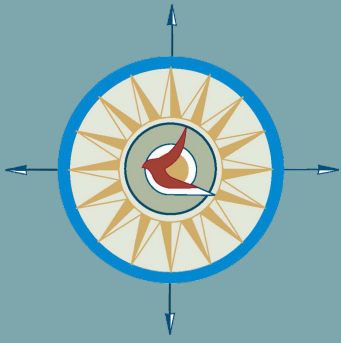




COMPASS

SUMMER 2026

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.



Red Bay Basque Whaling Station, a UNESCO World Heritage Site,
Red Bay, Labrador, in the heart of QLF's home region
PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS GATES

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

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



QLF ARCHIVES

In times like these that favor quick solutions to complex problems, there is still something important to be said for playing the long game. Given the array of challenges facing our natural world, there remains a great need, frankly a demand, for environmental scientists, planners, and advocates who invest the real time necessary to truly understand the sum and substance of a living being, and its place and role in the Earth's biodiversity.

In this issue of *Compass*, we recognize the element of time in the 14-year-old initiative Aquatic Species at Risk, the 17-year SCI partnership, and especially the nearly 40-year journey of QLF Vice President Brent Mitchell.

And similarly, we welcome two new members of the QLF-Canada Board of Directors, both of whom had experienced QLF early in their careers.

As always, I invite you to share your thoughts and ideas with me.

Best wishes,

Elizabeth Alling
President

QLF BIDS ADIEU TO OUR SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT BRENT MITCHELL

Concluding a distinguished 40-year association with QLF, Senior Vice President Brent Mitchell is pursuing new opportunities in the international conservation field.

In his early days, Brent helped QLF establish its identity as a leading proponent of community-based conservation and stewardship. Together with his wife Jessica Brown, Brent expanded QLF's exchange program beyond the U.S. and Canada, first with fellowships for emerging conservation professionals from the Caribbean, and later all of Latin America. After working at the nexus of nature conservation and civil society in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, and later in the Balkans, his work took him to other regions of the world.



COURTESY PHOTOGRAPH

Brent enjoys a long affiliation with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the largest conservation alliance in the world. Particularly interested in governance in conservation and environmental issues, he led the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas' (WCPA) Specialist Group on Privately Protected Areas and Nature Stewardship for its first 14 years.

Brent currently serves as a Vice Chair of the IUCN WCPA, where he manages the commission's response to the 30x30 global biodiversity challenge.

A gifted writer and editor, and recognized thought leader on the protection and stewardship of the earth's biodiversity, Brent epitomizes the act of sharing through the publication of numerous white papers, reports, and journal articles, and the organization of countless workshops, conferences, and symposia.

Brent is a founding member of the National Park Service Stewardship Institute, a collaborative for change helping to move U.S. protected area management in new directions.

Brent was feted at recent U.S. and Canada QLF board meetings where he was applauded for his manifold contributions to the professional practice of conserving the world's natural resources. He will be sorely missed.

Godspeed, Brent Mitchell.



Brent Mitchell with QLF staff, QLF Congress, Barcelona, Spain, 2016. From left to right: Marta Pujol, Delphine Slotten, Nina McKee, and Adrienne Kotler. PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY MORRIS

RECOVERY OF AQUATIC SPECIES AT RISK: PLAYING THE LONG GAME

The spring of 2026 brings to a close the latest chapter of one of QLF's longest and most successful community-based programs: Recovery of Aquatic Species at Risk.

Implemented by a team from Intervale Associates, under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Blanchard, this project contributed to the recovery of endangered aquatic species while serving as a model of community engagement.

The most recent phase of the project received substantial funding from 2019 to 2026 from Fisheries and Oceans Canada under the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk.

The main objective was to reduce threats caused by fishing interactions, such as ingestion of plastic waste and gear entanglement that threaten marine species including the North Atlantic Right Whale, Leatherback Sea Turtle, Beluga Whale, Blue Whale, and species of wolffish in waters of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Many used bait box liners once discarded at sea are now placed in collection boxes. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF INTERVALE

The project later expanded to include reductions in poaching and habitat disturbance for threatened Atlantic Salmon on Newfoundland's South Coast.

In order to best ensure success, the project team undertook a comprehensive outreach campaign to engage town officials, harbor authorities, fish harvesters, local organizations, Indigenous groups, schools, and youth groups. A critical component were the dockside conversations with more than 450 fish harvesters and community leaders.

