

NATIONAL

CONSERVATION

LEADERSHIP

INSTITUTE

Annual Report Cohort 2  
2007-2008

*The National Conservation  
Leadership Institute is a  
world-class experience  
developing extraordinary  
leaders from natural resource  
organizations. It is one  
unparalleled solution for  
an unprecedented  
historic challenge.*

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After the successful inaugural year of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) in 2006, the second cohort put to rest any concerns that the Institute's initial success had been but a one-time occurrence. The second year of the Institute was by all accounts a soaring success.

Thirty-six Fellows from diverse conservation organizations throughout the nation graduated from the seven-month program in April 2008 and melded into a group of professionals "on the ready" to step up to adaptive leadership opportunities and challenges. Overall, the cohort morphed beyond professional networking into an extraordinary fellowship of professionals with a heightened capacity for leadership and influence. This second cohort of 36 individuals, combined with the 35 from year one, doubled the remarkable leadership pool being developed nationally.

The infrastructure of the Institute also morphed, leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness. Operational economies were identified to more effectively sustain this program for future cohorts.

And the buzz nationwide about this exciting new leadership program continued to grow louder.

2007-2008 NCLI SPONSORS

FOUNDERS:

Keith Campbell Foundation  
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

PARTNERS:

Boone & Crockett Club  
Weatherby Foundation

ASSOCIATES:

America's Wildlife Association for  
Resource Education (AWARE)  
Campfire Conservation Fund  
Dallas Safari Club  
International Paper  
Pope & Young Club

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS:

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies  
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service



BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB



In 2007, as the Institute approached its second year, slight changes emerged in the initial forecasting done in 2004 regarding Baby Boomer retirements. The economy began to tighten and some Boomers were reconsidering their retirement dates. Workforce turbulence increased, from those leaving, those staying for a bit longer, those moving up the ladder, and those just entering conservation organizations. The turbulence vibrated the work environment of conservation organizations and adjusted our lens to subsequent new realities.

The need and urgency for preparing professionals to take our conservation legacy into the future was never greater.

In 2004, building leadership capacity was identified within the natural resources conservation community as a critical and urgent need. Three factors were identified as contributory. First, most conservation organizations had already begun losing their senior leadership—a predicted 50% to 80% loss within the next nine years. The exit of Baby Boomers would produce a large workforce loss.

A second factor was that another cohort of experienced employees had not been made ready to move into these empty seats (Virginia Tech 2004 study). And finally, across the U.S. fewer and fewer capable employees were applying for upper level positions when they became available. Succession planning is not widely practiced within conservation organizations. All three factors pointed to conservation leadership as an issue of critical importance, demanding immediate response.

The projected leadership vacuum would adversely impact our country's conservation institutional memory and core functions, resulting in adverse impacts on our ability to manage our nation's natural resource. A historic opportunity emerged for conservation to prepare its leaders, through an approach that crossed organizational sectors and moved beyond the teaching of traits, or other similar static leadership development approaches. The need was to equip our future leaders with a different lens—to see leadership as a verb, dynamic and adaptive, messy and nonlinear.



*“The NCLI program is a rare program among all the leadership development efforts out there. In its design and patient approach, it creates true learners, sophisticated systems thinkers, and leaders who can design projects that truly have impact. Members of the cohort develop deep and sustaining relationships that allow them to take risks. These pioneering leaders work from a clear sense of purpose and develop ever greater commitment as they grow during the program’s long-term offerings. I have not encountered another program like it in the U.S. The NCLI is truly special.”*

–Dr. Margaret Wheatley  
Co-founder & President Emerita  
The Berkana Institute

The challenge for the board was to facilitate the momentum. The board wisely added a Fellow alumni to the board’s membership, reflecting the NCLI value of bringing diverse conservation organizations to the table. Board members in 2007-2008 included:

Chair: Steve Williams, President, The Wildlife Management Institute

Lowell Baier, President, Boone and Crockett Club

Matt Hogan, Director, The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)

Ken Haddad, Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Erik Meyers, The Conservation Fund

Jimmy Bullock, Resource Management Service

Greg Schildwachter, President’s Council on Environmental Quality

Joanna Prukop, Cabinet Secretary for New Mexico Department of Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources

Max Peterson, Former Executive Vice President of AFWA and Chief, US Forest Service, Emeritus

Gary Boyd, International Paper, NCLI Alumni

Ex Officio: Steve Riley, Alumni Association President, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Advisory: Dale Hall, Director, USFWS

Staff from the AFWA’s Management Assistance Team (MAT) who had been working in the leadership development domain for over a decade, were dedicated to the project as in year one.

