

QLF PROGRAMS 2023

LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

With its roots in the Atlantic Region of North America, QLF engages environmental leaders worldwide to advance community-based and larger-scale conservation and stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage.



The QLF field team, along with Nature Trust of New Brunswick staff and stewards, conduct a seabird survey on the coast of Disher Conservation Easement in Bocabec, New Brunswick. Those data of the species surveys in this region contribute to longitudinal studies, informing future conservation efforts . PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTA GRANT



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

MISSION STATEMENT

With its roots in the Atlantic Region of North America, QLF engages environmental leaders worldwide to advance community-based and larger-scale conservation and stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage.

VISION STATEMENT

The Quebec-Labrador Foundation envisions a world in which nature and human societies thrive together and people of good will collaborate to solve the global issues of our time -climate change, depletion of natural resources, biodiversity loss and planetary health.

Building on its decades-long legacy of engaging a worldwide network of conservation and community leaders, QLF seeks innovative solutions and shares knowledge across generations, cultures and borders.

QLF addresses pressing global environmental challenges through impactful programs in three focus areas: environmental leadership, biodiversity conservation, and stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage. Through its work, QLF nurtures and trains current and future conservation leaders while fostering diversity, equity and inclusion in all its programs.

In these ways, QLF strives to be a highly relevant and effective non-profit conservation organization that contributes to a vibrant future for humanity and our planet.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Create and cultivate enduring relationships within the Atlantic Region and worldwide.
2. Invest in the talent, energy, and optimism of current and future conservation leaders.
3. Contribute to and share knowledge, strategies, and innovation across cultures and borders.
4. Uphold a commitment to serve people, places, and the environment.
5. Lead with boldness, creativity, and conviction.
6. Act with humility, respect, and integrity.

Amended April 2023

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REPORTS

I. LEADERSHIP 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 regions.

II. CONSERVATION - EASTERN CANADA & NEW ENGLAND

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The Biodiversity Conservation Program consists of Leadership in Conservation (Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland and the Labrador Straits) Aquatic Species at Risk (Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland and the Labrador Straits), and Aquatic Species at Risk (South Coast of Newfoundland).

III. CONNECTIVITY CONSERVATION

QLF is a new partner in the Staying Connected Initiative, a cutting-edge cross-border, public-private collaboration focused on conserving and restoring a well-connected forest landscape for native wildlife and people in the Northern Appalachian-Acadian/Wabanaki region of northeastern North America. This region, which encompasses more than 80 million acres (32 million hectares), is globally significant as one of the largest areas of mixed temperate forest remaining in the world. Importantly, it is a critical destination and gateway for species moving northward in response to climate change.

IV. CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP, THE MARITIMES

The program, Conservation and Stewardship, the Maritimes, is dedicated to conducting provincial surveys that assess the impact of climate change on seabirds, sea ducks, migratory birds and their habitat; and macro-invertebrate species that are indicators of water quality. Those data are integrated in regionwide longitudinal studies on biodiversity and ecosystem health, which further define strategies and management plans for the conservation, stewardship, and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems in the province.

V. STEWARDSHIP - REGIONAL

QLF is the principal partner in the National Park Service Stewardship Institute. The Institute is designed to guide leaders in the National Park Service in new programmatic directions through collaboration and engagement; leadership for change; and research and evaluation. A few of the current projects include the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and a Leadership Summit for the National Park Service Institute.

VI. STEWARDSHIP – GLOBAL

The Global Stewardship Programs are focused primarily on the work of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), which is designed to provide scientific, technical and policy advice and to advocate for global and national systems of marine, freshwater and terrestrial protected areas that result in successful outcomes for the conservation of biodiversity.

Other projects include the the Global Biodiversity Framework; the implementation of the 30x30 Global Initiative; Regional Parks Congresses; Protected Areas and One Health; Privately Protected Areas; the UNESCO World Heritage program.

VII. 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.



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

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

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. *With its roots in the Atlantic Region of North America, QLF engages environmental leaders worldwide to advance community-based and larger-scale conservation and stewardship of natural resources and cultural heritage.*

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. The International Conservation Programs were established 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.

II. BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION – EASTERN CANADA & NEW ENGLAND

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

Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland and Southern Labrador

With funding from the International Grenfell Association, QLF has been leading a multi-year program of conservation leadership training for youth, in collaboration with many partners including Intervale, the Community Youth Network, Point Amour Lighthouse Provincial Heritage Site, the Town of Main Brook, Tuckamore Lodge, and several schools and youth groups. 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 the 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. This program is very popular among youth and families from Blanc Sablon to as far north as Cartwright, Labrador, and it enjoys generous hosting by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the light station staff.



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

QLF has submitted a grant proposal to the International Grenfell Foundation for renewed funding of the Leadership in Conservation program. The proposed workplan for 2023 will include sustaining support from Intervale, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Community Youth Network, and other organizations in the region.

Aquatic Species at Risk

This four-year project (2019-2023) has been funded with a substantial contribution from Fisheries and Oceans Canada under the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk. The contribution was secured by Kath Blanchard, who is recognized by regional and international organizations and government agencies for successful marine conservation initiatives and a community-based approach. 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. QLF serves as Lead Organization and Grant Administrator for this project and its 25 partner organizations.

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, Blue Whale, and threatened species of wolffish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and waters of Newfoundland and Labrador. 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. Many other marine

species benefit from the project's conservation strategies. In extensive year-round field work, project staff, consultants, and interns conduct dockside dialogue with more than 300 fish harvesters and community leaders. They produce video clips on the commercial and recreational fisheries, create and distribute thousands of informational posters and placemats, and engage in extensive outreach using social media. Each year, team members inspire hundreds of youth in the region with lively, informative presentations about how to protect marine species and maintain healthy ocean ecosystems.



Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) off Conche, Newfoundland. QLF's Aquatic Species at Risk project works with communities and fishers to reduce harm to marine species at risk. PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS GATES

Aquatic Species at Risk, South Coast of Newfoundland

This new four-year project (2022-2026) is funded with a multi-year contribution from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) under the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk. Following DFO priorities, the project focuses on recovery actions in waters off the South Coast of Newfoundland and in coastal communities between Port aux Basques and Harbour Breton. Some of the smaller outports of this region are isolated, accessible only by boat and periodic coastal ferry service. Similar to the Aquatic Species at Risk project described above, which is currently in its final year of DFO funding, this new project is implemented by Intervale Associates and engages several partnering organizations including local Indigenous groups, harbour authorities, fish harvesters, towns, schools, and youth groups. The project goal is to reduce the threats caused by fishing interactions, namely gear entanglement and ingestion of plastic waste, and to contribute to recovery of regional priority aquatic species at risk. Those species include North Atlantic Right Whale, Leatherback Sea Turtle, Northern Wolffish, Spotted Wolffish, and the Newfoundland South Coast population of Atlantic salmon. Wild Atlantic salmon populations in this region are threatened by poaching, habitat disturbance, other factors both in-stream and nearshore, and interaction with commercial farm-raised salmon.

Strategies will be developed and based upon lessons learned from the previously funded project, with particular emphasis on partnering with harbour authorities to divert plastic waste from the ocean and accelerating the spread of this successful initiative. The project will work with the public to reduce poaching and encourage best practices in the recreational salmon fishery through workshops and the posting of 40 river signs. Team members conduct dockside dialogue with more than 150 fish harvesters to promote live release of wolffish caught as bycatch. School presentations, posters, and informational placemats will educate youth and adults and inspire positive action. The project, which is being launched in 2022-2023, overlaps during its first year with the fourth and final year of the previous project.



The harbour of Little Port, Newfoundland and Labrador, on the province's west coast, is one of many fishing stations where commercial fishers are following procedures for preventing plastic waste from entering the ocean, as part of QLF's multi-year Aquatic Species at Risk South Coast of Newfoundland project. PHOTOGRAPH BY DR. KATHLEEN BLANCHARD

**THE SOUNDS CONSERVANCY MARINE PROGRAM
QLF STAFF WITH ELIZABETH ALLING
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.

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



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

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.

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.



