



# QLF

PROGRAMS 2022-2023

LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

*In QLF's 60th year, We Affirm Our Commitment  
to Biodiversity Conservation and Stewardship of  
Protected Areas and Natural Resources  
In-region and Worldwide.*





A killick anchor, Conche, Newfoundland. Killicks were first used by fishermen throughout Newfoundland and Labrador in the early 17th Century. For QLF, the killick is our anchor to windward. Our Planned Giving Society is named after the killick 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. In QLF's 60th year, 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 in 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.



## 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 Aquatic Species at Risk (Newfoundland and the Labrador Straits); Marine Bird Conservation (Quebec North Shore); Leadership in Conservation (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. STEWARDSHIP – REGIONAL & GLOBAL

QLF created International Programs nearly 40 years ago to foster an exchange of experience and innovation 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.

Regional Stewardship projects are in collaboration with the National Park Service Stewardship Institute and include Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and a series of initiatives with Park Management. Global Programs consist of the PARKS Journal Special Issue on COVID-19; Privately Protected Areas; and World Heritage. The projects of Privately Protected Areas (PPAs) include Guidelines for PPAs, IUCN WCPA Technical Note, and Training on PPAs.

### IV. INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

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. The International Conservation Exchange Programs scheduled for 2021 are now postponed indefinitely and include The East Asia Conservation Exchange Program (in Mongolia) and the Middle East Conservation Exchange Along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyways in Jordan.



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 Aquatic Species At Risk Program. PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

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

*QLF At Fifty*

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

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## 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 and staff 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 program 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:



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

### Multi-Year Grant: Aquatic Species at Risk

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, was secured by Kathleen 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 the Lead Partner, QLF will serve as the Grant Administrator for this project and its 25 partner organizations.

## Marine Bird Conservation: Renewing Local Action in Seabird Conservation on the Quebec 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, Common Murre, and sea ducks such as Common Eider nest in dense colonies and congregate in bays and other areas that are rich in food such as capelin and blue mussel. They are considered by scientists to be excellent indicators of the health of the marine ecosystems and their behavior often signals that studies may be needed into the impacts of climate change on the ocean.



Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*). Dr. Kathleen Blanchard directed QLF's Marine Bird Conservation Program for 20 years.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

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, 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.

Beginning in August of 2020, QLF launched a two-year project, *Renewing Local Action in Seabird Conservation on the Quebec North Shore*, in communities of the Quebec Lower North Shore aimed at re-engaging residents of that isolated region in activities to protect the important seabird colonies of the coast. The objectives are to raise awareness of threats to nesting colonies of puffins, razorbills, murres, and eider ducks and to mobilize youth and adults in monitoring activities. The project targets the main threat of illegal hunting and eggging, which has been well documented. Although seabird populations of the coast enjoyed a dramatic come-back following QLF's and the government's extensive efforts in the late 20th century, there has been a resurgence of these threats in recent years, which has been exacerbated by the elimination of the last federal migratory bird officer position for that coast. The Quebec North Shore is home to 10 of Canada's oldest migratory bird sanctuaries. The Lower North Shore contains the most important sanctuary — the St. Mary's Islands — and is home to QLF's first and decades-long programs that were initiated by QLF Founder Robert A. Bryan.

The project, conceived and directed by QLF Senior Consultant Dr. Kathleen Blanchard, will reach residents from Chevery to Blanc Sablon with community radio programs, in-school presentations, and community workshops. Occasional boat trips to the seabird colonies, led in part by adults who attended QLF's seabird program decades ago, will familiarize youth and adults with the nesting birds up-close, skills in monitoring birds, and actions for protecting the colonies from disturbance. Radio programs were broadcast in August and September 2020, led by QLF Alumnus Thierry Grandmont, who worked with Kath Blanchard for two years and is currently enrolled in a graduate degree program at Laval University. In-person community activities were postponed out of necessity due to restrictions and community concerns under the COVID-19 pandemic. Much more is planned for later this fall, involving remote presentations to schools in the region.

The project builds upon QLF's 20-year Marine Bird Conservation Program, led by Kath Blanchard and involving over 100 Interns from Canada and the US. It was a program of special interest to Bob Bryan, who enjoyed bringing many noteworthy visitors such as Bobby Orr to witness QLF in action. It is also a direct result of interaction with residents of St. Paul's River, whose passion for seabirds resulted in the creation and performance of a play in 2019 involving high school youth and teachers. The script and costumes referenced the famous *Dreambird* production by QLF Interns during the 1980s, and is further evidence of QLF's long-lasting impact among residents of the coast.

The project is funded by the Community Interaction Fund under the St. Lawrence Action Plan, a multi-year funding initiative of Environment and Climate Change Canada in cooperation with the Province of Quebec.

## Leadership in Conservation

### 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 collaboration 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.



