



THE SECOND QLF ALUMNI CONGRESS *and what's next...*

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) and the outcomes of the *Congress*. 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. 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
QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment
June 2018



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.*

REGIONAL FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS – QLF is renewing support for its regional Flagship Programs, Biodiversity Conservation and Conservation Internships.

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), and expand the Southeast Asia Program.

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.

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, Món Sant Benet, Catalonia - PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

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 loyalty to QLF undiminished by time and geography. It was 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

OUTCOMES OF THE SECOND QLF ALUMNI CONGRESS – WHAT’S NEXT?!

Now, over a year later, QLF is pleased to report on some of the many concrete outcomes that were born out of the Congress, and championed by QLF Staff and Alumni around the world. In Barcelona, we renewed support for flagship programs and launched new initiatives.

REGIONAL FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

QLF renewed its support for the regional flagship programs to include:

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION (ONGOING)

At the Congress, attendees of the Our Living Planet: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation workshop had a chance to hear from Dr. Kathleen Blanchard, Senior QLF Consultant, and Alumnus Kiragu Mwangi. 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); 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).

In the Greater Saint John Area, the Kingston Peninsula and Fredericton, New Brunswick, Interns provided environmental education projects and workshops for youth to encourage their interest in their surrounding environments. The projects focused on shorebirds and seabirds, marine species, climate change, marine debris and conservation action.

CONSERVATION INTERNSHIPS (ONGOING)

Conservation leadership is among QLF’s highest priorities and has historically been a hallmark of our programs. QLF’s conservation model, inspired in the Atlantic Region, is shared with Alumni and partner organizations worldwide.



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 CRANINA

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 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, and its Conservation Internship Program is one of the reasons for QLF's growing Alumni network.

QLF is renewing support for these important and transformative flagship programs and will continue to invest in the next generation's conservation leaders.



QLF Conservation Interns conduct a survey of endangered shorebirds along Newfoundland's southwest coast, 2017. PHOTOGRAPH BY RUSSELL WALL

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The following partnerships are ongoing:

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 Brent 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



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

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.

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 work- place 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.

QLF/INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSOCIATION

At the *Second QLF Alumni Congress*, QLF Alumna and Consultant Lisa Andrews was able to meet and convene with other water professionals from around the world. Lisa works at the International Water Association (IWA) in The Hague, The Netherlands as a Program Officer in their Cities of the Future program.

The IWA and the World Bank have established a global partnership to assist countries in reducing their Non-Revenue Water (NRW). The project aims to capture practices that raise awareness of the need to reduce NRW, use Performance-Based Contracts to reduce NRW, improve the preparation of such contracts, and support their implementation. The IWA is seeking water professionals from target regions who would be well-suited and interested in participating in a training initiative about Performance Based NRW Reduction. Upon working on this training initiative, Lisa immediately thought of the water professionals she had met at the *Congress*, and in particular those from the West Bank. She is currently in discussion with QLF Middle East Alumni about their potential participation.

CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

QLF renewed support for Conservation Exchange Programs

SOUTHEAST ASIA CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM – APRIL 2017

In April 2017, QLF directed its second Southeast Asia Conservation Exchange Program in partnership with Viet Nature, the BirdLife International affiliated based in Hanoi, Vietnam. The program's goal is to share conservation knowledge, experience and conservation innovation with a focus on public/private partnerships in biodiversity conservation. Vietnam, which occupies less than one percent of the global land area, is a country that is rich in biodiversity. Forest protection and forest stewardship, biodiversity conservation and marine conservation are high on Vietnam's environmental agenda.

The Exchange was inspired by Pham Tuan Anh, President and Deputy Director, Viet Nature Conservation Centre (Hanoi) and Khong Trung, Head, Quang Tri Provincial Forest Protection Department, who attended



Fellows and QLF Staff, 2017 Southeast Asia Exchange Orientation Meeting at the Inn at Castle Hill, a property of The Trustees of Reservations, the Crane Estate, Ipswich, Massachusetts. From left to right: Phan Thi Hoai, Director, Quang Binh Community Development Center; Pham Thi Luot, retired, Quang Binh Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; To Thi Thu Huong, Interpreter; Pham Tu Anh, Cau Giay District People's Procuracy; Pham Tuan Anh, President & Deputy Director, Viet Nature Conservation Centre; Nguyen Huu Hoai, Chairman, Quang Binh Provincial People's Committee; Khong Trung, Head, Quang Tri Provincial Forest Protection Department; and Le Trong Trai, Director, Viet Nature Conservation Centre. Second row: Larry Morris, QLF President Emeritus

The oldest regional land trust in the world, The Trustees of Reservations is a non-profit land conservation and historic preservation organization dedicated to preserving natural and historical places in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

the 2016 Congress in Barcelona. Both were participants in the Congress Conservation Finance Workshop. In the interest of exploring conservation finance through public/private partnerships, Pham Tuan Anh offered to lead a delegation of conservation practitioners from Vietnam to New England. She was joined by Khong Trung and selected the participants

The Exchange consisted of site visits in New England and Washington, D.C. and meetings with conservation leaders and practitioners representing both the public and private sector. The desired outcomes were to share experience and knowledge of the opportunities and challenges of public-private partnerships and initiatives in Biodiversity Conservation. The consensus by the Fellows was a commitment to conservation and stewardship working in collaboration with nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

Viet Nature has called for continued collaboration with QLF with a new Exchange for Conservation Professionals representing QLF's Global Leadership Network of Alumni in Vietnam.

