The National Conservation Leadership Institute is an independent 501-c3 non-profit organization, designed as a meta-program into which graduates of various internal organizational leadership programs can pursue expanding their leadership capacity.
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With the graduation of each Cohort, the story of the National Conservation Leadership Institute deepens. Just as the NCLI experience has the potential to help shape the future of conservation, every Cohort’s unique journey brings with it an invaluable contribution to the program itself. The vision, mission and goals of the NCLI are recreated and further refined each year, and with this evolution its successes multiply, reaching further into our conservation community.

As many have, Cohort 9’s journey began with a conversation. It was a discussion about purpose and aspirations—about what 36 people from a diverse range of natural resource related organizations across the United States care most deeply about. Along the way important discoveries were made, both individually and as a group. Conflict surfaced, unchallenged beliefs were examined, positions were shifted and perspective was gained. The inevitable differences that spring from diversity provided insight into the common but daunting challenges our organizations currently face as they attempt to manage not only natural resources, but equally important the human equation.

Even as Cohort 9’s Fellows navigated the tough questions, common ground was found and many shared convictions were unearthed. Guided by world-class leadership experts and seasoned Peer Coaches, the group learned about the value of passion as a resource and the necessity of purpose in the work they undertake. Together they learned to distinguish technical problems from adaptive challenges. Skills were mastered, confidence was increased, and for each Fellow the capacity to practice leadership—in the office, in the field, and at home—was expanded.

The success of any NCLI Cohort is never easily measured in numbers. It is seen, instead, in the development of its participants, and it is witnessed in the extent to which those individuals become connected and form a collective, discover a purpose and go on to motivate others around that purpose. While Cohort 9’s conversation began with a question about individual aspirations, their journey led them to an understanding about the importance of interconnectedness, and the potential it creates for affecting change.
OBJECTIVES

The NCLI’s three principal objectives capture what the “program” endeavors to accomplish overall and they align well with most natural resource conservation organizations’ continuing education criteria. The objectives are evaluated with each cohort and are much more than merely “new tools in a leader’s toolbox.”

Some of the objectives speak to specific skill sets that are essential; other objectives focus more on expanding capacity and increasing the likelihood that the Fellow will step up to the call of leadership when the opportunity manifests itself. Still other objectives relate to personal attributes such as emotional intelligence, the ability to empower others by creating a motivating work environment, and the ability to differentiate between adaptive and technical problems—a critical capacity for effective leadership today. Finally, the development of high-trust networks composed of professionals from across organizational boundaries is a powerful, future success key for the graduates and their organizations as the Fellows advance in their careers.

SELECTION

Cohort 3 alumnus Steve Perry, Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, once again led the external selection committee who rated the nominations for the 2014–2015 Institute. Other members of the external selection committee included Janet Cushing (NCLI Alumni, Cohort 5) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, J.R. Jacobson with New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NCLI Alumni, Cohort 6), Pat Ruble from the Wildlife Management Institute, and Sharon Schafer (NCLI Alumni, Cohort 5) with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Top administrators of natural resource conservation organizations nationwide submitted their nominations from February to the end of April, 2014. The applicant pool for this year was again of very high quality, and the overall number of nominations was once again at a historical high.

The final selection of Fellows for Cohort 9 resulted in 36 Fellows: 23 from state fish and wildlife agencies, 5 NGOs, 7 from a Federal Agencies, and 1 from an industry organization. Efforts continued to be underway to increase nominations from Native American tribes, and industry, and to increase diversity among nominees, overall.
The NCLI curriculum is guided by a single question; “What will it take to prepare our future leaders?” The answer remained consistent. It takes a great and truly unique curriculum that can be distinguished from other good leadership development programs by its emphasis on participant diversity, its focus on viewing leadership through a multifaceted lens, and its willingness to embrace self-organization as a means of tackling adaptive challenges.

The curriculum and basic learning model was no exception in year nine, and the significance of this core question was illuminated more brightly than ever. Four major phases of learning—prework, an initial 11-day residency, an individual leadership challenge, and a final culminating residency—engaged the Fellows of Cohort 9 in a combination of classroom instruction, small group discussion, and the opportunity to use the learning in real-life situations. The following is a brief synopsis of the overall experience:

PREWORK: One month critical foundations work was composed of directed reading of Institute selected material, Leadership Without Easy Answers, by Ron Heifetz. Fellows also outlined a significant leadership challenge facing their organization. They continued work on this challenge throughout their NCLI experience, sometimes carrying the task beyond graduation.

