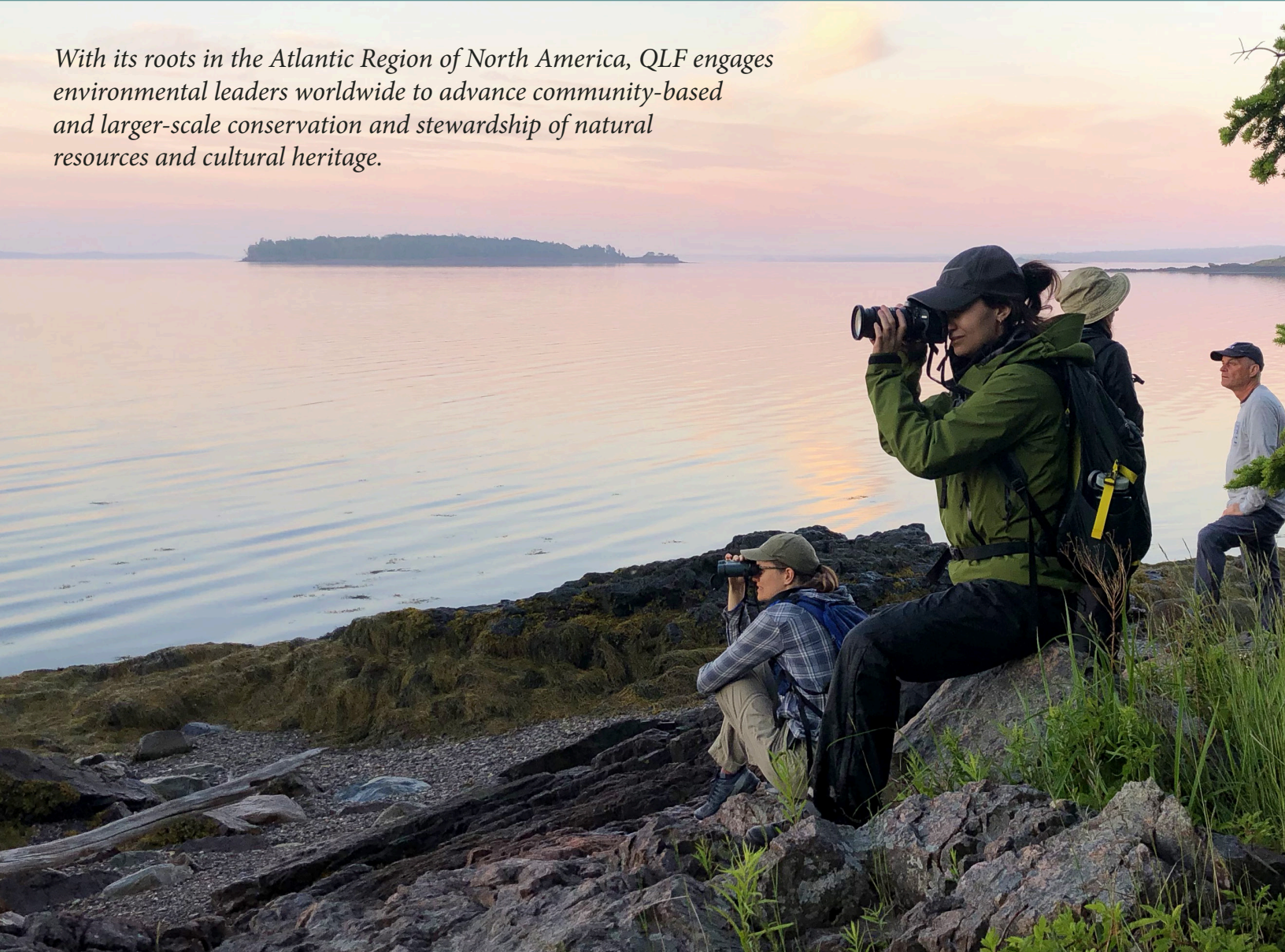




QLF PROGRAMS 2025

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.

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.

YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

QLF is managing 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.

II. BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION – EASTERN CANADA & NEW ENGLAND

AQUATIC SPECIES AT RISK PROGRAM – NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR, THE QUEBEC NORTH SHORE

This four-year project focuses on the recovery of aquatic species at risk along the south coast of Newfoundland and in coastal communities between Port aux Basques and Harbour Breton.

CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP – MARITIMES

The program, Conservation and Stewardship, 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.

III. CONNECTIVITY CONSERVATION

QLF is a leading partner in the Staying Connected Initiative, an innovative cross-border, public-private partnership focused on sustaining and enhancing ecological connectivity for native plants, wildlife, and people in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. This region is globally significant as one of the largest remaining areas of mixed temperate forest in the world, and is a critical destination and gateway for species moving northward in response to climate change.

IV. 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.

V. STEWARDSHIP – GLOBAL

The Global Stewardship Programs are focused 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.

VI. INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

After four decades, QLF has conducted Conservation Exchange Programs that 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.

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

The Quebec-Labrador Foundation fosters leadership through conservation internships 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: the Maritimes Provinces, Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec North Shore, 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.

YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM GREAT NORTHERN PENINSULA OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND SOUTHERN LABRADOR

With funding from the International Grenfell Association, QLF has 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 Historic 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. Some of the youth who have been attending the program for several years have been trained as instructors in the program and now serve side-by-side with program staff.



Conche, Newfoundland. PHOTOGRAPH BY DR. KATHLEEN BLANCHARD

II. BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION – EASTERN CANADA & NEW ENGLAND

AQUATIC SPECIES AT RISK PROGRAM NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, QUEBEC NORTH SHORE

Beginning in 2019, QLF launched a four-year project (2019-2023) in Newfoundland and Labrador with the goal of reducing threats to aquatic species at risk. The project was funded with a substantial contribution from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada under the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk. The project demonstrated widespread success, which led to another four-year project beginning in 2022 that was also funded with a generous contribution from Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Both projects 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. Priority threats caused by fishing interactions are primarily entanglement with gear, ingestion of plastics, and, in the case of wolffish,

by-catch mortality. Many other aquatic species benefit from the project's varied conservation strategies, including Atlantic salmon. The current project focuses on the small, relatively isolated fishing communities of the South Coast of Newfoundland, where some of the smaller outports are accessible only by boat and periodic coastal ferry service. The main target audiences in each project have been commercial fish harvesters, harbour authorities, community leaders, and youth.



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

Federal funding for both projects were secured by Dr. Kathleen Blanchard, who is recognized by regional and international organizations and government agencies for successful marine conservation initiatives and a community-based approach. QLF has been serving as Lead Organization and Grant Administrator. The 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 uses several strategies to reduce threats to aquatic species and to inform and engage people of all ages. Project staff and interns conduct dockside dialogue with more than 300 fish harvesters and community leaders year-round. They give presentations in schools, implement community events for adults and families, and organize beach clean-ups with town officials and volunteers. 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. The project may be best known for working with harvesters and harbour authorities on measures that prevent plastic bait box liners from being discarded at sea, where they pose lethal threat to aquatic species at risk and a danger to all forms of marine life. There are currently 30 harbours enrolled in these measures and the number is growing each month. As a result of the project, well

over 250,000 plastic bait box liners have been returned to shore—representing a very conservative estimate. Education is a central strategy of the project, as staff and interns inspire hundreds of youth and adults with lively, informative presentations about how to protect marine species and maintain healthy ocean ecosystems.



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



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

CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM MARITIMES

The Conservation and Stewardship Program, established in 2017, focuses on promoting biodiversity conservation, restoration, and environmental stewardship at protected areas across the Maritimes region of Canada. The program is carried out through a combination of community engagement and hands-on field activities, including longitudinal surveys to assess ecosystem health and the impacts of climate change on various species and habitats. These efforts aim to raise awareness about environmental challenges, provide practical training to future conservation leaders, and contribute to evidence-based biodiversity conservation strategies.

The program's success is built on strong partnerships with local land conservation organizations. Since the program's inception, QLF has collaborated closely with the Nature Trust of New Brunswick (NTNB), a charitable land trust which conserves and stewards more than 80 nature preserves, totaling 12,000 acres across New Brunswick. In 2022, the program expanded its reach by partnering with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT) and the Island Nature Trust (INT), broadening its impact across diverse ecosystems.