Returning from staffing Cohort 1 was Jim Lopp, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Jim’s many years of experience in leadership development and training and his quiet, steady demeanor made him a valuable staff partner.

In Cohort 2, two alumni from Cohort 1 joined the staff serving as speakers and peer group coaches. The following alumni who joined the NCLI staff were:

John Kennedy, Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Randy Stark, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Finally, key returning staff were Dr. Hugh O’Doherty and Marty Linsky from the Cambridge Leadership Associates and Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.

## Objectives

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Six key objectives, initially developed for the NCLI program in Cohort 1, continued in Cohort 2 and were as follows:

1. Develop a conservation leadership mind-set marked by participants' increased confidence in their leadership abilities.
2. Enhance interpersonal skills including improved emotional intelligence.
3. Increase effectiveness at managing organizational change.
4. Increase effectiveness at creating a motivating work environment.
5. Increase ability to differentiate problems that require adaptive solutions from problems that require technical solutions, ultimately leading to increased leadership in strategic decision-making.
6. Increase quality and quantity of participants' lifetime, interorganizational professional networks.



## Promotion

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A conservative estimate is 100,000 people received information about the NCLI. The alumni proved to be one of the most valuable sources of promoting the extraordinary program and encouraging others to consider applying. Alumni also proved to be valuable sources for gaining sponsorship of scholarships. Promotional targets were state and federal government, nongovernment conservation organizations, and conservation related businesses. In addition, a concerted effort was made to reach Native American tribes. Information was communicated to the general public, key partners, and other stakeholders through original promotional materials in video and print, presentations at national conferences, direct mailed brochures and letters, links on other websites, exhibits/displays, press releases, and email blasts.



In addition, the NCLI used its website [www.conservationleadership.org](http://www.conservationleadership.org) as the public information portal for searching information about the NCLI program.

## Selection

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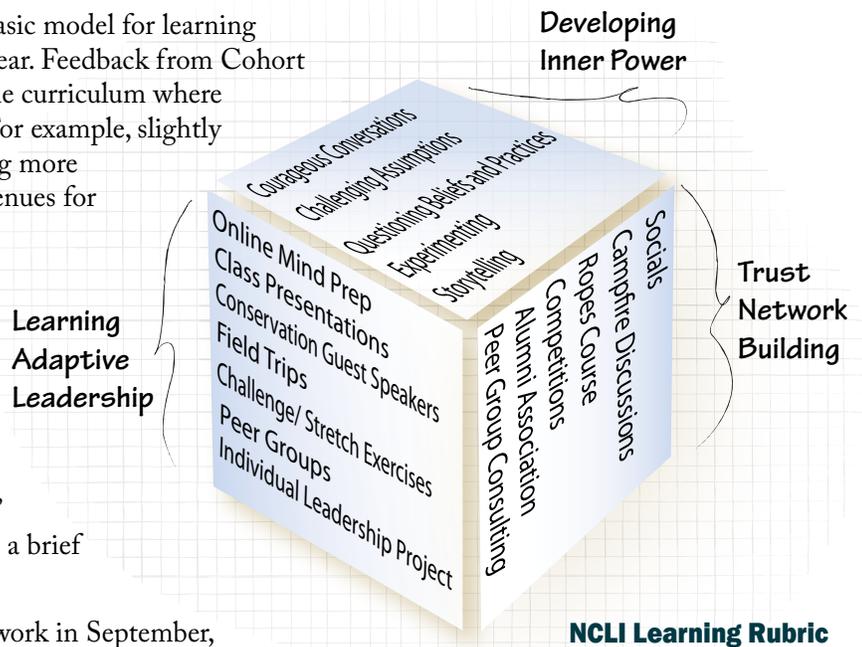
The Institute received 49 nominations for Cohort 2 from the top administrators of conservation organizations nationwide to compete for 36 Fellowship spaces. This number was in contrast to the initial 60 nominations received in the inaugural year just prior.

The Selection Committee was composed of individuals from a number of different conservation organizations who functioned to rate the nominations and make recommendations to the board. Final selection, with emphasis on achieving group diversity, resulted in 36 Fellows: 21 from state fish and wildlife agencies, 7 from federal government agencies, 7 NGOs, and 1 from the corporate sector. Despite diligent efforts to reach out to the Native American conservation community, the Institute received no nominations from this sector.

The integrity of the curriculum and the basic model for learning remained fundamentally the same in the second year. Feedback from Cohort 1 Fellows and staff was used to identify areas in the curriculum where some modifications could improve the program. For example, slightly decreasing the number of guest speakers, providing more time for reflection, and providing more outdoor venues for presentations.

