



ConWatch

The Garden Club of America
Summer 2019

Awards Issue

From the Editor

Bennett Burns

News

Hollidae Morrison and SaSa Panarese

GCA Conservation Medalists

Dr. Cary Fowler, Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Brian R. Vogt, Denver Botanic Gardens

Dr. David Gallo, Oceanographer

Audubon's Women in Conservation Award

Seagrass

SOLVE

Call to Action

*Never believe that a few caring
people can't change the world.
For, indeed, that is all who ever
have. –Margaret Mead*





Lisa Ott



Elizabeth Waddill

From the Editor

By Bennett Burns

The Awards issue always brings such inspiration as we pass on the stories of these remarkable leaders in the conservation arena. What an ideal dinner party it would be to bring these award winners together around the table and hear their stories in even greater detail.

Summer is a time of transition in leadership at the GCA. A huge thanks goes out to **Molly Jones**, whose expert editorial skills over the last four years have shaped ConWatch into the beautiful and informative publication that it is today. We are so grateful for her vision and dedication.

We also are saying goodbye to our fabulous Committee Chairmen **SaSa Panarese** (Conservation) and **Hollidae Morrison** (NAL). Many thanks go to these intelligent, funny and capable women, whose leadership inspired us all to go for greatness, while having fun doing it! Under their collaborative leadership the Land and Water Conservation Fund was passed into law, and in March of 2019, the Botany Bill was introduced in the House and is steadily collecting bipartisan sponsors. They also helped launch the Healthy Yard Pledge as a GCA initiative to

educate our members about the harmful impacts of pesticides, weed killers and fertilizers. We are so pleased to welcome our new leaders:

Elizabeth Waddill, incoming Chairman of the Conservation Committee is a passionate conservationist both in her club and as a former VC of National Parks on the Conservation/NAL Committees. She hails from the Magnolia Garden Club and was awarded the Zone IX Conservation Award in 2018.

Lisa Ott, incoming Chairman of the NAL Committee, brings tremendous experience having served as VC of Water/Wetlands and VC of National Parks on the Conservation/ NAL Committees. She was awarded the Zone III Conservation Award in 2011 and her conservation exhibit on invasives and the benefits of native plants won the Marion Thompson Fuller Brown Conservation Award in 2013. ■



Bennett Burns, Editor, ConWatch, The Portland Garden Club, Zone XII



**Businesses, charitable organizations & individuals
all have a carbon footprint. Buying carbon credits can lessen the impact.**

News From the Conservation & NAL Committees

By Hollidae Morrison & SaSa Panarese

A Carbon Offset—What Is It, How GCA Committees Use It and How Can You?

Sometimes GCA members ask if our committees support carbon offsets. The answer is, yes, both the NAL Conference and the Conservation Study Trip contribute to carbon fund offset programs to reduce the carbon footprint of our meetings. While we try to make our conferences and trips as eco-friendly as possible by recycling our items, printing on recycled paper with soy ink, composting leftover food, eliminating single-use plastics, etc, the fact is that all meetings create waste and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To mitigate the effects of this, we buy carbon offsets.

What Is a Carbon Offset?

Think of buying carbon offsets as a form of trade. Buying an offset funds projects that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These projects might protect old growth forests, plant trees, buy clean-burning stoves in third world countries or increase the energy efficiency of buildings and transportation. Carbon offsets

give the option to fund a project that reduces GHG in another setting. As GHG emissions mix quickly with the air and spread around the entire planet, it doesn't really matter where GHG reductions or projects take place if fewer emissions enter the atmosphere.

The Science Behind a Carbon Offset

A carbon offset is made up of carbon credits. Each carbon credit offsets one metric ton (about two thousand pounds) of emissions, verified by third-party auditors. These auditors calculate emissions through a stringent process and issue carbon credits based on their findings. For instance, if flying for travel creates five metric tons of emissions, a verified project somewhere else on the planet can reduce five metric tons of emissions through project activities. "Offsetting" those emissions by purchasing five carbon credits, five metric tons of carbon emissions can be neutralized.

While offsets don't excuse excess or cancel all carbon output, they can encourage individuals and businesses to take responsibility for their part in global climate change. Perhaps more importantly, if the popularity of voluntary offsets rises, it could help promote a carbon market or a carbon tax backed by public policy. The more programs like this are supported, the more they will become a standard way of thinking.