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). PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXA SCHUBAK

Over six field seasons, QLF teams have conducted 156 field expeditions across 84 nature preserves and conservation sites. The program's hands-on approach has provided 15 aspiring conservationists with practical skills through internships, fostering their development as future environmental leaders.

A key focus of the program is biodiversity monitoring and research, which serves as the foundation for effective stewardship and management plans. QLF's efforts to date include 117 comprehensive bird surveys, with some targeting species of concern such as the Piping Plover and Bank Swallow. The program has also gathered essential data on the long-term health of freshwater ecosystems by conducting 18 surveys of macro-invertebrate populations, which serve as key bioindicators of water quality.

Habitat management and restoration are critical components of the program's mission. Since 2017, QLF has conducted 19 environmental cleanup initiatives to remove harmful debris from natural areas. The program has also actively managed invasive species through preserve-wide surveys and targeted removal efforts.

Community engagement is vital to the program's success. Through stewardship workshops, youth educational initiatives, and volunteer participation, the program has directly engaged over 350 community members and youth, while reaching approximately 500 individuals through remote content.

These multifaceted efforts have established a strong foundation for conservation and stewardship in the Maritimes. As we look towards 2025, QLF strives to return to the field, further strengthen our partnerships, and expand our reach as we work to ensure a sustainable future for the diverse ecosystems we aim to protect across the region.



QLF partnered with the Island Nature Trust (INT) to conduct Piping Plover surveys along the beaches of Basin Head Provincial Park, Prince Edward Island. PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTA GRANT

THE SOUNDS CONSERVANCY MARINE PROGRAM

THE SOUNDS AND COASTAL WATERS OF NEW ENGLAND AND SOUTHERN 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.

As well, each year, staff update The Sounds Conservancy's electronic publication with reports on the research of current grantees, thus documenting twenty-two years of work by Sounds Conservancy Fellows, and furthermore archiving the research by Sound, year, and subject. An archival piece, the publication serves as a reference guide for grantees and QLF Staff. Under the direction of a 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. In recent years, 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.



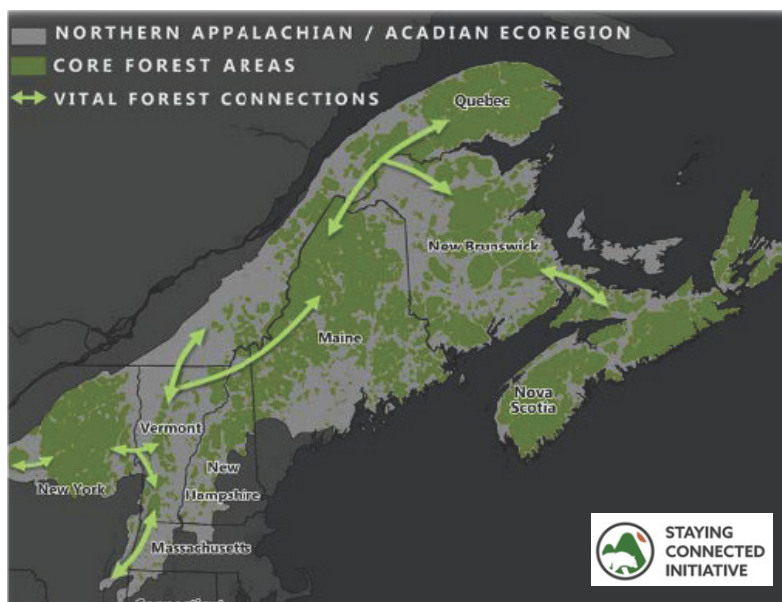
Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Park, Woodstock, Vermont. For twenty-five years, QLF has worked in collaboration with the National Park Service Institute based at Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Park. QLF is a founding partner of the Institute established, along with the park, in 1992. The Institute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

The Staying Connected Initiative

Over the past three years, QLF has become a leading partner in the Staying Connected Initiative (SCI). Founded in 2009, SCI is a cutting-edge public-private partnership focused on sustaining and enhancing ecological connectivity across borders for native wildlife, plants, and people in the Northern Appalachian-Acadian/Wabanaki region of northeastern North America.

