provides an array of experiential learning that often results 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's conservation leaders and stewards of our environment.

THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
EASTERN CANADA

QLF Founder Robert A. 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 directed by Beth Alling for educational purposes to include academic scholarships, fellowships, study tours, and other educational opportunities. In addition, the program continues to offer standing grants to universities as QLF has historically done with Memorial University of Newfoundland. When available, the vast QLF resource network worldwide is utilized for additional creative objectives.

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.

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

II. CONSERVATION – EASTERN CANADA & NEW ENGLAND

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

Dr. Kathleen Blanchard, Senior Consultant with the Quebec-Labrador Foundation, directs the Biodiversity Conservation Program 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 as they witness first-hand the impacts of pollution and climate change affecting rural communities and 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 empower people to work within their cultural context. The program, directed for more than two decades, involved more than 100 Interns and 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.

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 is expanding the program in 2020 and the harvesters themselves - the champions of the project - are spreading the word.

Interns have an important role in coordinating several beach clean-ups in areas where plastic marine debris washes onshore and recording the volume and weight of that debris. These data points have substantiated the extent of the problem and helped inform the action strategies that are being implemented. QLF Interns also teach youth in schools and summer workshops about steps they can take to prevent marine debris from occurring.

Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) off Conche, Newfoundland, monitored by QLF's Marine Species at Risk Program
PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS GATES

New Multi-Year Grant: Recovery Actions to Benefit Marine Species in Newfoundland and Labrador Waters

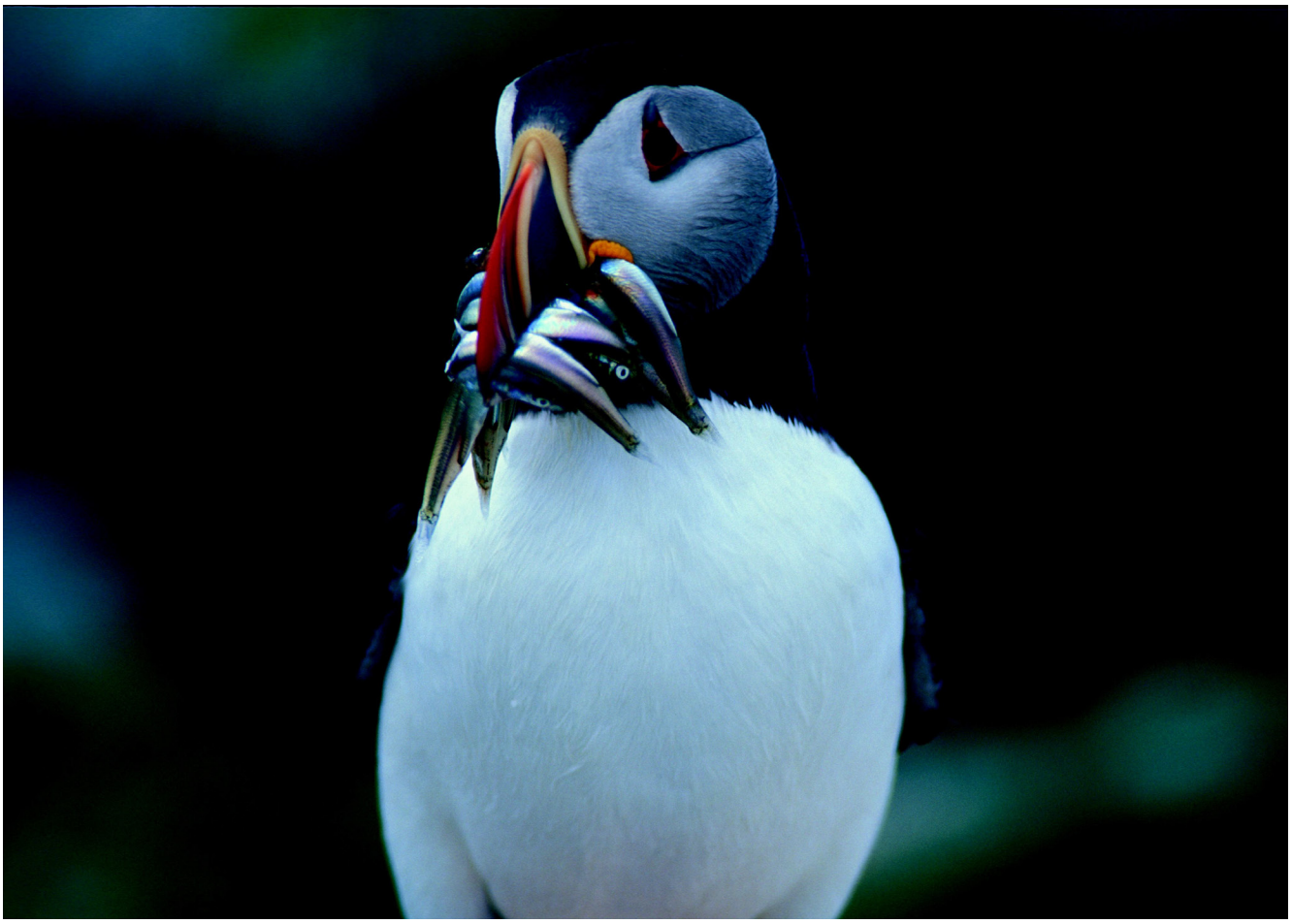
This new, four-year grant from the Government of Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, under the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk, is secured by Kath Blanchard who is recognized by regional and international organizations and government agencies for her pioneering work in community-based conservation, and holds a track record of successful marine conservation initiatives in the region.