Looking out at the Bay of Fundy from the shoreline of Disher Conservation Easement in Bocabec, New Brunswick, an area of land protected by the Nature Trust of New Brunswick (NTNB). The NTNB partnered with QLF in 2021 to conduct conservation activities across the southern region of the province.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXA SCHUBAK

**CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP  
ALEXA SCHUBAK WITH KRISTA GRANT, PROGRAM MANAGERS  
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 QLF field team, along with Nature Trust New Brunswick (NTNB) staff and stewards, conduct a seabird survey on the coast of Disher Conservation Easement, in Bocabec, New Brunswick. The data collected during the species surveys in this region contributes to longitudinal studies, informing future conservation efforts PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTA GRANT

**THE SOUNDS CONSERVANCY MARINE PROGRAM  
ELIZABETH ALLING WITH HANNAH MOORE  
THE SOUNDS AND COSTAL 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.

Staff continually 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 a 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.



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

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.

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.



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

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

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

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.



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 is a founding partner of the Institute 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

### III. STEWARDSHIP – REGIONAL AND GLOBAL BRENT MITCHELL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

#### 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:

#### Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network

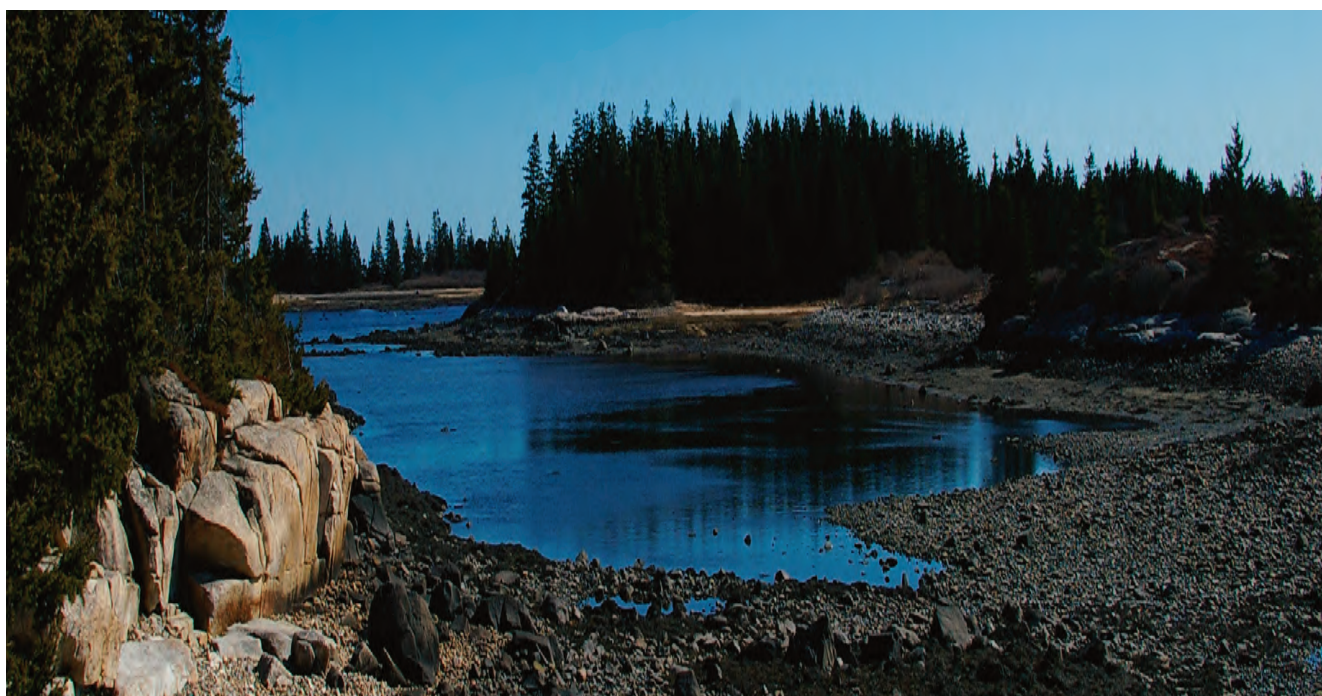
QLF recently concluded a project to develop a strategic plan for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. Gateways are parks, wildlife refuges, maritime museums, historic sites and water trails, and the Network is a system of hundreds of sites within the 64,000 square miles within the watershed. Authorized by Congress 20 years ago, the Network has been a bit neglected in recent years due to reductions in the staff assigned to it. With our partners at the Stewardship Institute we used interviews and (virtual) workshops to develop a strategic plan for its revitalization, including a multi-million-dollar partnership grants program. We also updated the Gateways Framework, a description of the constituent parts. Though the Chesapeake is geographically a bit outside our usual areas of focus, at the Institute we have been supporting and studying networks for years, and discussions are underway for further assistance to guide the implementation of the Plan.

## Other Projects

Much time in this difficult period has been devoted to developing new projects with our partners in the Stewardship Institute.

A proposal is pending for Brent Mitchell to be engaged as a “learned professional” to help develop a Leadership Summit for the NPS Stewardship Institute. It would convene groups of people around specific topics of value to the NPS mission, facilitate exchange and group learning, and distill key lessons for wider dissemination. The topic for the first event in the series will capture lessons learned in adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic within the NPS.

The highly successful NPS Urban Agenda has drawn attention at the level of the Department of Interior, and discussions are underway for the Institute and QLF to develop a guidebook/manual of best practices in community engagement on environmental justice.