Carbonfund.org, as well as other organizations, have a calculator to determine how much carbon an organization or meeting uses. The EPA also can calculate how much carbon individuals and families personally use.

Our Committees 2019 Carbon Fund Donation

After each meeting, the Conservation and NAL Committees are polled to see if there is a particular organization that should be considered. The committees then vote and the carbon offset donation is made. The committees must make donations to organizations that are verified as "carbon offsetting businesses."

This year, the committees voted to offset the Conservation Study Trip with a donation to The Carbon Trust because the trust had offsets in Colorado, where the meeting took place.

The committees voted for the NAL Conference carbon offset donation to go to CarbonFund.org for its Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Reforestation Initiative which aims to reforest at least one million acres throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri and Illinois. Considered North America's rainforest, this region is a vital habitat for migratory birds and numerous plant and animal species. The project will also sequester CO2 emissions. Previously encompassing 22 million acres of temperate forest, the region now holds only four million acres of unfarmed forestland. ■

Carbon Credits: Don't Leave Home Without Them

Here are some links to help calculate and buy carbon credits.

Carbon Footprint Calculator

Carbon Fund

Cool Effect

The Carbon Trust

A Guide to Airline Carbon Offset Programs

Hollidae Morrison, Garden Club of Jackson, Zone IX

Chairman of the NAL Committee 2017–2019

SaSa Panarese, Garden Club of Milton, Zone I

Chairman of the Conservation Committee 2017–2019





Dr. Cary Fowler

By Lindsay W. Marshall

The Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor Medal

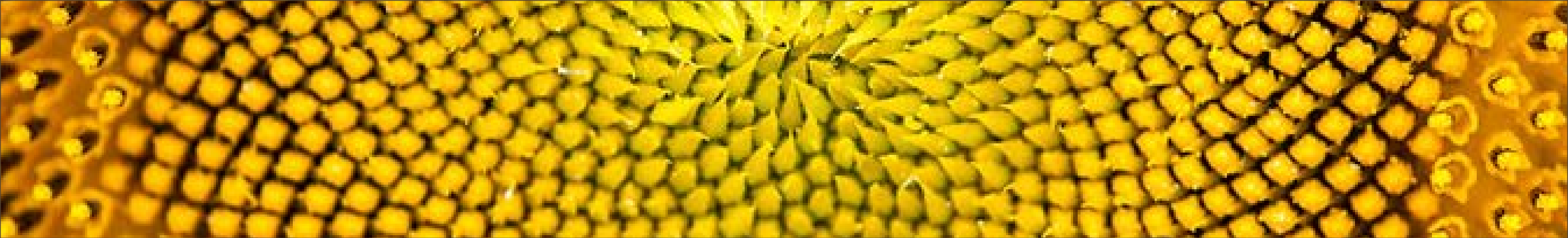
Dr. Morgan Carrington “Cary” Fowler, Jr. is the well-deserved recipient of the 2019 Garden Club of America Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor Medal for distinguished service to conservation. He is a conservationist and humanitarian who is nationally and internationally recognized as a scientist and leader. Dr. Fowler is one of two foreign elected members of the Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences and has received both the Thomas Jefferson Medal in Citizen Leadership and the Vavilov Institute Medal.

Dr. Fowler is perhaps best known as the “father” of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, which UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon described as an *“inspirational symbol of peace and food security for the entire humanity.”* Dr. Fowler proposed creation of this Arctic facility and headed the international committee that developed the plan for its establishment. The Seed Vault currently provides a secure home for more than 930,000 unique crop varieties, representing over 4,000 species and 13,000 years of agricultural history.



The vault is located on the snow-covered, isolated Norwegian Island of Svalbard, just below the Arctic Circle, and preserves plant seeds that are duplicate samples of seeds held in other seed banks worldwide. The seeds are protected against a large-scale global crisis or potential devastating effects of climate change and will offer diverse genetic material needed for the future food supply of nearly every country on earth. This invaluable vault addresses the fear that our planet could face of loss of agricultural plant diversity and especially agricultural food crops. Thus, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault is a vital undertaking of service to the world.