The project aims to contribute to the recovery of several endangered and threatened marine species, including the North Atlantic Right Whale, Leatherback Sea Turtle, Beluga Whale, and Blue Whale - species in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and waters of Newfoundland and Labrador. The project will also assist in the recovery of the Fin Whale and threatened species of wolffish. The project goal is to reduce threats caused by fishing interactions such as entanglement with gear, ingestion of plastics, and, in the case of wolffish, by-catch mortality. Directed by Kath, the project is based in Newfoundland and Labrador, where the main target audiences are individuals involved directly in commercial and recreational fisheries, community leaders, and youth.

The project involves extensive year-round field work in Newfoundland, including dialogue and focus group meetings with more than 300 fish harvesters and community leaders. It expands on QLF's successful pilot work, directed by Kath, in diverting plastic fishery-related waste from inshore waters, as bait box liners and plastic bags are a lethal threat to sea turtles and deep diving whales. The project will engage a communications campaign using social media, produce video clips, and informational products, and with the help of QLF Interns give 25 presentations each year to youth across the Province. Indigenous groups and several organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador will be engaged, as required by the Government of Canada. As the Lead Partner, QLF will serve as the Grant Administrator for this project and its 25 partner organizations.

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. Seabirds such as Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, and Common



Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*). Dr. Kathleen Blanchard directed QLF's Marine Bird Conservation Program for 20 years, beginning in the 1970s. One hundred Interns and Volunteers began their careers in wildlife research and environmental education working for this program. PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

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. In 2018, with funding from Bird Protection Quebec, Dr. Blanchard traveled 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 planting 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 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.

CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP
EMILY MCINTOSH, PROGRAM MANAGER
THE MARITIMES

The overarching goal of the program, Conservation and Stewardship, Maritimes, is the conservation of birds and the stewardship of their environments in protected areas principally in New Brunswick and across the Maritimes. The program is directed in partnership with the Nature Trust New Brunswick - a charitable land conservation organization that is responsible for conserving and stewarding more than 60 nature preserves throughout the province. Through teaching environmental awareness and monitoring species in significant areas in New Brunswick, and the stewardship of marine environments and preserves, the next generation of leaders and practitioners are engaged and inspired. This year, QLF will expand the program across the Maritimes to address the drastic decline of bird species in the region's changing climate.