AN INITIAL 11 DAY RESIDENCY: Fellows challenged their assumptions, honed critical thinking skills, learned to navigate conflict, and engaged in lively and often courageous discussions during an intensive 11-day residency in October at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. Harvard University faculty from Cambridge Leadership Associates provided the “connective tissue” linking exercises, case examples, and learning into a cohesive picture of Adaptive LeadershipTM for conservation. Insight was gained through another book, Leadership on the Line, and presenters from organizations throughout the conservation community showcased historic and current case examples highlighting the application of leadership practices specific to conservation issues.

Six peer groups were formed to provide Fellows with the opportunity of receiving candid and open feedback about individual leadership challenge projects. During this process, and throughout the entire residency, many developed lifelong high-trust relationships that would be invaluable to them as they continued along their professional journey. Sessions on emotional intelligence, team building, and storytelling served to solidify this bond.

INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE PROJECTS AND CAFÉ WEBINARS: Following the foundational work laid down during the first residency, and with the support of their peer groups, Fellows continued work individually over the next seven months on their leadership challenge projects. Guided by peer coaches, peer groups met regularly through conference calls for objective feedback. The Cohort also participated collectively in three Café Webinar exercises designed to reinforce the application of the Adaptive LeadershipTM principles.

A FINAL, CULMINATING RESIDENCY: Seven months into their Institute experience, Fellows reconvened at the National Park Service’s Horace M. Albright Training Center on the rim of the Grand Canyon. There they shared their NCLI experiences and discussed the progress of the leadership challenges. Final learning and discoveries were shared, lifelong key relationships were cemented, and reflection and advice was given for their continuing journeys.
From its inception in 2005, membership of the NCLI Board has remained stable and continues to reflect the basic value of bringing different natural resource conservation organizations together in the NCLI experience to achieve greater diversity of perspective and depth of discussion. Board members in 2014-15 included:

**CHAIR**

*Steve Williams*, Wildlife Management Institute

**VICE CHAIR**

*Lowell Baier*, Boone & Crockett Club

**SECRETARY / TREASURER**

*Ron Regan*, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

*Jimmy Bullock*, Resource Management Service, LLC

*Jon Gassett*, Wildlife Management Institute, Cohort 1

*Max Peterson*, US Forest Service, Retired

*Joanna Prukop*, Freedom to Roam

*Greg Schildwachter*, Watershed Results, LLC

*Scott Talbott*, Wyoming Game and Fish Department

*Nick Wiley*, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

*Byron K. Williams*, The Wildlife Society

**EX OFFICIO**

*Bob Curry*, NCLI Alumni Association President, Alumni Cohort 3

**ADVISORY**

*Jay Slack*, National Conservation Training Center
STAFF—The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ Management Assistance Team continued to staff the Institute during Cohort 9’s time in residency. 2014-2015 staff included: Gina Main, NCLI Executive Director; Greg Moore, Professional Development Programs Manager; Tiffany Fritts; Amanda Myers; and Kim Switlick.

Pat Dougan, The Ariel Group
Dave Chanda, NJ Div. Fish and Wildlife
Greg “Moose” Cronin, Phillip A. Bolen Park
Harold Joseph Jr., Hopi Nation
Dr. Tom Kalous, Organizational Consultant

Marty Linksy, Cambridge Leadership Assocs.
Hugh O’Doherty, Cambridge Leadership Assocs.
Dr. Mamie Parker, MA Parker & Associates
Randy Stark, WI Dept. of Natural Resources
Shannon Wright, FL Fish & Wildlife C.C.

Divided into six subgroups, or peer groups, the cohort learned how to give each other candid, valuable feedback as they discussed their individual leadership challenge projects throughout the eight months of the NCLI. Facilitating the process, each subgroup had its own peer coach who was a volunteer and an alumnus from one of the previous cohorts. The role of the peer coaches is a critically important role in the Institute’s program and success, as Coaches work side by side with Fellows and, together, develop high trust relationship, invaluable as Fellows continue in their professional journeys.