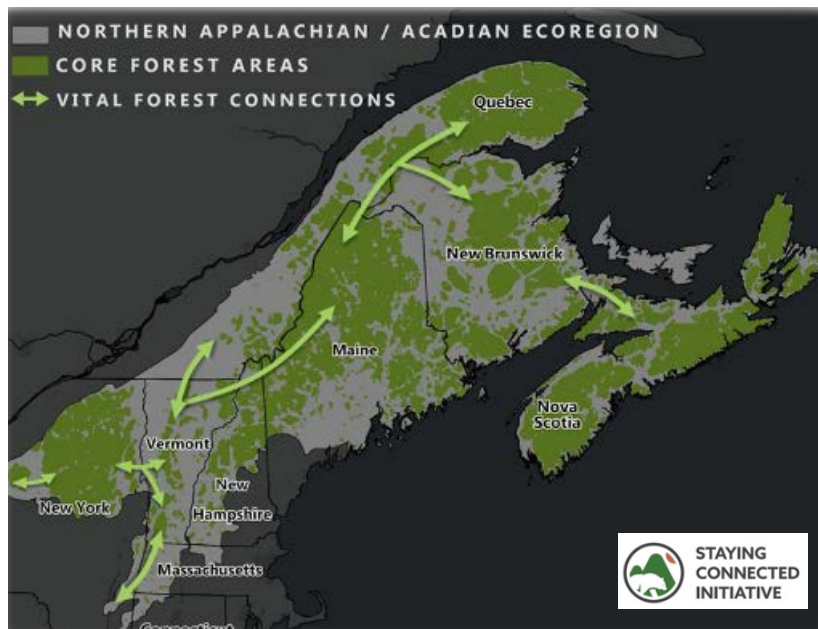
Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Park, Woodstock, Vermont. For twenty-five years, QLF has worked in collaboration with the National Park Service Institute based at Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Park. QLF is a founding partner of the Institute established, along with the park, in 1992. The Institute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

PHIL HUFFMAN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
EASTERN CANADA AND NEW ENGLAND

QLF is excited to be the newest partner in the Staying Connected Initiative (SCI), a cutting-edge cross-border, public-private collaboration focused on conserving and restoring a well-connected forest landscape for native wildlife and people in the Northern Appalachian-Acadian / Wabanaki region of northeastern North America.



The Staying Connected Initiative is focused on maintaining vital forest connections across the Northern Appalachian-Acadian / Wabanaki region of northeastern North America. These connections are critical to enable native wildlife and plants to move across the landscape to meet their life needs and adapt to climate change, habitat loss, and other stresses. A well-connected forest landscape is also essential for the vitality of the region's human communities. MAP COURTESY OF THE STAYING CONNECTED INITIATIVE

This region, which encompasses more than 80 million acres (32 million hectares), is globally significant as one of the largest areas of mixed temperate forest remaining in the world. It also is a critical destination and gateway for species moving northward in this part of the world in response to climate change. Launched in 2009, SCI has grown to include more than 70 governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and others in the northeastern US and eastern Canada.



The Staying Connected Initiative brings together dozens of governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and academic institutions, all working together to maximize their collective impact maintaining a connected forest landscape in northeastern North America.

This remarkable array of partners is deploying an innovative, multi-pronged approach to protect key habitat linkages that connect forest blocks across the region. SCI's holistic approach combines land protection, land use planning, engagement with landowners and communities, projects to make it easier and safer for wildlife to cross roadways, and policy initiatives. All of these are grounded in the best available science for maximum conservation impact.

QLF's new Senior Vice President, Phil Huffman, has been a leader in SCI since its inception, and is now representing QLF as a member of its bi-national Steering Committee. He is working closely with other SCI leaders to help the partnership achieve three timely goals:

1. capitalize on historic funding opportunities to dramatically advance on-the-ground connectivity conservation and restoration work through major new federal programs in the US and Canada;
2. align with national conservation initiatives in both countries – so-called “30x30” commitments to protect 30% of terrestrial and aquatic habitat by 2030;
3. engage thoughtfully and supportively with Indigenous leaders and communities in the region toward shared objectives.

1st Northeastern North America Landscape Connectivity Summit and Action Plan

As part of its leadership within SCI to achieve these and other goals, QLF is spearheading an effort to convene key players from across northeastern North America for a first-ever, region-wide summit on landscape connectivity conservation and restoration. This ground-breaking Summit, likely to be held in spring 2024, will bring together governmental decision-makers and partners from the 5 eastern-most Canadian provinces, 7 northeastern-most U.S. states, Indigenous nations and tribes in the region, and others.