Dr. Fowler's previous work heading the Global Crop Diversity Trust in Rome from 2005-2012 brought him in contact with crop diversity experts from across the globe. In association with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the Vault has grown to include seeds from almost every country in the world. Each country owns its own seeds and can take them out when needed, like a safety deposit box. The Vault's capacity is 4.5 million samples and is managed by the Norwegian Government.



Very giving of his time, Dr. Fowler has spoken to GCA members at various meetings. At the 2013 Conservation Study Trip hosted by the Memphis Garden Club in Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. Fowler's home town, his slide show began with Norwegian folk music playing in the background with pictures of the entrance to the Vault barely visible above the icy ground. We were mesmerized. He has since spoken at National Affairs and Legislation (NAL) Washington meetings beginning in 2015 and a Sadie Gwinn Blackburn meeting hosted by River Oaks Garden Club in Houston, among others. He is a humble, considerate individual, with a passion for helping the world and a generous willingness to share his knowledge with others.

He continues this strong work today on a professional and personal level, including practicing what he preaches at home. He and his wife currently collect, breed and plant heirloom varieties of apple seeds that are either indigenous to North America or brought by early settlers. He truly is working to do more than his share to save the world one seed at a time. ■

Resource Links About Dr. Fowler and the Seed Vault

Click on links below to view

- [TED Talk](#)
- [Segment on CBS 60 Minutes](#)
- [Profile in The New Yorker](#)

Lindsay W. Marshall, Cherokee Garden Club, Zone VIII

The Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor Medal

is awarded, by specific request, to non-members for exemplary service and creative vision in any field related to The Garden Club of America's special interests. The medal was endowed by the Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor Charitable Foundation in 2003.

Past winners include:

- Save the Redwoods League
- National Park Service
- Newman's Own Foundation
- Tom's of Maine
- Ladybird Johnson





Brian R. Vogt

The Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal

Not everyone thinks botanic gardens can change the world. Brian Vogt does. For the past 12 years, Brian has been changing the world as the CEO of the **Denver Botanic Gardens** (DBG). Brian has led a team of professionals, volunteers, donors, and civic leaders to transform the gardens from a work of nature to a force of nature. DBG’s mission, “*Connecting People to Plants*” comes alive every day with local, regional, national, and international programs.

In 2007 Denver Botanic Gardens was ready for rebirth. Under economic pressure, suffering high staff turnover, and appealing to a limited audience, DBG needed to change. The Board of Trustees hired Brian to lead the change and it was a brilliant decision.



By Suellen White

Under Brian’s leadership, attendance has grown to over 1.4 million visitors annually, making it the second most visited botanic garden in the US. Through a new Master Plan, the gardens have been transformed with more than 60 new construction projects. To finance it all, Brian spearheaded fundraising initiatives that brought in more than \$113 million.

Early in Brian’s tenure the DBG partnered with the community to create a first-of-its kind community supported agriculture (CSA) program, which is the cornerstone of the Gardens’ Urban Food Initiatives. The program utilizes fields within the historic **Chatfield Farms**, a nearby campus of the DBG. From seven



acres of vegetables, flowers, and fruit, the CSA provides fresh local produce to Colorado families, many in underserved neighborhoods.

DBG connects with people of all ages through classes, lectures and seminars. Students from pre-K to 12th grade discover the gardens through science and art classes and by exploring plants from all over the world. For those who can't come to the gardens a Cultivation Cruiser brings the classroom to them.

DBG's professional staff teach the wonders of Colorado's steppe environment both here in the US and abroad. They expand observational skills with classes in botanical art and illustration. They inspire everyone to connect with nature through a popular suite of herbalist classes. DBG's **PlantSelect** program helps close the gap between theory and practice. The program collects seeds from steppe environments world-wide for test trials and introduction locally and regionally.

Connecting people to plants doesn't stop with Colorado. DBG participates in education and outreach programs around the world. International collecting expeditions help protect critically endangered flora. In 2012, DBG established the Center for Global Initiatives to bring horticultural and conservation research to diverse and sustainable programs. Professionals from DBG work in Madagascar to protect and propagate a critically endangered tree species. In South Sudan they introduced a prized coffee cultivar to farmers. In Patagonia, South Africa, and Central Asia, they studied steppe plants and exchanged technical information. In Mexico, DBG promotes a bi-national effort to spur collaborative management of the Colorado River.