This region – which largely overlaps with QLF's “home region” – is globally significant as one of the largest remaining areas of mixed temperate forest in the world, and is a critical destination and gateway for species moving northward in response to climate change. Protecting and restoring well-connected forest and aquatic ecosystems throughout the region is crucial for enabling species to move freely across the landscape to meet their life needs and adjust their ranges, and for strengthening the resilience of natural and human communities to the impacts of climate change.



The Staying Connected Initiative partnership works to maintain well-connected forest and aquatic ecosystems across the Northern Appalachian-Acadian / Wabanaki region of northeastern North America. Connections between large forest blocks in the region are critical to enable wide-ranging wildlife and plants to move across the landscape over time to meet their life needs and adapt to climate change, habitat loss, and other stresses. A well-connected landscape is also essential for the vitality and resilience of the region's human communities. Map courtesy of the Staying Connected Initiative. MAP COURTESY OF THE STAYING CONNECTED INITIATIVE

The SCI partnership uses an innovative, multi-pronged approach to protect and restore ecological connectivity, recognizing that no one strategy is sufficient to get the job done. SCI's holistic approach starts with conservation science, spatial analysis, and planning to inform where conservation investments should be made. Partners then utilize a combination of implementation strategies including land protection, stewardship and restoration; land use planning; engagement with landowners and communities; projects to make it easier and safer for wildlife to cross roadways; policy initiatives; and coordination and collaboration to optimize effectiveness.



The Staying Connected Initiative partnership uses an innovative, multi-pronged approach to maintain and enhance landscape connectivity. GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY.

SCI's work to conserve and restore ecological connectivity across the Northern Appalachian-Acadian / Wabanaki region also entails deploying a multi-faceted approach at a range of different scales – from individual land parcels and road crossings to large landscape-scale linkages and regionwide.

Recognizing that no one entity is capable of doing it all – that is, implementing the full suite of strategies in SCI's multi-pronged approach at all the scales that are relevant – the SCI partnership brings together a broad mix of partners to tackle the challenge through coordinated collective action. Today the SCI network includes more than 70 official partners from within the region and beyond in Canada and the U.S. These include federal, provincial, state, regional, and municipal governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, private funders, and many others who are woven into the work in various ways.



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. GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE STAYING CONNECTED INITIATIVE

1st Northeastern North America/Turtle Island Landscape Connectivity Summit

QLF's primary focus with the Staying Connected Initiative partnership over the past year has been spearheading the first-ever transborder summit on landscape connectivity for Northeastern North America, which was held in June 2024 in Montréal / Tiohtià:ke, Québec, the unceded territory of the Mohawk Nation / Kanien'kehá:ka.



QLF was proud to spearhead and co-host the first-ever transborder Summit on landscape connectivity that encompassed the five eastern-most Canadian provinces, seven northeastern-most U.S. states, and the many Indigenous territories in the region. PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN MAUER/ISTOCK

This unique gathering brought together a diverse mix of participants across borders, cultures, organizations, and sectors to build relationships and chart a path toward an ecologically and culturally connected landscape for all inhabitants of this globally significant region. Over 170 conservation leaders, practitioners, and funders from Canada, the United States, and Indigenous nations both within and far beyond Northeastern North America participated.

QLF was honored and thrilled to co-host the Summit with the Center for Large Landscape Conservation (CLLC) on behalf of the SCI partnership. The gathering was a resounding success, with great energy, important outcomes, and strong interest in a second Summit. We are deeply thankful to our programmatic funders and Summit sponsors whose support made the event possible.



Attendees at the highly successful first-ever Northeastern North America/Turtle Island Landscape Connectivity Summit in Montréal / Tiohtià:ke, Québec, co-hosted by QLF in June 2024. PHOTOGRAPH BY AUDREY HUFFMAN

Actions Building Off the Connectivity Summit

Following the resounding success of the Summit in June, momentum is building quickly for enhancing ecological connectivity across borders in Northeastern North America.

A major milestone was reached on September 10, 2024 in Boston, Massachusetts, when the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG-ECP) adopted a new resolution on connectivity, Resolution 45-2. This significant action reaffirms the support of the region's current top political leaders for the NEG-ECP's earlier Resolution 40-3 adopted in 2016, which highlighted connectivity as an important regional issue and solidified a commitment by the provinces and states to work together to sustain and enhance a well-connected transborder landscape.