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

## QLF GLOBAL PARKS Journal Special Issue on COVID-19

Brent Mitchell co-edited a special issue of PARKS, the International Journal of Protected Areas and Conservation, on the impacts and implications of SARS-CoV-2 on conserved areas. Peer reviewed papers examine everything from the history of epidemics and land conservation, to the drivers of COVID-19 in wildlife and human population dynamics, and impacts on everything from tourism income to direct management of parks and reserves.

The Journal was published on 11 March 2021, the anniversary of the declaration of a pandemic by the World Health Organization. It received extremely strong media coverage, thanks to a communications team borrowed from IUCN, WWF, Conservation International, and others. Since publication, QLF has been working to get the information before decision-makers in a variety of formats and venues.



QLF's conservation research and studies now extend north of our home region in Eastern Canada - the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Quebec North Shore - to the once remote geographies such as the Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Greenland's High Arctic. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING.

## Policy Notes, Technical Papers and Related Communications

QLF assisted with the development of "Nature-based COVID-19 recovery: investing in protected and conserved areas for planetary health," #4 in the IUCN WCPA Technical Note series (a format we advocated for, and contributed #1 on privately protected areas). We are also assisting in the development of a series of video interviews of authors from the PARKS special issue, the first (available now) being with Dr. Rachel Golden Kroner of Conservation International.

Brent Mitchell advised on a range of policy documents, including contributions to the "Protected and Conserved Areas Joint Statement on Climate Change and Biodiversity Crises." QLF is a founding signatory to the policy document being prepared for the climate conference in November (Glasgow) and biodiversity conference of parties (April, Kunming).

Brent and five others authored a peer-reviewed paper, Privately Protected Areas: Missing Pieces of the Global Conservation Puzzle, which argues PPAs are an essential part of global conservation efforts (such as new climate and biodiversity targets to be set this fall and spring), but on which we have too little data. The paper will appear in the journal *Frontiers in Conservation Science*, with publication expected in October.

## Privately Protected Areas

QLF has managed a specialist group on privately protected areas and nature stewardship ever since IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas established the group in 2008. We convene a leadership subgroup, the PPA Strategists, every month; maintain a website; and undertake projects to elevate the recognition, understanding and integrity of private conservation worldwide.

## Guidelines for Privately Protected Areas

Over decades IUCN has produced detailed guidance on many aspects of protected area management and governance. QLF produced No. 29 in the series, Guidelines for Privately Protected Areas. Since the launch three years ago we have translated the publication into Spanish, French and, most recently, Japanese. Versions in Portuguese and Polish are in development.

## Training on Privately Protected Areas

We are wrapping up a series of trainings based on the PPA Guidelines, funded by the German Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). The first training event was held at the III Latin America and Caribbean Protected Areas Congress in Lima, Peru (October 2019). Others planned for April and June of 2020 were of course postponed. At the World Conservation Congress we delivered a half-day "conservation campus," one of only six such long sessions offered. In December we will return to Món Sant Benet, Catalonia (site of the 2016 QLF Congress) for the European Land Conservation Network conference, and to provide five of 35 sessions of the International Land Conservation Network congress, to be held virtually. The ELCN grew out of QLF's early work in Catalonia. Brent Mitchell will give the keynote address to the Spanish network in October.

While our training program was planned around in-person events, in the pandemic we have pivoted to virtually communications. In June 2021 we organized a series of webinars, based on the PPA Guidelines, through the Vital Sites series hosted by IUCN's Global Protected Areas Programme.

The webinars, Guidelines, technical notes, case studies, bibliography and other materials will form the basis of a self-guided study curriculum we are now developing, to be hosted online by our partners at BfN.

## World Heritage

Brent Mitchell continues to assist the IUCN in its support to UNESCO in the World Heritage program. Recently, these have been limited to desk work, including a status report of all natural (and mixed natural/cultural) sites, the World Heritage Outlook. We hope to resume on-site evaluations and reactive monitoring missions once it is safe to travel again.

## IV. INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

### ELIZABETH ALLING, STAFF, AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

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 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 rich 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  
ALONG THE RIFT VALLEY/RED SEA FLYWAYS  
ELIZABETH ALLING WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

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.

Essential for the Middle East Conservation Exchange Program is a recognition of the intrinsic value of conservation as a path to mutual understanding and collaborative conservation across borders, political boundaries, cultural frameworks, and socioeconomic borders. For nearly three decades, program themes have focused on Migratory Birds, Marine and Coastal Conservation, Biodiversity, Consensus Building and Collaborative Conservation. 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.

With continued regional conflict, 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 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.

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.



Looking out at the forest of Disher Conservation Easement, in Bocabec, New Brunswick, an area of land protected by the Nature Trust of New Brunswick (NTNB). At this site, the QLF field team conducted forest bird surveys in collaboration with NTNB staff and stewards, as part of QLF's Conservation and Stewardship Maritimes Program. The data collected contributes to longitudinal studies on birds and to the broader conservation effort in this region. PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTA GRANT



Lobster Cove, Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA



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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