Brian's passion to improve our quality of life has led to extraordinary ventures. When hurricanes devastated Florida and Louisiana, he sent DBG staff to help rebuild, replant, and restore public gardens. Additionally, he initiated and orchestrated the effort to convince the American Public Gardens Association to form a Garden-to-Garden Disaster Relief Center. Gardens devastated by natural disasters—including hurricanes, wildfires, and



Sculpture, 'One Fell Swoop' by Patrick Dougherty
Photo: Scott Dressel-Martin

mudslides—now benefit from this program. To protect native plants, improve water quality and support fauna, DBG restored the degraded riparian habitat near Chatfield Farms.

Brian leads his highly qualified and intellectually energetic staff to think beyond traditional boundaries and create a broader vision. The results are breathtaking. Four Ph.D. scientists lead collaborative international research efforts. They also manage mentoring programs for graduate students, including some GCA scholarship recipients.

In everything he does, Brian exemplifies a passion for making the DBG a place for all people. The Denver community and beyond now routinely look to the Gardens as a place to improve their quality of life.

Everyone who works with Brian has the same opinion: he is exceptional. He has enormous talent and energy and a clear vision of how botanic gardens can lead the way for conservation and environmental solutions.

As Brian says, *“The key for the Gardens is to take our interactions and understanding of plants and use them to break open a world of wonder and enlightenment for the countless people we reach.”* ■

Suellen White, Garden Club of Denver, Zone XII

The Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal is awarded for outstanding achievement in environmental protection and the maintenance of the quality of life. The medal was designed by sculptor Charles Parks. It was endowed in 1979 by Mrs. William K. Laughlin of the Southampton Garden Club, NY. Previous winners include:

- Save the Bay
- The Nature Conservancy President, Patrick Noonan
- Wendell Berry
- The US Green Building Council



Photo: Arlene Burns

Dr. David Gallo

By Carla Morey

Frances K. Hutchinson Medal

"Oceanography to me, has always had these two parts...the excitement of exploration and discovery ...and the importance of understanding it for the sake of the planet." —Dr. David Gallo, Ph.D.

Dr. Gallo has spent over 40 years passionately exploring and defending the critical role our oceans play in our very existence. Despite early learning disabilities, including ADD, he was so inspired after reading an article on the oceans in National Geographic by Dr. Robert Ballard that he ultimately earned a Ph.D. in Oceanography.

After getting his doctorate, Dr. Gallo was hired as the Assistant Director of the Center for Marine Exploration at the world-renowned Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) where he spent over 30 years. According to the Deputy Director and Vice President for Research, Lawrence Madin, "... Dave was Director of Special Projects, and it seemed like projects became special largely because he was leading them." In his distinguished career at WHOI he was known as a man of many talents and occupied a unique niche both in WHOI and in the global oceanographic and earth science community. It was through scientific discovery that Dr. Gallo began to understand the symbiotic

relationship between exploration and the need to preserve and conserve our oceans. Moving seamlessly among the world's most revered oceanographers, scientists, and ocean preservationists, his work pushes the bounds of oceanic discovery while keeping an emphasis on preservation of the oceans from devastation, especially man-made disasters.

Dr. Gallo worked closely with oceanographer and explorer Dr. Robert Ballard, renowned for his work in the underwater archaeology of shipwrecks. Through this involvement, Gallo became an expert in the technology, logistics and politics of shipwreck exploration. This expertise brought him to work with humanitarian endeavors such assisting the French government in locating a lost Air France jetliner. The successful location of the plane brought him other survey missions and many requests for media appearances.

In his lectures, Dr. Gallo is adept at conveying the importance of understanding our oceans through exploration, innovation, conserving ocean resources and the fragility of the water cycle on our planet. He speaks fervently regarding the negative impact climate change is having on our waters. He is a natural communicator, with a genius for using humor when discussing serious topics. Whether speaking to school children or dedicated scientists, his message is the same; we must be mindful of the impact human beings have on the waters that cover nearly three-quarters of our planet.