THE SOUNDS CONSERVANCY MARINE PROGRAM
ELIZABETH ALLING WITH QUINN PARKER, PROGRAM COORDINATOR
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 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 scientists and share conservation innovation.

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 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

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

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

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.

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, conservation and innovation across borders while promoting cross-border, international cooperation between individuals, communities, and regions worldwide.

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, and QLF's Global Network of Alumni who share a conservation ethic that is critically important today.

EAST ASIA CULTURE AND CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH CONSERVATION LEADERS FROM MONGOLIA AND NEW ENGLAND
CRICKET WILBUR, SENIOR CONSULTANT, INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Over the last five years, QLF has directed several Conservation Exchange Programs with conservation leaders from Southeast Asia. In 2019, QLF expanded the reach of the Exchanges to East Asia and directed the first Conservation Exchange Program in New England in partnership with the Mongol Ecology Center. Its focus was Sustainable Communities through Biodiversity Conservation and Management. In the spring of 2020, QLF will lead the second Cultural and Conservation Exchange Program in Mongolia for practitioners representing the public and private sector from New England and Mongolia. This program is managed once more in partnership with the Mongol Ecology Center.

While Mongolia is reach in biodiversity, its environmental challenges, amplified by the impact of climate change, are similar to New England, in particular loss of biodiversity and habitat. Conservation practitioners from New England and Mongolia will address shared conservation challenges and build strategies for a renewable environment in a changing climate.

MIDDLE EAST CONSERVATION EXCHANGE
ELIZABETH ALLING WITH QUINN PARKER, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

"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 cases, but affecters 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 planning a second Conservation Exchange Program on Global Flyways. This Exchange will take place on the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyways in Jordan. Participants will gather together for an event on migratory bird protection and transboundary flyway conservation, followed by workshops and bird banding. The Exchange will culminate in a program publication to document new conservation partnerships and transboundary initiatives that emerge during the program.

After a rainstorm, approaching the Sheikh Hussein border between the West Bank and northern Jordan, Fellows of the 2007 Middle East Conservation Exchange were witness to the migration of many species of birds including White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*), Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*), and Common Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*).

The sight of migratory birds flying unencumbered across international borders, as they have done for centuries, was a message of hope and symbolic of QLF's program mission to bridge people and communities across the Middle East region through a shared commitment to conservation and the protection of migratory, soaring birds. PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES JACOBI

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.

Early morning desert shadows, Wadi Rum, known as The Valley of the Moon in southern Jordan.
PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Park, Woodstock, Vermont. For twenty-five years, QLF has worked in collaboration with the National Park Service Institute based at Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Park. QLF has been a founding partner of the Institute since it was established along with the park in 1992.

The Institute works at the request of the National Park Service to build and sustain creative environments and practitioner networks that foster fresh thinking on global conservation and stewardship issues. PHOTOGRAPH BY NORA MITCHELL

IV. STEWARDSHIP – REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

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

Disarming Harassment

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. Building on a workshop we organized for NPS and seven outside experts at Gettysburg in 2017 we are now providing training. We convened a pilot training in December 2018 facilitated by a leading institute on restorative justice techniques, the STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience) at Eastern Mennonite University. The pilot training, held at the NPS regional office in Philadelphia, was so successful we were invited to be part of the next annual superintendents training. This second training, held at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia, reached one-third of the frontline supervisors in the country. We are currently refining the training model and evaluating our role in helping different parts of the agency coordinate their response.

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. Though no new parks are anticipated by the Department of the Interior in the near future, it is important to capture the lessons learned. QLF took the lead on compiling a comprehensive report and, after an exhaustive review process, it is now available on NPS.gov/stewardship institute.

Stewardship Today

QLF is a core member of the Stewardship Institute team, helping guide direction, implementation and evaluation. We are developing a number of new initiatives under a banner of "Stewardship Today." These include a look at new and existing authorities for the National Park Service to engage in partnerships, and assistance to the Chesapeake Bay Program to do just that. We are also in the early stages of planning initiatives around the 250th anniversary of the United States as a nation in 2026.