BIRD OBSERVATORY EXCHANGE

In partnership, QLF Alumni from Manomet Center for Conservation Science and the Jerusalem Bird Observatory (JBO) convened an exchange on bird observatories as catalysts for effective conservation and experiential education. (Bird observatories are an under-appreciated platform for providing children with an introduction to the natural world.) In September 2017, Manomet sent a team to Israel to visit the JBO and exchange ideas, expertise and knowledge on capacity building for flyway conservation.

In October, staff from the JBO visited Manomet headquarters in Massachusetts to continue the exchange. During the exchange, JBO co-presented with Manomet at the International Bird Observatory Conference in Cape May, New Jersey. QLF sponsored two members of the JBO to attend the International Bird Observatory Conference and the Exchange with Manomet.

MONGOLIA EXCHANGE ON SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN NEW ENGLAND – 2018

QLF is laying the groundwork for a new exchange program in New England 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, and water-stress impacts each amplified by climate change.


MIDDLE EAST CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM: THE WORLD'S GREAT FLYWAYS – 2019

QLF Alumnus Kiragu Mwangi, Senior Capacity Development Manager at BirdLife International, had long been in talks with Beth Alling, QLF President, to create a Middle East Exchange Program focused on migratory birds. When Kiragu co-facilitated the Biodiversity Conservation Workshop at the Congress, it presented the perfect opportunity to finalize the idea and bring it to life.

The Global Flyways Conservation Exchange Program is scheduled for April 2019, and will convene participants Jordan's Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyways. The Exchange has three components: Study Tour with



Fellows of the Middle East Program who as their colleagues are advocates for consensus building and collaborative conservation. From left: Sami Backleh (Palestine) and Charles Curtin (U.S.), Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan, 2008. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING



a focus on migratory bird conservation and field site visits along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway; a Summit Meeting on Transboundary Conservation along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway and the World's Great Flyways; and a program publication to document initiatives that emerge during the program.

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 Rift Valley where they diverge to Europe and Asia. Of these migrating birds, one and a half million are soaring birds.

Participants are QLF Alumni (former International Fellows), which QLF has worked in partnership with, and their respective organizations, for decades. There will be one participant from each partner organization in the Middle East representing Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine (West Bank). There will be four representatives from the program's Lead Partner, BirdLife International Middle East, which is based in Amman, Jordan. There will also be seven Alumni participants from beyond the Middle East, representing the World's Great Flyways.

QLF GLOBAL PROGRAM

At the Congress, QLF launched the QLF Global Program

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 grass-lands) 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 Council 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.

QLF DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT: FOR PROJECTS CATALYZED AT THE CONGRESS

CZECH ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP FUND, CZECH REPUBLIC AND ISRAEL

In September 2017, QLF provided support to the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation, whose CEO Miroslav Kundrata is a QLF Alumnus and attended both QLF Congresses. This was in support of their work in sustainable architecture, stewardship, and cultural exchange among nations. QLF’s assistance allowed the Partnership Foundation to support ecological architecture and cultural projects led by architect Rajnis Studio HAMR. These projects involve preparing construction elements in the Czech Republic with Czech materials, and then using them to construct ecological architecture in Israel. The project includes and highlights intercultural exchange.

GARDEN OF WISDOM

QLF Alumnus Michael Caduto, who is an educator, storyteller and author, wanted to document traditional stories and science from throughout the Middle East, and use them to educate children about nature and conservation. He spent several years making trips to the Middle East, in partnership with regional QLF Alumni, to gather and curate stories from storytellers, educators and conservation leaders from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine.


QLF assisted in funding the book project, and Michael was able to connect to Alumni through QLF’s Global Leadership Network – tapping network members online, in person, and at the *Second QLF Alumni Congress* in November 2016 – to identify local illustrators, and for assistance with the final steps necessary to publish the book. At the second Congress, an Alumnus suggested that Michael be in contact with Israeli illustrator Odelia Liphshiz, who went on to do the beautiful illustrations for the book. Other Middle East Alumni who were at the second Congress assisted with finishing touches on the book, such as doing final fact checks of the stories from their home regions.

In February 2018, all steps were complete and *The Garden of Wisdom: Earth Tales from the Middle East* was published. The final product represents a collaborative effort involving over fifty individuals spanning twenty organizations, many of whom are QLF Alumni.

THE PALESTINE HEIRLOOM SEED LIBRARY, PALESTINE

At the Congress, QLF Alumna Vivien Sansour presented on a new project on seed saving and cultural heritage in Palestine.

The project, *The Palestine Heirloom Seed Library*, continues work Vivien has been doing for a decade around seed conservation, and engagement with communities and farmers. Her new initiative is to build a “traveling



kitchen cart” to enable her to spend one year traveling to different villages to raise awareness about the importance of seed saving and seed autonomy as a path to health and community strength. Vivien finds heirloom seeds that are approaching extinction, documents the cultural heritage around them, conserves them, and makes them available again. Through her travels, Vivien works with farmers to make traditional foods from their heirloom varieties while telling the story of the seed, and spreading knowledge about seed preservation. Her work has led farmers to grow more heirlooms, and young people to seek out information about their own seed heritage.

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, PALESTINE

With QLF’s support and assistance, environmental consultant, university lecturer, and QLF Senior Consultant Sami Backleh has crafted a program called “Traditional Ecological knowledge and new models in Palestine as a tool to climate change adaptation.” The project documents and assesses Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in Palestine, using a participatory approach, and with a focus on education and public awareness about climate change, including adaptation. The project is led by working groups made up of students and environmental and media professionals. QLF provides these participants with the chance to learn about climate change adaptation and TEK in the United States.



Early morning desert shadows, Wadi Rum, Jordan. One of seven protected areas managed by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING



Wisher's Point, Tabusintac estuary, New Brunswick, site of QLF's first Environmental Education Program, *Living Rivers*. PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