Together, these two resolutions provide a robust, high-level mandate for advancing connectivity efforts in this region, and offer powerful models for other regions in North America and beyond. Getting renewed attention to connectivity from the Governors and Premiers was one of the primary goals of the Summit in Montreal / Tiohtià:ke, and the SCI partnership is excited they have taken this important leadership step so quickly. QLF is now collaborating actively with other SCI partners to capitalize fully on the significant opportunity it presents to accelerate connectivity conservation and restoration work regionwide.



Governor Maura Healey of Massachusetts and Premier Andrew Furey of Newfoundland and Labrador, the 2024 Co-Chairs of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, sign Resolution 45-2 in Boston on September 10, 2024. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN AUSTIN

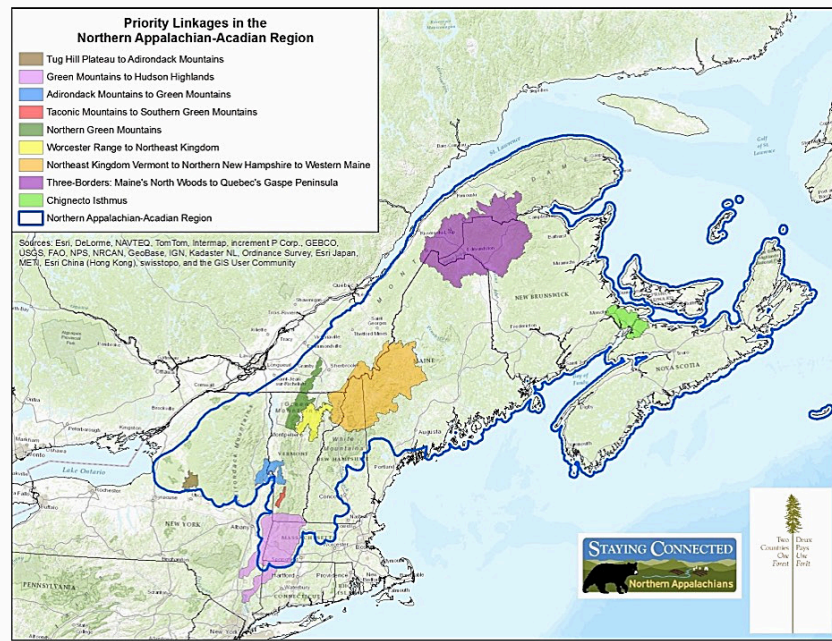
Also, QLF is helping lead an effort with SCI partners to distill key needs, opportunities, strategies, and actions to advance connectivity conservation and restoration work in the region that surfaced at the Summit in Montréal/Tiohtià:ke in June. These “connectivity pathways” will be compiled in a bi-lingual document scheduled for release this winter (2025) to help guide connectivity conservation efforts. The “pathways” document also will provide a framework for enhanced cross-border collaboration among a diverse array of actors, including provincial, state, and federal agencies, Indigenous groups, NGOs, academic institutions, funders, and others.

Ultimately, the Summit, the “pathways” document, and the NEG-ECP Resolutions will help align connectivity conservation actions in the region with many Canadian, U.S., and global priorities. These include goals and principles established in the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which recognize that biodiversity and human well-being depend, in part, on maintaining and restoring ecological connectivity.

Advancing Transborder Connectivity Planning and Action in the “Borderlands” Region

QLF also is spearheading another first-time effort to bring partners together across borders to advance connectivity conservation and restoration – this one focused on one of the key regionally-significant, large-scale habitat “linkages” identified by the Staying Connected Initiative, the area encompassing northeastern Vermont, northern New Hampshire, northwestern Maine, and adjacent parts of southern Québec. Known informally by some as the “Borderlands” linkage, this transboundary region plays a vital role in connecting forested landscapes to the south and west with those farther east.

This region has been on SCI's map of priority linkages for fifteen years and partners have been doing great work on the ground there for decades. But there has never been a cross-border convening of key players from all four jurisdictions to build relationships, share perspectives, develop a collective vision and priorities for connectivity conservation and restoration, and look for potential synergies and opportunities for enhanced collaboration. QLF is excited to help address this gap and heighten collective action that will benefit the diverse human communities and ecosystems of this vitally important area.



