

THE SECOND QLF ALUMNI CONGRESS

A Brief Report - April 2017

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I write to each of you with a brief report on *The Second QLF Alumni Congress* held in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain (November 2016). The five-day *Congress* was a resounding success, convening 160 conservation leaders representing 38 countries, 100 organizations, the public and private sector.

The ideas, commitments, and enthusiasm that emerged at the *Congress* affirm my belief that QLF's future and next half century programs will be defined by the organization's network of outstanding individuals who are community and conservation leaders and practitioners. I am certain the *Congress* contributed to new emerging public/private partnerships, regional and international exchange programs, and consulting opportunities for Alumni managed by QLF and which address shared conservation challenges in rural communities worldwide.

To this end, I extend my deep appreciation and heartfelt thanks to QLF partners in Catalonia, Members of the Governing Boards, Alumni, Partner Organizations, Staff, and Consultants for your commitment to the *Congress* and collective efforts to ensure its success. And I am eternally grateful to the *Congress* donors for their generous contributions for this historic gathering. Thank you, thank you.

Elizabeth Alling, President
Quebec-Labrador Foundation
Atlantic Center for the Environment



Congress participants at the conclusion of the Workshop Plenary Session, Món Sant Benet, El Bages region, Catalonia - PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

RECOMMENDATIONS SET FORTH AT THE CONGRESS WORKSHOP

The recommendations set forth at the *Congress Workshop Plenary* — orchestrated by QLF Senior Vice President Brent Mitchell with facilitators, presenters, and *Congress* staff — mirror QLF's program direction; that is, *to direct current regional programs and international exchanges, and launch new initiatives under the banner of the Global Leadership Network. And, we will roll out the following:*

PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS – QLF is in dialogue with several organizations to establish new program partnerships with our respective Networks of Alumni.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS – QLF remains committed to directing International Exchange Programs, and in particular, we will revitalize the Middle East Program (with an in-region exchange and eco-tour scheduled, Fall 2017), and expand the Southeast Asia Program (with an exchange scheduled, Spring 2017).

QLF GLOBAL – QLF is developing a Global Consulting Initiative named QLF Global. The initiative is designed to offer consulting assignments to Alumni conservation leaders and practitioners. The assignments are expected to generate high impact and innovative solutions to shared environmental challenges in communities worldwide.

QLF Global presents an opportunity for new mission-driven programs that result in diversified funding to support QLF's programmatic growth and our Network of Alumni. QLF Global has the potential to meet funding challenges as nonprofits experience increased competition for philanthropic support. Creative adaptation is crucial, and this initiative should lead to a more sustainable organization. A Business Plan is currently in development with examples of consulting projects that demonstrate Return on Impact.

Now is the time to harness the energy and good will of the *Congress*. I welcome a dialogue with you on this new “venture.”

THE CONGRESS WORKSHOPS

The *Congress Workshops* opened with a Plenary Session on 14 November 2016 at historic Sant Pau, Barcelona's former Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau. QLF was honored to welcome Raül Romeva, Catalan Minister of Transparency, Institutional Relations and Foreign Affairs, as the keynote speaker for this session. The Workshops were structured around presentations and working sessions with ample time for group discussion allowing participants to share knowledge, expertise, and experience. Participants identified initiatives to address common environmental issues worldwide through new innovative programs, partnerships, and consulting assignments.



Brent Mitchell with *Congress* staff, before Plenary Session, Sant Pau, Barcelona. (Left to Right) Marta Pujol (Catalonia), Delphine Slotten (U.S.), Nina McKee (U.S.) and Adrienne Kotler (Canada & Germany) - PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY MORRIS



(Left to Right) Kate Irvine (UK), Raed Hayyaneh (Jordan), and Sharón Benheim (Israel), Consensus Building and Collaborative Conservation Workshop, Mon Sant Benet, Catalonia - PHOTOGRAPH BY KEVIN PORTER

In all there were eight *Congress Workshops* ~

Consensus Building & Collaborative Conservation – Facilitated by Sharón Benheim (Israel) and Alix Hopkins (U.S.)

Local Response to Climate Change – Facilitated by Nellie Catzim (Belize) and Snezana Dragojevic (Montenegro)

Local Stewardship: Community-Based Conservation – Facilitated by Stephen Engle (U.S.) and Simone Hanchet (Canada)

Marine & Freshwater Stewardship – Facilitated by Iyad Aburdeineh (Palestine) and Magda Nassef (Egypt)

The Nature in Us: Cultural Heritage & Communities – Facilitated by Blazena Hušková (Czech Republic) and Miriam Torres (Peru)

New Directions in Protected Areas – Facilitated by Brent Mitchell (U.S.) and Nathalie Zinger (Canada)

Our Living Planet: Biodiversity & Nature Conservation – Facilitated by Dr. Kathleen Blanchard (U.S. & Canada) and Kiragu Mwangi (UK & Kenya)

Scaling Up and Conservation Finance – Facilitated by Constance de Brun (U.S.) and Sabrina Sassi (Canada & France)



Kiragu Mwangi (UK & Kenya), Workshop Facilitator, *Our Living Planet: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation*, Món Sant Benet, El Bages region, Catalonia - PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

QLF ALUMNI IN CATALONIA

Over decades, QLF has quietly and deliberately built a Network of Alumni. There is overwhelming consensus that QLF's greatest strength over its history is its cadre of Volunteers, Interns, International Fellows, and staff and consultants who have worked for over five decades in every capacity. QLF's Alumni number more than 5,000 and hail from 75 countries in six regions worldwide. Many are leaders in community and conservation, and share the same spirit and feelings about QLF undiminished by time and geography. It is only fitting to convene our Alumni — 10 years after *The First QLF Alumni Congress* in Budapest hosted by the U.S. Ambassador to Hungary George H. Walker.

Congress objectives were to provide an opportunity for Alumni to convene and network during formal working sessions and site visits; share knowledge and expertise among a multi-disciplinary, global network of conservation leaders and practitioners who continue to influence public policy at a regional and global level; and launch new programs, partnerships, and consulting teams under the banner of the Global Leadership Network.

QLF's relationship with Catalonia has thrived over the latter half of its 56-year history. When QLF began an exchange program in Eastern Europe shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. asked QLF to include Catalonia in its Exchanges. The Fund recognized that the region was still emerging from the Franco regime in much the same way that Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania were emerging from Soviet dominion.

A decade later, QLF's participatory approach to land stewardship found fertile ground in Catalonia, culturally and historically predisposed to a social approach to conservation. One Alumnus teamed with a savings bank to create a network of privately protected areas across Catalonia; another created a Catalan network of local organizations that supports individuals to manage private natural areas. In recent years, QLF advised these Alumni and others in a European Union project to promote land stewardship across the continent. Today, QLF has friends and Alumni across the country, and at high levels of government and NGO conservation agencies.



QLF Canada Board Chairman Philip Nadeau (left) with Larry Morris, La Pedrera, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Modernist building designed by Antoni Gaudí, Barcelona. La Pedrera was the site of the Opening Reception of the Congress.
PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA



Món Sant Benet, site of the *Congress Workshops*. Located in the region of El Bages, one hour outside of Barcelona, is the Món Sant Benet cultural heritage center with its refurbished Medieval Monastery of Sant Benet del Bages, the former summer residence of Catalan painter, Ramon Casas. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING



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