

# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

Inspiration.....	3
PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	3
PROJECT BACKGROUND .....	3
PROGRAM MODULE (2 weeks) .....	4
1. Evening Program: CROSSCURRENTS/L'ACADIE .....	4
2. Campfire Program: WILD THINGS .....	5
3. Staff Training Workshop: MUSIC AND FOLKLORE IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION.....	5
4. Cassette Tape: CROSSCURRENTS (Newfoundland) .....	6
LOGISTICS AND MANAGEMENT .....	6
A. Institutional Arrangements.....	6
B. Programs .....	7
C. Travel and Housing.....	8
D. Publicity .....	8
VISITOR COMMENTS.....	9
CC Comments .....	9
CROSSCURRENTS '87: AUDIENCE RESPONSES ; .....	9
FROM THE MAILBAG .....	10



# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

## Inspiration

*"If we are to devise an enlightened plan for human activity in the Arctic, we need a more particularized understanding of the land itself -- not a more refined mathematical knowledge, but a deeper understanding of its nature, as if the land, itself, were another sort of civilization we had to reach some sort of agreement with. I would draw you, therefore, back to the concrete dimensions of the land and what they precipitate; simply to walk across the tundra; to watch the wind stirring a little in the leaves of dwarf birch and willows; to hear the hoof-clacket of migrating caribou. Imagine your ear against the loom of a kayak paddle in the Beaufort Sea, hearing the long, quivering, tremolo voice of the bearded seal. Or feeling the surgical sharpness of an Eskimo's obsidian tool against the stroke of your finger."*

-- Barry Lopez, "ARCTIC DREAMS: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape"

## I. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

CROSSCURRENTS explores the landscape of some of Atlantic Canada's most special places: its National Parks. It is a series of illustrated concerts, campfire programs and workshops blending folk music, color slides, natural history and cultural geography developed for Gros Morne, Terra Nova and Kouchibouguac National Parks. Its purpose is to interpret to Park visitors and residents the richness of the Atlantic region's natural and cultural heritage, and to communicate some of the complex issues facing the region and its Parks today through regional themes: LIVING OFF LAND AND SEA (work in a resource-based economy), HARD TIMES AND HEAVEN (images of the rural landscape), CHANGING WAYS (migration, urbanization, industrialization), GLOBAL TO LOCAL (definitions and uses of the regional concept).

## PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: to improve public awareness of natural and cultural heritage conservation in National Parks.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) to present an integrated perspective on heritage conservation by placing local issues and concerns in a regional and global context.
- 2) to present an example of the use of cultural geography, folklore and the performing arts in environmental education and interpretation.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

This project grew out of my work in Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland,

# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

## Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

1985-87, and my lifelong interest in Atlantic music and culture. I first went to Gros Morne in 1985 as Assistant Director of Ocean Horizons, a conservation education camp sponsored by QLF/the Atlantic Center for the Environment (see Appendix B). There I rediscovered the power of traditional music to create a sense of place and provide an invaluable, inside view of Newfoundland culture; and I became aware of some parallels and conflicts between mainland conservationists and locals seeking to preserve a vanishing way of life.

I returned to Gros Morne in 1986 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to research my M.S. thesis on landscape imagery in the Newfoundland natural and cultural preservation movements since 1970. That May, I had presented the UW Geography Department's first "singing seminar:" ten folk songs, illustrated with slides, that to me communicated some of the essence of Newfoundland life and landscape. This pilot concert became the first CROSSCURRENTS program, presented weekly at Gros Morne the summer of 1986; and I became Gros Morne's first International Volunteer to develop and present a solo interpretive program.

At summer's end, the Interpretive Specialist from Environment Canada-Parks' Atlantic Regional Office (Halifax, NS) favorably evaluated the program, and invited me to develop a proposal for a regional series. This report describes the "program modules," consisting of a CROSSCURRENTS concert, musical campfire program, and staff training workshop, I presented at Gros Morne, Terra Nova and Kouchibouguac National Parks in the summer of 1987. The project was co-sponsored by QLF/the Atlantic Center for the Environment, and administered under the Environment Canada-Parks International Volunteer Program.