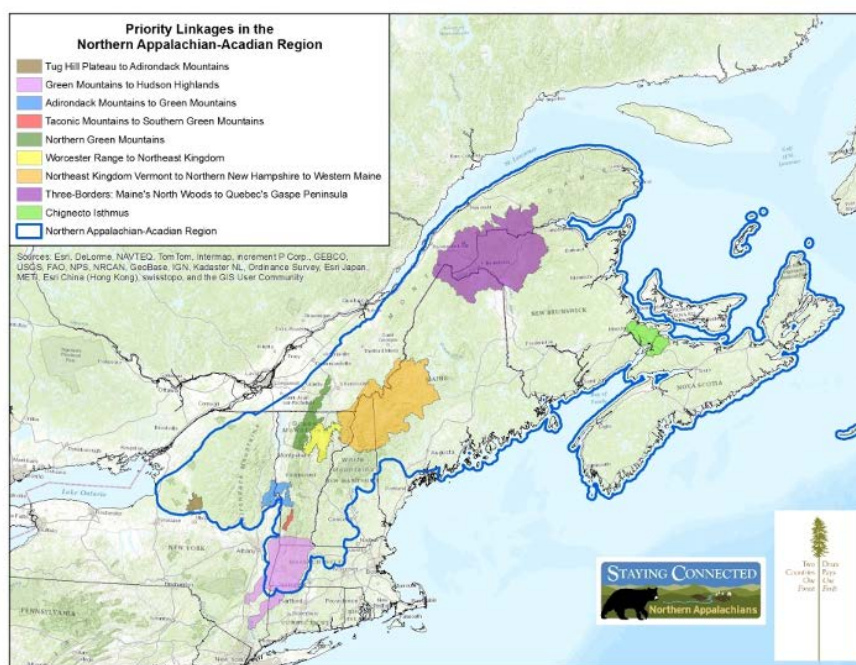


The QLF-led first-ever Northeastern North America Landscape Connectivity Summit will bring together key players from across this vitally important part of the continent to accelerate and scale up transborder connectivity conservation and restoration.
MAP ADAPTED FROM MARGINALCOST CC BY-SA 4.0 VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The gathering will elevate the visibility and importance of the region's connected forest landscapes, and highlight current needs and opportunities. It will lead to preparation of a high-level blueprint of priority actions to advance connectivity conservation and restoration, and help the region secure its fair share of federal funding to accelerate and scale up work on the ground. It also will create and strengthen relationships and collaboration that are essential ingredients for success, both in the near-term and over time.

"Borderlands" Linkage Partner Convening and Action Planning

QLF also is spearheading a parallel effort at a smaller geographic scale focused on one of the Staying Connected Initiative's nine focal "linkage areas" –the one encompassing northeastern Vermont, northern New Hampshire, northwestern Maine, and adjoining areas of southern Quebec.



The Staying Connected Initiative's nine top priority "linkage areas", with the "Borderlands" linkage encompassing parts of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Quebec shown in the tawny color. MAP COURTESY OF THE STAYING CONNECTED INITIATIVE

This cross-border area, referred to by some as the "Borderlands" linkage, plays a vital role regionally by connecting forested areas to the southwest in Vermont and beyond with ones farther east in Maine, Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula, and New Brunswick.

Over SCI's 15-year history, there has never been a convening of partners across all of the linkage's borders, nor has a strategic connectivity conservation and restoration action plan been developed for it. To fill those voids, QLF is collaborating with key players to design and implement a well-grounded, efficient process to bring partners together and identify top priority needs, opportunities, and actions. As with the broader northeastern North America initiative described above, the Borderlands effort is particularly timely and needed now to help partners in the linkage fully capitalize on the unprecedented federal funding that is currently available in both Canada and the US. It also will build a foundation for ongoing cross-border collaboration that is needed to optimize progress toward shared conservation goals.

QLF is grateful for financial support from the Echo Foundation and the Lintilhac Foundation for our work on landscape connectivity conservation and restoration with the Staying Connected Initiative.

IV. CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP, THE MARITIMES

KRISTA GRANT, PROGRAM MANAGER

QLF Staff member, Krista Grant, serves as the Manager of the program, Conservation and Stewardship, the Maritimes. The program is established to conduct provincial surveys that assess the impact of climate change on seabirds, sea ducks, migratory birds and their habitat; and macro-invertebrate species that are indicators of water quality. Those data are integrated in regionwide longitudinal studies on biodiversity and ecosystem health, which further define strategies and management plans for the conservation, stewardship, and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems in the province.