"We are living on an ocean planet and if we protect the sea, the sea will protect us. No matter where we live on earth, the oceans impact our everyday lives and no matter where you live, you impact the ocean." —David Gallo, Ph.D.

A favorite presenter at the Aspen Institute Festival, Gallo talks about the uncharted territory of ocean exploration, just as we used to talk about deep space exploration. Gallo also has one of the most viewed TED talks, "**Underwater**

Astonishments". The founder of TED Talks, Dr. R. Saul Wurman, when asked to recommend Gallo for this award, said *"He has allowed me to learn to see for the first time with clarity what goes on eight kilometers deep in the ocean and to understand the three quarters of the world I was hardly aware of. That changed my life, my focus and my journey."*

He has been recognized by the Explorer's Club, American Association for the Advancement of Science, TED All-Stars, and the ComputerWorld Smithsonian Award amongst others.

Still traveling the world, using his affable persona, he embodies the intensity and responsibility we have as humans to understand the mysteries of the deep ocean in order to save it from ourselves for future generations. He brings out the Jacques Cousteau in all of us! ■

Carla Morey, Milton Garden Club, Zone I

Frances K. Hutchinson Medal

Awarded to figures of national importance for distinguished service to conservation. Designed by Spaulding-Gorham. Previous winners include:

- Rachel Carson
- Walt Disney
- Stewart Udall
- Ladybird Johnson





The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe, the less taste we shall have for destruction.

Rachel Carson



The GCA Wins Audubon's Women in Conservation Award

By Dede Petri

Lady Bird Johnson, Elizabeth Titus Putnam, Sylvia Earle—and now The Garden Club of America. These are just a few of the extraordinary winners of the Rachel Carson Women in Conservation Award from the National Audubon Society. On May 16, 2019, the GCA became the latest recipient in a gala luncheon at the Plaza Hotel. I was honored to accept the award on behalf of the GCA and to acknowledge current and former Conservation and NAL chairmen in the audience as well as *“the many hundreds of committed GCA club members who have made this award possible.”* In addition, Rose Harvey, past Commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, was a recipient. Rose has another connection to the GCA as the niece of devoted

conservationist and longtime GCA club member, Ellie Kelly, NAL chairman from 1977–1981.

More than 300 people gathered for this special event. In addition to the award presentation, Audubon showcased honorees with short videos about their work. GCA's video covered its illustrious history, current activities and included moving testimonials from club members and friends. Diane Lewis, member of the Bedford Garden Club, lauded the GCA and its efforts. So too, did Representative Earl Blumenauer and Fred Rich, lawyer, environmentalist and author of *Getting to Green*. Watch the video by Katina Productions by clicking [here](#) and using the password: gc@

Before they had the right to vote, remarkable women came together in a garden to create The Garden Club of America in 1913. Much like the founders of Audubon, they were opinionated, visionary, and enterprising. Now, in our second century, we are as engaged as ever before by:

- advocating on Capitol Hill and demanding the hiring of plant scientists on public lands,
- engaging in public parks to remove invasive species and foster native plants,
- addressing climate change and advancing a restoration initiative, which supports clubs whose landscapes have been devastated by natural disasters,
- taking action against synthetic pesticides through the **Healthy Back Yard Pledge**,
- supporting the next generation of environmental leaders through scholarships, and
- partnering with like-minded organizations such as Audubon to expand our reach and efforts.

Tocqueville noted the remarkable capacity of Americans to address local challenges through voluntary associations—and the work of the GCA and Audubon are surely part of that tradition.

Over the years, we have had our conservation triumphs—and we have had our defeats. But we just keep coming back. Like our founders, we are militant, engaged—with our boots on the ground. *“The one absolute of gardeners is faith,”* says Allan Armitage. *“Regardless of how bad past gardens have been, every gardener believes that next year’s will be better.”*

Gardeners are by nature conservationists, taking inspiration from the ground up and understanding our unique opportunity to be responsible stewards in our own backyards.

Conservation is place-based. But gardeners also understand the big picture. Restoring, improving and protecting the environment requires staying power over time and space. Clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet are not momentary initiatives. They are continuing projects, requiring sustained application. That is the power of The Garden Club of America.