During extensive year-round field work, project staff and interns conducted numerous community workshops, posted river stewardship signs, created and distributed thousands of informational posters and placemats, and engaged in extensive outreach using social media. Importantly, team members inspired hundreds of youths in the region with lively, informative presentations about how to protect marine species and maintain healthy ocean ecosystems.

One of the more visible outcomes was the notable reduction of plastic bait box liners (BBL) and other fishery-related waste from inshore waters. To learn more about the threat posed by BBLs and the growing plastic waste diversion initiative, go to: <https://qlf.org/bait-box-liner-recovery/>.

QLF LEADS NEW CASE STUDY ON STAYING CONNECTED INITIATIVE

Over the last four years, QLF has established itself as a leading partner in the Staying Connected Initiative (SCI). SCI is a cutting-edge, public-private collaboration dedicated to conserving and restoring ecologically connected lands and waters for fish, wildlife, and people across the Northern Appalachian-Acadian region and adjoining areas of northeastern North America. The region, spanning more than 80 million acres in eastern Canada and the northeastern U.S., is globally significant as one of the largest remaining areas of mixed temperate forest in the world.

Phil Huffman, QLF Senior Vice President, Regional & Global Programs, serves on SCI's Executive and Steering Committees, and helps lead the partnership's transboundary efforts.

In 2024, Huffman was approached by Jim Levitt, at the time the Director of the International Land Conservation Network at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, about capturing SCI's story in a case study that would be published by the Institute. As some readers may know, Levitt is a longtime part of the QLF family, having initially served as a summer volunteer in New Brunswick as a young adult and later as a member and chair of QLF's U.S. Board of Directors. The Lincoln Institute is a well-respected global nonprofit think tank that seeks to "improve quality of life through the effective use, taxation, and stewardship of land," and publishes case studies, research reports, and other materials among many types of work to achieve its goal.

Huffman collaborated with several other SCI leaders in writing the case study, and the final product was released by the Lincoln Institute in January 2026. The comprehensive 29-page report describes SCI's origins, evolution, innovative approach, and primary achievements to date, along with lessons learned and recommendations for practitioners engaging in similar efforts elsewhere.

The case study features two initiatives that QLF spearheaded on behalf of the SCI partnership: an impactful transboundary summit on ecological connectivity held in Montréal/Tiohtià:ke, Québec, Canada in June 2024, which drew 175 conservation leaders from across northeastern North America and beyond; and the ensuing publication *Pathways to an Ecologically Connected Transborder Landscape*, a guide released in April 2025 to inform and inspire collaborative connectivity conservation and restoration efforts throughout the region.

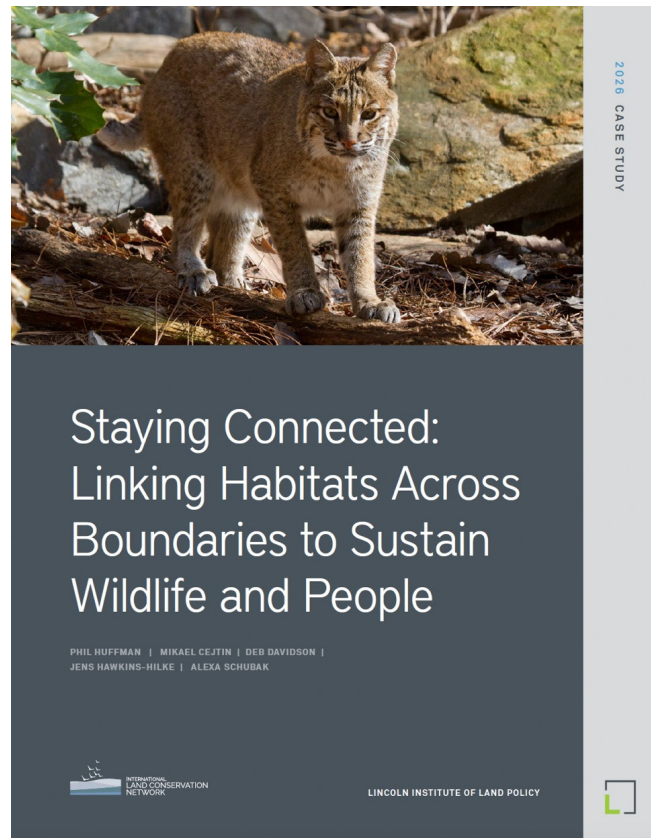
The case study highlights that over its 17-year history to date, “the Staying Connected Initiative has achieved significant, measurable conservation outcomes..., including large-scale land protection, infrastructure improvements, policy advancements, and broad stakeholder engagement. These results position SCI as a leading model for collaborative, transboundary connectivity conservation.”