The Cohort 9 Peer Coaching Team included (pictured from left): Dave Golden (NJ DFW, Cohort 7); Rick Hargrave (OR DFW, Cohort 6); Laura MacLean (AFWA, Cohort 7); Dave Miko (PFBC, Cohort 4); Terry Stewart (CA DFW, Cohort 2); Dave Zebro (WI DNR, Cohort 3). As with previous years, Peer Coaches once again reported the value of participation, citing its impacts on their personal and professional life, and their own capacity to continue practicing leadership within their organizations.
NCLI SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Platinum:
Management Assistance Team
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Conservation Training Center
Keith Campbell Foundation
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Gold:
Boone and Crockett Club
America’s Wildlife Association
for Resource Education
National Wild Turkey Federation
The Weatherby Foundation

Silver:
Campfire Conservation Fund, Inc.
Pope and Young Club
U.S. Geological Survey
WI Department of Natural Resources
NCLI Alumni
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Other
NCLI Board and Staff
Dallas Safari Club

Bronze:
NM Game and Fish
SC Fish and Wildlife
Bass Pro Shops
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
OR Department of Fish and Game
DE Division of Fish and Game
International Paper
PA Fish and Boat
Ducks Unlimited
NJ Department of Fish and Wildlife
NPS/Albright Training Center
National Shooting Sports Foundation
Southern Company
NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES BY

DEVELOPING EXTRAORDINARY CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP
In 2014–2015, thirty-six participants were competitively selected from across the nation to become the 9th Cohort of the NCLI. Twenty-three individuals were chosen from state fish and wildlife agencies, and seven from federal agencies. Five hailed from non-governmental organizations, and one Fellow came from a natural resource-related industry organization. These thirty-six individuals were challenged and invigorated by both the unique experience of the NCLI and by each other. They entered as professionals, one by one; they left as a collective with a renewed courage and deepened sense of purpose.

Penny Becker, WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Chad Bishop, COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE
David Brakhage, DUCKS UNLIMITED, INC.
Judy Crandell, CATERPILLAR INC.
Jack Daugherty, FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Jeff Davis, WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Mike Denson, SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Ali Duvall, INTERMOUNTAIN WEST JOINT VENTURE
Patt Fitts, ARKANSAS GAME AND FISH COMMISSION
Elsa Gallagher, PHEASANTS FOREVER
Tom Guess, VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES
Jen Hauxwell, WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Rebecca Hensley, TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
Mark Humpert, ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES
Rick Jacobson, CONNECTICUT DEPT. OF ENERGY AND ENV. PROTECTION
Martin Jennings, MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Todd Kalish, MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Sammy King, U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
Rebekah Martin, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Jeff McCreary, DUCKS UNLIMITED, INC.
Meredith Nevers, U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
Jennifer Norris, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Maria Palamar, NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION
Lincoln Parrett, ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
Kirk Patten, NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH
Joel Porath, MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Karen Prentice, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Michael Schiavone, NEW YORK DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Carrie Selberg, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
Justin Shannon, UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES
Sam Sheppard, MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
Jim Teare, IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
Kellie Tharp, ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
Marla Trollan, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Tony Wasley, NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE
Dave Zafft, WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
### REVENUE

#### Donations

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#### Tuition

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#### Total Revenue

**$281,495**

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<td>Instructor Fees</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Covered Expenses

- Management Assistance Team (MAT)/AFWA: $26,956
- National Conservation Training Center: $20,000
- National Park Service - Albright Training Center - Instructional Room: $3,700
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife: $1868
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife: $1810
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: $1536
- New Jersey Fish and Wildlife: $1039
- Dave Miko: $478

Time and Services

Staff
- Management Assistance Team (MAT) / AFWA: $35,508

Coaches
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife: $17,399
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: $9,023
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife: $6,776
- New Jersey Fish and Wildlife: $5,586
- Dave Miko: $5,141

Speakers
- Randy Stark - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: $2,475
- Shannon Wright - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: $1063
- Dave Chanda - New Jersey Fish and Wildlife: $800

Total In-Kind Contributions: $141,158

OPERATION COSTS

- Total Expended: $237,181
- Total In-Kind Contributions: $141,158

Total Cost to Operate NCLI: $378,339

COST AND TUITION ANALYSIS

- Operation cost associated per Fellow: $10,509
- Average tuition paid by Fellow: $5,861
- Subsidized average amount per Fellow: $4,648

For every $1 paid for tuition in Cohort 8, $0.79 was matched from in-kind and other fundraised sources to fund the NCLI.