It’s noteworthy that GCA gave Rachel Carson, not one, but two national prizes for her work in conservation. The first was in 1952—remarkably 10 years before her book, *Silent Spring*, was published. The second was in 1963. Her own words sum up our beliefs as well.

“... we cannot fulfill our mandate to leave the world safe for future generations unless we have an understanding and appreciation of the physical world around us—the sea as well as the land, the waters as well as the atmosphere—for they are all a part of the environment that sustains us. And even more we must have a clear understanding of the many interrelationships between all forms of life and environment—a realization that what concerns one, concerns all.” ■

Dede Petri, Georgetown Garden Club, Zone VI

President, The Garden Club of America (2017–2019)

Audubon Women in Conservation Award

This award was established in 2003, in honor of Rachel Carson, author and seminal figure in the environmental movement. The award recognizes female environmental leaders *“who change our world and inspire the next generation of young women who will join them in environmental careers and activism.”* Rachel Carson was awarded both the GCA Frances Hutchinson Medal and a GCA Special Achievement Citation for her groundbreaking work in alerting the public to the life-destroying dangers of indiscriminate pesticide use.




Blue Carbon/Green Seagrass

By Christy Millet

Conservation Exhibit at the Boston Annual Meeting

What is green and wet and captures 35 times more carbon than rainforests? Seagrass! The unassuming, weedy plant that carpets sea beds on every continent but Antarctica makes up one of the most important ecosystems on the planet — and it is disappearing at the rate of two football fields an hour.

Seagrass was the focus of Noanett Garden Club's Conservation exhibit at the GCA's annual meeting in Boston last May. Chris Battat, Kim Hatfield and Christy Millet worked for a year-and-a-half with Alyssa Novak, Research Assistant Professor of Earth & Environment at Boston University, to design an exhibit that would convey the importance of this aquatic plant to the health of our world. Utilizing large screen panels to highlight the salient facts about seagrass, the



“In every outthrust headland, in every curving beach, in every grain of sand there is the story of the earth.”

Rachel Carson

exhibit also included samples of seagrass restoration materials and four glass cylinders containing eelgrass (New England’s most common seagrass)—and two hermit crabs nicknamed Henry and Bertha, who were collected with the eelgrass a few days earlier.

As coastal development, pollution runoff, disease, boating activity and climate change cause seagrass meadows to deteriorate, scientists and policy makers are becoming increasingly aware of just how vital they are to sequester carbon, provide shelter and nutrients to thousands of fish and invertebrates, and produce oxygen. One acre of seagrass can produce 40,500 liters of oxygen per day and can absorb over 740 lbs. of carbon per year. Although they cover less than .01% of the ocean floor, they are responsible for 11% of the organic carbon buried in the ocean. While trees release their carbon stores when they die or burn, carbon sequestered in the sea beds can be stored for thousands of years.

Seagrass beds provide an ideal and safe environment for juvenile fish and invertebrates to conceal themselves from predators, and over half of the world’s fisheries depend on seagrass at some point in their development. They are the exclusive food for sea turtles and manatees, and many other species depend on seagrass for their sustenance.

The extensive root system of seagrasses serve to buffer wave action on the ocean floor, thus preventing soil erosion from storms and ocean currents. Seagrass also filters the water by trapping sediment and runoff from industrial and agricultural settings, thus increasing water clarity.

Seagrasses have been used by humans for over 10,000 years to insulate houses, fertilize fields, and for furniture, mattress batting and basket making. But, for coastal communities, its value as a nursery for fish and other commercial marine species is paramount. It is estimated that the value of an acre of seagrass is close to \$18,000. But seagrasses are losing ground! Seagrass meadows are declining at a rate of about 1% a year and nearly 30% of

the world's seagrass meadows have disappeared already. In fact, the only marine plant listed as endangered in the US is a seagrass (*Halophilia johnsonii*) found in Florida. Bottom trawling for fish and anchor chains are further destroying seagrass beds, and federal and local authorities are beginning to take steps to limit the use of traditional anchoring and bottom fishing gear in order to save seagrasses.

Scientists and researchers around the world are racing to learn more about these modest plants and how to save them. Efforts to restore seagrass meadows are very costly (about \$100,000/ acre) and time consuming. There is no international legislation to protect them, so most initiatives have been spearheaded by scientists in conjunction with state and local agencies. Various techniques have been tried with moderate success, ranging from transplanting by divers, weaving seagrass seedlings into biodegradable ceramic disks, to a machine that plants seagrass seeds on the seafloor. In Chesapeake Bay, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science successfully restored over 500 acres with 8 million seagrass seeds, and similar efforts in Florida, Massachusetts, Washington and other states are making some progress.

By far, the best method for saving seagrass is to prevent it from declining in the first place. With growing awareness of its importance, hopefully more will be done. You can help by:

- Disposing of trash properly.
- Limiting the use of fertilizers and herbicides in your gardens.
- Stop dumping hazardous materials down the drain.
- Not setting anchors in seagrass beds.
- Asking local authorities to take action on behalf of this invaluable resource.

Christy Millet, Noanett Garden Club, Zone I

Current Zone I Rep, Conservation and NAL Committees

Resource Links

Smithsonian Institution

Seagrass Educator's Handbook

Seagrass-Watch



The Author and Her Intrepid Exhibit Team

Wading out into Cohasset Bay on a 43° day with winds blowing 20 knots was not my idea of a day at the beach, but as we dodged waves to rake the murky bottom for seagrass shoots for our conservation exhibit at the GCA Annual Meeting, I marveled at the resilience of this unassuming plant and its role in our planet's survival. ■

My Heart Sees Not Or Hears

*I hear the song of the ocean,
It wafts beyond the dune;
It floats along across the sands
And ebbs and flows in tune.
I feel its rhythm of motion
In the breeze blowing in;
And the dancing seagrass floweth
To its gay lyric spin...*

© 2019 Ashely Lowery



Chris Battat

Christy Millet

Seagrass conservation exhibit at The GCA Annual Meeting in Boston in May, 2019. Awarded the Marion Thompson Fuller Brown Conservation Award for an exceptional educational exhibit that increases knowledge and awareness of the environment.



SOLVE

By Candace Harvey-Smith

Club Conservation Commendation

In the spirit of this Awards issue, we want to provide an example of a Club Conservation Commendation, submitted by The Portland Garden Club. This commendation is awarded to non-members or non-member organizations which have made a significant contribution to conservation in the community. The Conservation Committee authorizes the award through a proposal process. All clubs are welcome to apply.

This June, The Portland Garden Club presented the Commendation to SOLVE and its founding directors Jack and Jan McGowan. This impassioned organization has been “taking care of Oregon” since 1969. Created by Governor Tom McCall, it was originally called SOLV (for Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism) to realize the need for community action in our fast-growing state. Over the years, tens of thousands of volunteers have been mobilized to keep Oregon’s environment clean and healthy.



Since 1984, SOLVE has managed semi-annual beach clean-up projects to remove tons of litter and marine debris. In addition, SOLV-IT was created in 1990 to clean up urban neighborhoods and address the problem of illegal dumpsites. SOLVE has also been involved in the Adopt-A-River campaign and has worked extensively on stream and wetland restoration.

The group has raised awareness of Oregon's precious natural areas and has marshaled volunteers to endorse native plantings and remove invasive species. Currently SOLVE is involved in the massive post-wildfire clean-up and reforestation project in the Columbia River Gorge. This effort was also awarded a GCA Restoration Grant in 2018.

SOLVE recognizes the importance of education to reach its long-term goal of a thriving and sustainable environment. Programs for middle and high school youth continue to foster new generations of aware advocates.

After fifty years, SOLVE is steadfast in its mission to bring Oregonians together to improve our environment and to build a legacy of stewardship. Its long history of success has also inspired countless beach clean-up projects and non-profits across the country. ■

Candace Harvey-Smith, The Portland Garden Club, Zone XII
Awards Chair, The Portland Garden Club

THE GARDEN CLUB of AMERICA

CLUB CONSERVATION COMMENDATION

presented to

Recipient Name

The recipient's unique citation will display here. Citations must be twenty-five words or less and are submitted as part of the award proposal form.