Conserving and restoring ecological connectivity are recognized world-wide as essential for stemming the crisis of biodiversity loss and making natural systems and human communities more resilient to climate change. QLF and other partners are excited and grateful to have the new Lincoln Institute case study to help broaden awareness of the Staying Connected Initiative as an innovative example of this vital part of the global conservation agenda.

To access and read the case study, go to:

<https://lincolninst.edu/publications/case-studies/staying-connected-linking-habitats-across-boundaries/>.

To learn more about SCI, go to: <https://stayingconnectedinitiative.org/>.



ALIX MORRIS WINS MAINE LITERARY AWARDS



COURTESY PHOTOGRAPH

QLF Alumna Alix Morris was in for a surprise as she sat in the audience of the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance annual award ceremony on May 28. More than 300 writers had sent in their work to be considered by over 30 jurors for the 2026 Maine Literary Awards. That night Alix was called to the stage twice for her book *A Year With the Seals: Unlocking the Secrets of the Sea's Most Charismatic and Controversial Creatures*. Congratulations to Alix for winning the Book Award for Nonfiction and co-winning the prestigious John N. Cole Award for Maine Nonfiction.

As a science journalist, Alix brought her meticulous research, skill as a storyteller, and balanced approach to the complex subject of her book: the return of seals from near extinction in the coastal waters of the U.S. and eastern Canada. Other high praise for her book includes a *Publisher's Weekly* starred review and a *Washington Post* top 10 notable books of the summer.

Alix's ties with QLF began as an intern for two summers in Newfoundland, Labrador, and the Quebec North Shore. She later participated in QLF's Congresses in Budapest and Barcelona.

LESLIE VAN GELDER RECEIVES ORDER OF MERIT

June 1 in New Zealand marks the king's birthday and the day citizens receive royal honours. This year QLF Alumna Leslie Van Gelder was awarded an ONZM Order of Merit for her distinguished service to "conservation and dark sky initiatives."

An archaeologist, writer, and educator by profession, Leslie nearly twenty years ago moved with her husband to the New Zealand community of Glenorchy where she became a committed advocate for regional issues. Since 2019 she has led the Dark Skies Group, which protects southern dark skies through the creation of sanctuaries. She also founded and co-chairs the Southern Lakes Sanctuary, one of New Zealand's largest and most ambitious conservation projects. As chairwoman of the Queenstown-Lakes District Council climate group, she helps advise community leaders on strategies to cope with climate risks.

Leslie worked at QLF from 1985 to 1989 teaching environmental education in outport communities in eastern Canada and has stayed involved with QLF ever since then.



COURTESY PHOTOGRAPH

QLF - CANADA WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Quebec-Labrador Foundation – Canada Board of Directors welcomed two new Members at its Board Meetings in April 2026.



COURTESY PHOTOGRAPH

Adrienne Kotler first experienced QLF as a member of staff, and now re-joins the organization as a member of its Canada Board of Directors.

Following her graduation from McGill University with a B.Sc. Environment, Adrienne served as a program manager in QLF's Montreal office where she developed an online network of conservation leaders. In addition, she led the early organization of the 2016 QLF Alumni Congress in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, which brought together conservation leaders from 38 countries. Adrienne was a featured guest on the QLF webinar "Rise of the Young Professionals."

Since 2019, she has applied her education (M.Sc. Environmental Governance, University of Frieberg) in environmental science and governance while managing and leading strategic communications initiatives for ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in Frieberg, Germany and now Toronto, Canada.

Sylvia Metayer has come full circle. Of French and British descent and born in Africa, Sylvia was raised and educated in Canada. With degrees in environmental physiology and education, her first professional experience was with the QLF Atlantic Center for the Environment. For two years she supported community education in Maine's Allagash Valley and helped organize an international sea bird preservation conference in Newfoundland.

She moved to France with her husband and built a distinguished international career in business and finance. Stops included Arthur Anderson, Mattel, Vivendi, Houghton Mifflin, and 16 years with Sodexo. Since retiring from executive life in 2022, Sylvia has focused on governance and sustainability. She sits on or chairs several boards in fields as diverse as nursing homes, animal health, urban transportation, and the French FCC.



COURTESY OF SYLVIA METAYER

Deeply committed to environmental stewardship at the local level, Sylvia founded a nonprofit organization in Burgundy dedicated to sustainable urban planning and regional ecological cooperation.



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