Key regionally important habitat connectors or “linkages” identified by the Staying Connected Initiative. QLF is leading a first-time effort to convene partners across borders to advance connectivity conservation and restoration in the linkage that encompasses northeastern Vermont, northern New Hampshire, western Maine, and southern Québec (shown in the tawny color). MAP COURTESY OF THE STAYING CONNECTED INITIATIVE

IV. STEWARDSHIP - REGIONAL

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:

Partnerships

National Park staff face many bureaucratic obstacles to funding work through partnerships, both in accepting philanthropic donations and in support partners like QLF. We assisted the Stewardship Institute in an initial study of the partnership authorities of other Federal entities such as the Smithsonian Institution, National Gallery of Art, and Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Currently under internal review, that study may lead to further assistance to lower barriers and educate staff about little known authorities they already have.

Brent Mitchell, QLF Senior Vice President, is also making plans to facilitate a review of the NPS Inventory and Monitoring Program, to begin in late 2024.



Schoodic Point, Acadia National Park, Winter Harbor, Maine QLF has a longstanding partnership with the National Park Service and is the principal partner in the National Park Service Stewardship Institute. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

V. STEWARDSHIP – GLOBAL

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. Madhu 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 passed an ambitious agenda for reversing nature loss, the Global Biodiversity Framework (December 2022, in Montreal). 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.

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 led 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. The Guide has been well-received, and was recently published in French and Spanish translations.

While the Guide is a book in PDF form, we have also worked to develop an online toolkit, 30x30.solutions, based on the Guide but expandable to provide easy access to new information and guidance. Brent works with The Nature Conservancy and the High Ambition for Nature and Culture in updating the site.

Also working intensively with the HAC and the CBD Secretariat, QLF is leading in the planning of a “Target 3 Action Day” and the next Conference of the Parties, October 2024 in Cali, Colombia.

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.

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 has now worked within WCPA to start up a new task force on Protected Areas and One Health. The group is preparing three tools for PCA managers and PCA system managers to (1) assess infectious disease threats in PCAs; (2) reduce infectious disease threats in PCAs; and (3) assess and improve One Health capacity in PCAs. These will be released in early 2025 after refining through wide consultation with the intended audiences. The group is also supporting development of wildlife health surveillance networks through a new data management system.

Policy Notes, Technical Papers and Related Communications

QLF has also been busy on publications and communications on protected areas.

We launched WCPA’s first newsletter, 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).

In recent months Brent Mitchell contributed papers to propose a new standard lexicon of area-based conservation (in Conservation Biology); an article in PARKS on protected area permanence (and associated official guidance, see below); and a paper in Frontiers of Conservation Science outlining a research agenda on privately protected areas.

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, four years ago. Some of that guidance was misinterpreted, and so we recently produced a technical note on permanence of protected areas, which led the Australian government to change policy that would have allowed for very short-term protected areas. We also produced a special issue of the journal *Frontiers in Conservation Science* on PPAs. After taking on additional duties as a WCPA Vice Chair, Brent turned over lead of the PPA specialist group to QLF alumnus Miquel Rafa of Catalonia.

World Heritage

Brent Mitchell continues to assist the IUCN in its support to UNESCO in the World Heritage program. After delays, first due to COVID and later because Russia had been in line to assume the presidency and host meetings, we are now returning to evaluation and monitoring missions and helping the quadrennial assessment of all inscribed natural sites, the World Heritage Outlook. He also developed a project to explore how the World Heritage program supports the Global Biodiversity Framework, work he will lead.



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

VI. 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.



After a rainstorm, approaching the Sheikh Hussein border between the West Bank and northern Jordan, Fellows of the recent 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



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

QUEBEC-LABRADOR FOUNDATION - U.S.
QUEBEC-LABRADOR FOUNDATION - CANADA

QLF – U.S.
4 South Main Street
Ipswich, MA 01938-2331
U.S.A.
978.356.0038 (Office)

QLF – CANADA
606 rue Cathcart, bureau 405
Montréal, QC H3B 1K9
CANADA
514.395.6020 (Office)

www.QLF.org