Garden Club
Zone

Month Year



HOW AN ISSUE BECOMES A CALL TO ACTION

By Hollidae Morrison

A large part of the GCA's strength and influence comes from the collective voice of their membership. As a GCA member you may periodically receive an email or hear an announcement at your club called a "Call to Action." This is a specific tool the GCA uses to rally its members and is not issued casually. The GCA advocates to protect the environment and preserve biodiversity. We are the self-described "Voice for Plants." These Call to Actions are made in response to issues that merit urgent attention from our clubs and club members. The creation of a Call to Action is a rigorous process, assuring that the issue has been well-researched and vetted before arriving in members' inboxes.

Several individuals monitor legislative issues of importance to the GCA. The Conservation and NAL Committees have twelve vice chairmen, each responsible for covering a specific conservation topic, as well as a legislative policy vice chairman and an assistant policy vice chairman. The committee also works with an outside legislative consultant based in Washington D.C.

The Steps to Creating a Call to Action

- An environmental issue comes to the attention of the NAL and Conservation Committee chairmen.
- The issue must relate to one of the GCA position papers (see end of article).
- When a relevant issue arises, the NAL Chairman, in consultation with the GCA Washington consultant and the Legislative and Subject Vice Chairmen, determine an appropriate action: a letter to policymakers or comments to the Federal Register or a full Call to Action.
- The NAL Chairman and the Legislative and Subject Vice Chairmen complete the detailed and thorough "Proposal for GCA Legislative Consideration" form.
- The NAL chairman shares the draft of this form with the Washington consultant for feedback and then the full committee for comments.
- Once the committee has made comments, the NAL chairman sends the draft to the Executive Board liaison for both the NAL and Conservation committees and the GCA president for their comments and approval.

- Once edits are made and approval is given, the proposal goes back to the committee for a vote. Subject to a majority vote, the proposal goes back to the Executive Board liaison and the GCA president for final approval.
- Once approved, the submitted action is completed by the NAL committee chairman, unless it is a Call to Action.
- If the action for the Proposal for GCA Legislative Consideration is a full Call to Action, there are extra steps to take before approval. Calls to Action are not sent out lightly.
- Once the Executive Board approves a Call to Action, it is distributed to the full GCA membership either by direct delivery to a member's email (if they have signed up for direct delivery of Calls to Action in their member profile) and/or by their NAL zone representative.
- Zone representatives send (or forward) the Call to Action to their zone's Conservation/NAL Committee club chairmen and club presidents, as well as their zone director and zone chairman, and the NAL committee chairman.
- GCA Calls to Action serve in an advisory capacity only. It is up to individual clubs to determine whether it is an issue that they want to support club-wide. Members can also decide to become involved outside of club participation.

WHAT IS A POSITION PAPER?

Each **Position Paper** is a statement of the GCA's stance on a specific conservation issue. They are used as a reference to focus and clarify core subjects as they relate to the GCA mission. They contain specific provisions which the GCA wishes to see addressed in any piece of legislation. The GCA doesn't act on any legislative issue without first ensuring that the specific issue is supported by at least one out of our ten Position Papers. Position Papers are jointly produced by the NAL and Conservation Committees and approved by the Executive Board. ■

Hollidae Morrison, Garden Club of Jackson, Zone IX

Chairman of the NAL Committee, 2017–2019

LWCF

Earlier this year, the GCA sent a Call to Action on the **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**. How did we decide to rally all of our members around this particular issue?

Our committees heard in early January of this year that a broad public lands package in the Senate included permanent reauthorization of LWCF. This permanent reauthorization was the culmination of a years-long effort by bipartisan champions and stakeholders around the country, including the GCA. This was a very real opportunity to permanently authorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, something that had never happened.

As the GCA has consistently supported the LWCF since its inception in 1965, the Call to Action was approved. We urged our members to call their senators in support of permanent reauthorization of LWCF in the Senate public lands package, with no weakening amendments. We also gave our members a list of the senators that needed to be acknowledged for their hard work to finally bring this package to the floor. This Call to Action was met with success as on March 12, 2019, President Trump signed into law S. 47, the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which included permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

However, passing legislation is only the first part of the process. The legislation must be funded to be effective, and thus far it has not been funded. As of June 19th, the House Natural Resources Committee favorably recommended H.R. 3195, the LWCF Permanent Funding Act, to the full house. Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate. Look for the GCA to stand behind this legislation as well. Sign up for direct delivery of Calls to Action in your inbox today! ■