A model of the NCLI learning rubric can be depicted in the graphic to the right:

The NCLI curriculum for Cohort 2 included four major components: pre-work, residency, individual projects and a culminating residency/event. Each of the programmatic components was linked together through an online “classroom” and small peer consulting groups. The following is a brief synopsis of the program:



**Pre-work:** Fellows engaged in one month of pre-work in September, 2007. This critical, foundational work was composed of directed reading, analysis, and electronic discussion of NCLI selected material. Fellows were given three books written by speakers they would hear during the residency a month later. A fourth book was given to the Fellows at the end of the program. During the Pre-work period, Fellows were introduced to the concepts of Adaptive Leadership™, working with emotional intelligence and many other leadership-oriented topics as well as initial personal introductions with the rest of the cohort.

**Residency:** The pre-work was followed by a 10-day residency in November at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s prestigious National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The curriculum began with a focus on personal leadership then expanded to leadership relevant to teams, to the organization, and to society. Harvard University faculty from Cambridge Leadership Associates provided the “connective tissue” linking exercises, case examples, and learning into a cohesive picture of Adaptive Leadership™ for conservation. Widely recognized conservation figures anchored leadership principles to real case examples from “the trenches.” Fellows challenged their assumptions, piqued critical thinking, and engaged in lively, applied discussion and debate. A surprise visit by “President Teddy Roosevelt” (Case Hicks, a certified Roosevelt impersonator) provided an up close and personal opportunity to ask questions and hear from one of the “big” conservation leaders of the past.

**Individual Adaptive Leadership Challenge Projects:** By the end of the 10-day residency, Fellows had identified and/or modified their individual adaptive leadership projects. Projects were real challenges facing their organizations, and Fellows applied leadership principles learned as they worked toward solutions over the next four and one-half months.

**Peer Consulting Groups:** During and after the residency, Fellows served as consultants for one another in trust-building groups of six Fellows, each with a group coach. Fellows challenged assumptions, asked probing questions, applied leadership principles learned and provided valuable feedback to each other for refining their challenge projects.

**Online Individual Project Work:** After the initial residency, each Fellow continued online in their small peer groups, functioning as peer consultants and providing input to one another on their individual natural resource projects. Each peer online consulting group was facilitated by a coach. The Fellows presented their project work and solutions to the full Institute during the final event in the Spring of 2008.

**Final Culminating Event:** Five months following the residency at NCTC, the Fellows reconvened at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri for a truly unforgettable three days of sharing their Institute experience and their project presentations. Team building activities reinforced final learning, discoveries were shared, and lifelong key relationships were cemented.



*“For Hugh O’Doherty and myself at Cambridge Leadership Associates (CLA), working with the MAT team and the NCLI Fellows is a highlight of our year. It is inspiring to work with people of talent and passion who come to NCLI with a commitment to further enhance their own leadership, not to advance themselves, but so that they can do more than they have in the past to nurture and preserve our natural resources.”*

– Marty Linsky

NCLI Faculty Member and CLA co-founder Marty Linsky is on the faculty of the Harvard Kennedy School, co-author of *Leadership on the Line* and the forthcoming *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*.

He blogs on leadership at [www.cambridgeleadership.blogspot.com](http://www.cambridgeleadership.blogspot.com)

### Curriculum Highlights:

A keynote presentation given by the Chairman of The Conservation Fund, Charles Jordan, provided an inspirational beginning for the residency. The learning intensity increased when Marty Linsky, of the Cambridge Leadership Associates and Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, introduced principles of Adaptive Leadership™ through a highly effective Socratic teaching style.

**Emotional Intelligence Workshop and DISC Assessments:** Returning counseling psychologist, Dr. Tom Kalous, provided an intense emotional intelligence workshop tied closely to Fellows’ results from individual DISC behavioral assessments. Guest conservation luminaries, John Cooper and Max Peterson, tied learning to real case stories in special sessions that focused on the challenge of conflict. Corky Pugh (Director of Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries), Rick Kearney (USGS), and Gary Boyd (International Paper) composed a panel that focused on how to avoid “group think” while maintaining team loyalty and the dangers of over-valuing consensus.

**Courageous Conversations:** A new addition to the curriculum was a special session presented by NCLI Fellow Alumni, Randy Stark, Law Enforcement Chief for the Wisconsin DNR. The session “Understanding the Contours of Adaptive Leadership by Examining Historical Events” proved to be a special highlight to the program and was highly rated by the Fellows. An interview panel of NCLI Alumni represented by Bill Thompson (Penobscot Nation), Kathy Graham (Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries), and Meredith Lathbury (Eastern Shore Land Conservancy) offered case examples of courageous conversations in conservation.