For several years, this program has been managed as a partnership with the Nature Trust of New Brunswick, a charitable land trust established for the conservation and stewardship of more than 60 nature preserves and 8,000 acres of ecologically significant land across New Brunswick. This year, the program expands on its new partnerships with the Island Nature Trust (Prince Edward Island) and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust.



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

The Maritimes are rich in biodiversity and New Brunswick alone provides critical habitat for bird species across a range of forests, lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands. Salt marsh and forested wetlands are home to 300 species of songbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl; of which, more than 230 are migratory, 100 are priority-listed, and 25 are threatened. Alarming, 40% of bird populations are in decline worldwide and one in eight are threatened with extinction. To note, these longitudinal studies are essential for conservation work in the Maritimes that can be shared worldwide.

QLF has explored opportunities for further building our programs, partnerships, and presence in Atlantic Canada through dialogue with NGO colleagues, academic institutions, and provincial and federal government agency staff, which could lead to new collaborative efforts such as:

- matching high-caliber undergraduate and graduate students with rewarding internship opportunities;
- extending our efforts to provide additional on-the-ground stewardship capacity to conservation partners through QLF field crews;
- helping support Indigenous-led conservation initiatives in the region; and
- fostering enhanced dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and collective action on habitat connectivity conservation across provincial borders.



QLF Maritimes Stewardship Program summer field staff conducting site monitoring and stewardship at a nature preserve owned by key partner Nature Trust New Brunswick along the free-flowing St. Mary's River. PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIP HUFFMAN

V. STEWARDSHIP - REGIONAL

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

Last year QLF 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 of the watershed. Last year, QLF developed a strategic plan for its revitalization and updated the Gateways Framework, a description of the constituent parts.

This year we entered into a second phase of assistance to Chesapeake Gateways. QLF and the Stewardship Institute are helping the NPS Chesapeake Office stay on track to fulfill the aspirations of the Strategic Plan and to facilitate engagement of sites, agencies and organizations across the watershed. This involves regular meetings with the management team; facilitating virtual meetings with key partners; convening “Network Chats” on an average of several a month; and other efforts to Rebuild the Network, one of four strategic themes of the plan.



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

VI. STEWARDSHIP – GLOBAL

BRENT MITCHELL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas

In January 2022 Brent Mitchell was confirmed as a Vice Chair of IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas with a remit in “Scaling Natural Solutions.” He works closely with the Chair, Dr. Madho Rao, based in Singapore. These positions were secured by the election of Dr. Rao by member organizations at the World Conservation Congress in Marseille, France, in September 2021.

WCPA is one of seven commissions of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature with a new Climate Crisis Commission, which together with a small Secretariat staff, collectively rely on the work of over 18,000 volunteer experts from over 160 countries. WCPA itself has over 2,500 expert volunteer members around the world. WCPA is designed and run to provide scientific, technical and policy advice and to advocate for global and national systems of marine, freshwater and terrestrial protected areas that result in successful outcomes for the conservation of biodiversity.

Global Biodiversity Framework

QLF is central to WCPA's preparations to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (like the UNFCCC on climate, one of the "Rio conventions"). After years of delay, CBD countries are expected to pass an ambitious agenda for reversing nature loss, the Global Biodiversity Framework (December 2022, in Montreal). Parties to the CBD are all countries of the world except Andorra, South Sudan, the United States, and the Holy See. Of particular relevance to WCPA is Target 3, or "30x30," an agreement to secure 30% of land and sea globally in protected and conserved areas by the year 2030. While others in the Commission support passage of the GBF, we have been looking ahead to implementation, developing guidance to help Parties to the CBD (that is, national governments) prepare to meet these aspirational targets.

Among many areas, we have been helping to define conserved areas, which officially in the CBD are termed "other effective area-based conservation measures." QLF is also focusing on improving access to existing guidance, as well as developing new technical guidance tailored to the need.