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.

Protected Areas

Senior Vice President Brent Mitchell was asked to advise on a new effort to consolidate and coordinate protected areas around Santiago, the capital of Chile. Santiago has the largest urban park in Latin America: in 2017, Brent was invited to a conference on the centenary of Parque Metropolitano, representing the U.S. National Park Service. However, recreational access to the mountains surrounding the capital area has been limited, and governance and management of the few existing parks has been weak. In 2019, Brent was invited to visit and help launch a new program to support conservation and boost outdoor recreational activity around the city. Over a third of the population of Chile lives in the Santiago Metropolitan Region.

Brent was also invited to an event marking the 60th anniversary of IUCN, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, with which we collaborate frequently. The conference, on Protected Landscapes, was held at Fontainebleau, where the Union was established. Brent provided a summary of presentations in one of three conference streams.

Though we work often with IUCN, we also assist its sister organization in cultural

preservation, the International Council of Monuments and Sites, or ICOMOS. Brent assisted a symposium on protected landscapes last November, convened at San Francisco's Presidio.

Brent continues to advise protected area professionals in Belize, though from a distance in the current period. There is recent movement on the part of the government to fully enact the National Protected Areas System Act of 2015, and QLF is providing consultation and background material from other countries.

Schoodic Point, Acadia National Park, Winter Harbor, Maine.
PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

V. QLF GLOBAL PROGRAM

BRENT MITCHELL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

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. 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.

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). In October, they published the landmark *IUCN Guidelines for Privately Protected Areas*, with QLF leading the effort. The guidance is timely as countries race to meet their protected area commitments in 2020 under the Convention on Biological Diversity. In June 2017 the German *Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN)*, brought 23 experts from 15 countries around the world to an island retreat in the Baltic Sea to outline the Guidelines. In the summer of 2018 they invited us back to develop training based on the Guidelines. With support from BfN, QLF is implementing a series of training workshops, based on regional and global events. The first was held at the Latin American and Caribbean Protected Areas Congress, in Lima, Peru (October 2019), which included a launch of the Spanish translation of the PPA Guidelines.

QLF continues to manage the IUCN Specialist Group on Privately Protected Areas and Nature Stewardship, including communications with a global team of volunteer experts, a dedicated website, and an occasional newsletter, *The Stivardr.*

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, and advised by two organizations: IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) for nature and ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites) for culture. In 2018, QLF participated in a workshop, in Rome, on "Connecting Practice," an effort to align the two.

QLF also advises on new nominations to the World Heritage List. In this reporting period, we represented IUCN as half of a field evaluation team to Lake Ohrid, Albania. The lake is shared by Albania and the country now known as North Macedonia. (QLF had independently conducted a Landscape Stewardship Exchange at Skadar, another transboundary lake in Albania, a decade earlier.) The World Heritage extension was approved in July of 2019.

Sometimes World Heritage sites face major threats to the integrity of their Outstanding Universal Value. In an effort to raise awareness, UNESCO places such sites on a list of World Heritage in Danger. Today there are over 50 such sites, though fortunately only 17 worldwide are natural sites. (QLF contributed to the effort to address issues so that one site, the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, could be taken off the danger list in 2018.) QLF was asked to serve on a Reactive Monitoring Mission to one of the remaining 17 sites, East Rennell, Solomon Islands, in May of 2019. The mission resulted in a set of recommendations being taken up by UNESCO and aid agencies in the South Pacific.

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.

Off Red Bay, Labrador. PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS GATES

Wishart's Point, Tabusintac estuary, New Brunswick, site of QLF first Environmental Education Program, Living Rivers (1975). The program reached hundreds of Anglophone, Francophone, and indigenous youth and adults, providing them with learning opportunities in river ecology and watershed management. For decades, QLF has directed dozens of environmental education programs in the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Quebec North Shore.
PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

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