**High Ropes Course:** An off-site, day-long activity facilitated by Upward Enterprises, Inc, at the Bishop Claggett Center in Buckeystown, MD, provided Fellows with world class low and high ropes activities, building trust, teamwork, and individual courage. The high ropes activities included debriefs relating back to principles learned in the classroom and from guest speakers.

**Working with the Media:** In this highly interactive activity, three media professionals from press and television were interviewed at the Hall of States Building during the Washington, DC, field trip. In front of the group they were asked probing questions about purpose, ethics, and how professionals can communicate with them to ensure they were really heard.

## RESULTS

The success of the NCLI Cohort 2 was measured in the short term both quantitatively and qualitatively. It will be in the long term, however, that the real success of this remarkable program will become evident. The data continues to come in on the Fellows' promotions, appointments to key committees and work groups and the overall influence of the Fellows who graduated from Cohort 2.

Effectiveness of the NCLI program was assessed quantitatively a number of ways. Pre and post 360° performance feedback surveys were administered to each Fellow. Before the program and following program completion, Fellows were rated on a number of indicators by those who worked above, below and with them. In addition, a pre and post self-assessment identified the Fellows' perceptions of key content learned.

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### **360 degree performance feedback surveys showed overall Fellows had:**

*30% increase overall in leadership performance*

*32% increase in overall leadership capacity*

*27% enhanced interpersonal skills including improved emotional intelligence*

*31% increase in effectiveness at managing organizational change*

*30% increase in ability to create a motivating work environment*

*36% increase in inter-organizational professional networks*



These figures are all higher than the first year of the Institute which may indicate improvements made in the delivery and processes of the Institute, i.e., the NCLI built on the success of its first year.

The additional pre and post survey of the Fellows indicated a **78%** increase in the Fellows' ability to differentiate problems that require adaptive solutions from problems that require technical solutions, ultimately leading to increased leadership effectiveness.

*(Note: The 360° data for three different Fellows was omitted from the above figures because they had all left their previous positions, received promotions, and/or were no longer with their former organizations.)*

## R E S U L T S

*Qualitative* measurement of the Institute's success can be seen in the continued, overwhelming positive feedback from the Fellows themselves and from their organizations over a year and a half after their program involvement. The following are a few of the qualitative indicators considered in the overall program evaluation:

- ❁ The 100% completion of the program by the Fellows
  
- ❁ The many Fellows who, after having graduated from the NCLI, went back to their organizations and facilitated workshops on adaptive leadership and shared principles learned through formal teaching/ learning venues
  
- ❁ The Fellows frequent use of a new, common language that enables quick, effective reference to adaptive leadership concepts
  
- ❁ Further evidence of achievement of the NCLI outcomes at this time can be found in four areas:
  - The continuing active involvement of the Fellows in the NCLI Alumni Association
  - The number of nominations received for the second cohort
  - The outstanding performance thus far of the third cohort as seen in the Fall 2008 residency
  - The participation of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 as guest speakers and peer group coaches in the program for Cohort 3



*“The National Conservation Leadership Institute offers a great opportunity to expand your skill set in a number of ways: by having top notch instructors, by interacting with your classmates who are the future leaders of the conservation community and by assigning an on-going project which allows you to practice your new skills. It is the best training I have ever had. If you get a chance to attend, I hope you will find it as life changing an experience as I did.”*

–Nancy Ledbetter,  
Fellow Cohort 2

**National Conservation Leadership Institute  
Cohort 2 Revenue and Expenses**

**Revenue..... \$299,489.00**

**Donations .....\$144,720.00**

Keith Campbell.....	\$50,000.00
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation .....	\$50,000.00
Boone & Crockett Club.....	\$10,000.00
Weatherby Foundation.....	\$10,000.00
AWARE.....	\$5,000.00
Campfire Conservation Fund.....	\$5,000.00
Dallas Safari Club .....	\$5,000.00
Pope & Young Club .....	\$5,000.00
International Paper.....	\$4,000.00
Steve Williams .....	\$500.00
John Cooper.....	\$220.00

**Tuition ..... \$154,000.00**

**Miscellaneous..... \$769.00**

Interest Earned .....	\$249.00
Reimbursed Expenses .....	\$520.00

**In-Kind Contributions .....\$84,576.00**

AFWA-MAT .....	\$30,155.00
USFWS Leadership Training Staff.....	\$11,005.00
The Conservation Fund (waived overhead).....	\$15,103.00
NCTC Instruction Rooms.....	\$13,750.00
AFWA-MAT Supplies, Materials & Technology Fees.....	\$14,563.00

**Expenses .....\$259,078.00**

Instructors' Fees .....	\$80,000.00
Project Staff.....	\$53,000.00
Technology Fees .....	\$889.00
Field Trips.....	\$9,867.00
Course Materials .....	\$5,296.00
Lodging and Meals–NCTC .....	\$54,752.00
Lodging and Meals–Big Cedar .....	\$31,961.00
Staff and Speaker Travel .....	\$9,564.00
Legal and Professional Fees.....	\$1,165.00
Promotion and Recruitment.....	\$5,801.00
Tuition Waiver.....	\$5,500.00
Postage and Shipping .....	\$1,256.00
Unbudgeted Items .....	\$27.00

**Total Revenue..... \$299,489.00**

**Total Expended..... \$259,078.00**

**Total Unexpended ..... \$40,411.00**

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What do you get when you put highly motivated natural resource professionals together with some of conservation’s living legends and some of the leading edge thinkers on leadership in the country today? You get provocation, challenge, and growth. At least, that is what emerged from this second year of the NCLI. Once again, we saw a remarkable convergence—the right content, the right environment, the right amount of intensity, the right time frame, and the right teachers combined with the right mix of people seeking to learn. This convergence, once again, produced an enduring impact on the Fellows. It provides confidence that the future of natural resource conservation will be in capable hands.

Cohort 2 was a success, and the extraordinary NCLI program owes so much to all the sponsors, partners, Fellows, volunteers, instructors, and those who believed in their nominees and in the program. To all of you, our heartfelt thanks.

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FELLOWS - COHORT 2

Cohort 2 NCLI Fellows 2007-2008



**Verdie Abel**  
*Ohio Division of  
Wildlife*



**Steve Belinda**  
*Theodore Roosevelt  
Conservation  
Partnership*



**Grace Bottitta  
Williamson**  
*Ducks Unlimited,  
Inc.*



**Jeff Bridi**  
*Pennsylvania Fish  
& Boat Commission*



**E. Lynn Burkett**  
*Bureau of Land  
Management*



**Karen Chytalo**  
*New York State  
Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation*



**Drue DeBerry**  
*American Forest  
Foundation*



**Tom Decker**  
*Vermont Fish  
& Wildlife  
Department*



**Michelle Doerr**  
*Archery Trade  
Association*



**Cindy Dohner**  
*U.S. Fish & Wildlife  
Service*



**Nate Donovan**  
*Nebraska Game &  
Parks Commission*



**Thomas Eason**  
*Florida Fish  
& Wildlife  
Conservation  
Commission*



**Jon Heggen**  
*Idaho Fish & Game*



**Grant Hilderbrand**  
*Alaska Department  
of Fish & Game*



**Lief Horwitz**  
*U.S. Geological  
Survey*



**Mike Hubbard**  
*Missouri  
Department of  
Conservation*



**Mark Hughes**  
*International Paper*



**Aleria Jensen**  
*NOAA Fisheries  
Alaska Region*



**Emmett Keyser**  
*South Dakota Game,  
Fish & Parks*



**Nancy Ledbetter**  
*Arkansas Game &  
Fish Commission*

FELLOWS - COHORT 2



**Andrea Mackenzie**  
*Sonoma County  
Agricultural  
Preservation &  
Open Space*



**Mitch Marcus**  
*Indiana Division of  
Fish & Wildlife*



**Ken McDonald**  
*Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks*



**Dirk Miller**  
*Wyoming Game &  
Fish Department*



**Dean Mitchell**  
*Utah Division of  
Wildlife Resources*



**John Nielsen**  
*Wisconsin  
Department of Fish  
& Wildlife Resources*



**Hank Patton**  
*Kentucky  
Department of Fish  
& Wildlife Resources*



**Lynn Quattro**  
*South Carolina  
Department of  
Natural Resources*



**Heather Richards**  
*Piedmont  
Environmental  
Council*



**Jen Mock Schaeffer**  
*Association of Fish  
& Wildlife Agencies*



**Mike Senn**  
*Arizona Game &  
Fish Department*



**Natalie Sexton**  
*U.S. Geological  
Survey*



**Terri Stewart**  
*California  
Department of Fish  
& Game*



**Jason Stockwell**  
*Gulf of Maine  
Research Institute*



**Shelley Tovell-  
DiBona**  
*Delaware Division  
of Fish & Wildlife*



**Wendi Weber**  
*U.S. Fish & Wildlife  
Service*



**NCLI Cohort 2 & Staff**



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