Guide to Inclusive and Effective Implementation of CBD Target 3

Brent Mitchell is leading a project to develop an accessible "how-to" guide to implementing "30x30." Funded by the Global Environment Facility through WWF-US, the focus of the work is on two elements, in particular the need for an inclusive approach and effective delivery; reacting against the earlier Aichi target, where governments tended to focus on the area component and pay less attention to the issues of effectiveness and equity. Briefings are being prepared on these two issues, probably as internal reports to WWF and the GEF.

The project is predicated on a participatory approach, seeking advice, input, criticism and hopefully support from a wide range of stakeholders involved in or affected by 30x30, with a particular emphasis on local rightsholders – Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), but also on a range of governance models and on more distant stakeholders, such as those relying on the ecosystem services such areas provide.

Protected Areas and One Health

Scientific evidence is growing that land-use induced spillover is a major contributor to disease, via a pathway of landscape level processes that drive changes in transmission of wildlife pathogens. Protected areas established to protect biodiversity are mechanisms to contain this risk.

Last year, 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 protected and conserved areas. He is now working within WCPA to start up a new task force on Protected Areas and One Health, which will be led by a scientist from the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Policy Notes, Technical Papers and Related Communications

QLF has also been busy on publications and communications on protected areas. Brent Mitchell facilitated development of a series of webinars ("Vital Sites") explaining "other effective area-based conservation measures" and detailing what does and does not count.

This year we also launched the first newsletter for WCPA, the “ABC Bulletin” (for Area-Based Conservation) before handing the details for the next edition to a young professional. Further, we are adding to the categories of WCPA technical guidance by launching a new series of short publications called “Issues Briefs.” These fill a need for a vehicle to explore emerging issues for which guidance has not yet been agreed (e.g., specific provisions of the new Global Biodiversity Framework, or management based on new science at the nexus of conservation and human health).

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 Japanese. This year a version in Polish joined the list, and publication of a Portuguese translation is imminent.

World Heritage

Brent Mitchell continues to assist the IUCN in its support to UNESCO in the World Heritage program. However, the work of the World Heritage Committee has been greatly delayed, first due to COVID and now because Russia had been in line to assume the presidency and host meetings. We hope to resume on-site evaluation and monitoring missions once the program gets back on track.



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

VII. INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

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.

NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT PHIL HUFFMAN, QLF ALUMNA LESLIE VAN GELDER, AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND AND NORTH AMERICA

Building on QLF's long history of exchanges among established and emerging conservation leaders around the world, QLF is pursuing a new exchange between northeastern North America (U.S. and Canada) and the South Island of New Zealand. This exchange is a partnership effort with QLF and the Southern Lakes Sanctuary (SLS), a young conservation collaborative encompassing more than 80 community, Indigenous, business, and governmental groups focused on sustaining and restoring native biodiversity and strengthening resilience across a large landscape in southern New Zealand's Queenstown Lakes and Otago region. QLF Alumna Leslie Van Gelder, a resident of the area and SLS Board Co-Chair, is leading SLS's involvement in the development of the exchange.

Drawing on the mirrored locations of these regions in the northern and southern hemispheres, the overarching theme of the exchange is "Confronting Climate Change and Positioning for a Resilient Future at the 45th Parallel North and South." Global modeling indicates that while their respective climates are headed toward significant changes, these areas are nonetheless likely to be among the more habitable parts of the world in the coming decades. These comparatively favorable forecasts present both new opportunities and challenges with significant implications. In addition, the regions share many other similarities despite being on opposite sides of the world, such as threats to native biodiversity; the growing emphasis on Indigenous-led conservation; destination management and tourism growth with corresponding stresses on the environment; and land use and development pressures.

Altogether, these factors present a rich opportunity for shared learning, innovation, understanding, and inspiration across cultures and distance toward effective and durable conservation solutions, in the best of the QLF exchange tradition. We are hopeful of securing funding from a mix of public and private sources in the coming months and to launch the exchange in 2023.

**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 2024, QLF plans to 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
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 effectors of real change. QLF is affirmation.
The Middle East Program is affirmation.*

~ Elizabeth Cabot, Coordinator, Middle East Program, 2008 – 2009

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

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



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

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.



Early Morning desert shadows, Wadi Rum, known as the Valley of the Moon in Southern Jordan
PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING



Off Red Bay, Labrador PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS GATES



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



Wishart's Point, Tabusintac estuary, New Brunswick, site of QLF's 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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Lobster Cove, Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA