



MATters

An Update from the Management Assistance Team

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ConservationLeadership.Org National Conservation Leadership Institute Receives High Praise

What do you get if you put the world's top leadership experts together with some of the greatest living conservation leaders in this country and mix in 35 of the nation's brightest up-and-coming conservation leaders? The National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)!

A ten-day residency at NCTC in November launched the National Conservation Leadership Institute. The Management Assistance Team staffed this effort that included instructors from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Marty Linsky, author of *Leadership on the Line*, Margaret Wheatley who authored *Leadership and the New Science*, Adam Kahane, author of *Solving Tough Problems* as well as conservation greats like Jack Ward Thomas, former



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Online Leadership Courses Update

Registration is now open for the 2007 Winter Term of the Management Assistance Team's online leadership courses. Fish and wildlife agency professionals from Association member organizations can participate in these courses even with very busy schedules. The courses require that participants have reliable Internet access and basic computer skills to visit websites, create MS Word documents, and use email. The courses are challenging and require about five (5) hours of work each week.

Online courses offered during the 2007 Winter Term:

- Creative and Critical Thinking
- Going from Good to Great
- Organizations as Ecosystems
- Power
- Visionary Leadership
- The Adaptive Leader

Registration Schedule:

- **December 22, 2006:**
Registration closes
- **January 1, 2007:**
Online Student Tutorial
- **January 8, 2007:** Courses begin

MAT online courses require from each participant a \$48 technology fee plus materials for 4-week courses and a \$60 technology fee plus materials for the 6-week courses (approximately a \$400 value). For more information and to register, go to www.matteam.org.



MAT *Better Conservation Through*

National Conservation Leadership Institute (Continued from page 1)

chief of the Forest Service; Steve Williams, former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and current head of the Wildlife Management Institute; John Cooper and Corky Pugh, Directors of state wildlife agencies and officers in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; and many others!

What did the Fellows think of the residency? Just read what they said:

Fantastic line up of leaders and educators with an excellent focus on leadership.

A top-notch training opportunity. 5 stars! This has truly been a life and career altering training.

I will carry this experience with me the rest of my life and it will change and guide my leadership and role as an "authority figure."

A fantastic program...I'm a better person for the experience!

Overall the experience was tremendous...I believe [it] increased my value in the conservation environment.

This is high praise indeed from the Fellows who participated in the residency. Each Fellow is now part of a Peer Consulting Group. These groups work together online each week to give advice and ask questions as they tackle professional leadership challenges over the next five months. The Fellows have returned to work with a new attitude, a new network, and new tools and skills to apply to individual leadership challenges back home. Heady stuff but necessary for the tough problems that these up-and-coming leaders are positioned to tackle.

At the end of five months the Fellows and staff of the NCLI will reunite at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri. This gathering will be an opportunity to share experiences using the leadership principles learned during the residency. It is often said that experience is a hard teacher – she gives the test first and the lesson later.

The 2007 National Conservation Leadership Institute will begin accepting applications in January 2007 for a fall residency. If you are interested in exploring this leadership opportunity please go to www.conservationleadership.org.



Better Managed Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Got Tools?



Sometimes developing leadership in our agencies requires that we take a different approach to meeting the challenges of the 21st century. Developing is building. Building takes tools. And we have tools in the state fish and wildlife “toolbox” of leadership courses and resources—a virtual treasure box!

Some states haven't wasted any time in getting the most from their new tools. Florida, Arkansas, Texas, Alabama, and Colorado are a few of the states who have already opened their economical and practical toolbox. For example, some state employees are taking one or more of the six online leadership courses in virtual classrooms with employees from other state fish and wildlife agencies. Ron Regan of Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife says, “*The Organizations as Ecosystems* course I took was very helpful and I plan to use it in my work here regarding reorganization decisions”. Other states are using the tools in different ways. Jim Lopp of the Texas Parks & Wildlife

Department points out, “The online courses are great for employees that can't take the time from their regular work schedule. These courses are a great addition to our existing leadership program.”

Other tools available to states are the nine face-to-face courses. Some states are taking advantage of the toolbox's consulting services or other expertise on leadership development and workforce succession planning. For example, Dave Schad, Director of Minnesota, says “MATs help with succession planning is an asset that we intend to fully take advantage of as we progress in dealing with the exodus of our baby-boomer employees.”

MAT continues to work with many state fish and wildlife agencies on leadership development and succession planning. In October, Dr. Sally Guynn gave a presentation on leadership development and workforce succession at the joint meeting of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' – Administrative Officers Workgroup (WAFWA-AOW) and the Conservation Business Management Association.

What are you waiting for? Call 304.876.7988 and find out what the toolbox has for you.



Donna Reeves brings to the MAT team a wealth of experience and a great sense of humor. Donna has many years experience in the education, legal, and business industries. She holds a bachelor's degree from Shepherd University.

Donna grew up in central Ohio then spent 14 years in South Dakota before moving to the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. While living out west she took advantage of opportunities to visit many national and state parks and monuments, once taking a 26-day trip from Rapid City, SD through the northwestern states, California, the southwest, and then home via Denver. Donna's son and daughter-in-law recently moved from Ohio to Phoenix, AZ and she is anxious to visit them and see Arizona again.

Among her interests and hobbies are traveling, photography (nature and artsy), kayaking, bicycling, hiking, reading, and many handicrafts. She currently has four dogs and four cats. Donna collects flamingos (but not the tacky lawn ornaments!).

What MATters... Leadership as Action

The concert master, a classically-trained virtuoso of the violin stands to take a bow after a stunning solo performance. The question may be (with musicianship and leadership alike), is this person a virtuoso by birth or learning? Does the question of birth or learning apply to both musicianship and leadership? Or, perhaps, the very question itself is flawed because it presumes a black and white answer to a Technicolor question.

One problem is the definition of leadership; there really is no single, correct definition, and the varying definitions may all be equally valid from any particular perspective. Leadership appears to be one of those concepts that defy an absolute definition, so as one person claims that the ability to lead is given at birth and another says that leadership must be learned, it is possible that both claims are correct because those claims are based on different concepts.

Most importantly, leadership and authority are often confused: The concepts of position and title should be separated from the act of exercising leadership. Authority is granted by the position one holds. Leadership is an action. Authors Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky go so far as to say that there is no such thing as a "leader." Leadership is not a set of skills or

traits. Leadership is getting people to act in a positive way. Leadership can happen at any level in an organization.

Some people also believe that leadership demands a charismatic individual, but the literature on this tells another story. One should be cautioned that while it may be tempting to follow charismatic individuals, quality leadership is not a function of charisma in an individual leader. Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, claims that organizations may suffer as a direct result of charismatic leadership. While people will follow charismatic individuals, what happens when those leaders leave the organization? Is charisma really the most important trait in knowing how run an organization? Collins found that the most successful companies in the United States are led by (most often) remarkably uncharismatic people with a tremendous personal humility matched with an overwhelming drive for organizational, not personal, success. The concept of charisma provides some evidence that inherited traits are not requisite to the exercise of leadership.

The Management Assistance Team offers the online courses *Going from Good to Great* based on Collins' work and *The Adaptive Leader* based on Heifetz and Linsky's work. Sign up for these and other online leadership courses at www.matteam.org.

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