## **PROGRAM MODULE (2 weeks)**

### **1. Evening Program: CROSSCURRENTS/L'ACADIE**

Each Park received an evening program, presented once a week in a Park theater, based on the regional themes above and individually tailored to its interpretive theme plan. Both Terra Nova and Gros Morne received a revised version of the original CROSSCURRENTS program, treating early settlement and population origins; fishing and lumbering; resettlement and the outport community; migration and the oil boom; tourism and urbanization; and "caring for special places" (stewardship and conservation). This program was adapted to English New Brunswick with special attention paid to local Loyalist history, ties to New England, and the definition of a physical, cultural and affective region (a moot point in island Newfoundland). Unedited footage of the final performance at Kouchibouguac is available on videocassette.

A third program, in French, was developed for Francophone New Brunswick audiences: L'ACADIE. Dealing with the history of Acadia and the Acadians, it focused on the Deportation of 1755, its geographic and historical roots, and its

# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

## Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

cultural consequences for today's Acadians, New Brunswick and Cajuns.

The most important lesson I learned from L'ACADIE, and one I sought to share with audiences, is the vibrant, vigorous existence of a thriving region that does not exist on any political map. The songs, stories, legends, literature, and above all the language of Acadia create a landscape as visible to the trained eye (or ear) as houses and boundaries. These cultural landscapes are the essence of CROSSCURRENTS, and if we are to devise any "enlightened plan for human activity" in any region (see sidebar), we must learn to see these landscapes as surely as we see the political or statistical units.

### **2. Campfire Program: WILD THINGS**

Tom MacMillan, Canada's Minister of the Environment, designated the year 1987 as "WILDLIFE '87: Gaining Momentum," a special initiative to commemorate the centennial of the nation's first Wildlife Refuge at Lost Mountain Lake, Saskatchewan. I chose this theme for a campfire program to continue the QLF/Atlantic Center tradition of international co-operation for conservation. The program was designed as an alternative to "traditional" campfires, which rely heavily on a songbook, which in turn dictates possible programs. WILD THINGS is a family-oriented sing-along, using songs to explore concepts important to wildlife conservation: adaptation and habitats, food chains and webs, the role of microscopic organisms in the environment, migration and "international" animals (whales and seabirds), pollution, and extinction of species. Unedited footage of the final performance at Kouchibouguac is available on videocassette.

### **3. Staff Training Workshop: MUSIC AND FOLKLORE IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Transferability is a key attribute of any education project. The goal of the workshop, presented at each Park, was not to turn out more CROSSCURRENTS programs, or even more singers, but to introduce Park interpreters and other staff to the intellectual and creative processes behind the programs, and to explore ways to enrich Park programs with innovative uses of music, songs, and local folklore. The workshop was adapted to each Park based on staff background, skills and interest. However, there were three basic components: TECHNIQUE, REPERTOIRE, and PHILOSOPHY.

TECHNIQUE focused on song leading, with group exercises in voice production and projection (critical for large groups). It also included suggestions on introducing a new song to a group, or how to lead a song without a songbook. Unaccompanied singing was stressed as an instrument available to all.

REPERTOIRE included songs, games and exercises for creating a group experience, and for communicating a Park message (sometimes incompatible!) We made "rhythm orchestras" from found natural objects; played blindfold "games" to heighten hearing; and learned action songs, chorus songs, and songs written about the natural world. Sea chanteys were stressed as historically and

# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

## Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

geographically appropriate; easy and fun to teach and sing; often having local lyrics; and providing opportunity for group participation, action mimicking real work (hoisting sails, raising anchor) and thus visual and learning interest.

PHILOSOPHY aimed at stirring emotions in people through music; and critically examined what those emotions were for a particular song and how well matched they were to a Parks and conservation message. We examined the "embedded values" of a traditional song and one written by an environmentalist; evaluated Park songbooks for information content, traditional/regional flavor, and conservation message (if any); wrote our own topical song on a local issue (pesticide spraying); and discussed ways to evoke the mystery and magic of nature, and the bonds and pleasures of community. Each workshop lasted one-half day and was attended by all interpreters and other interested Park staff.

#### **4. Cassette Tape: CROSSCURRENTS (Newfoundland)**

Some tangible product was needed as a permanent record of the project; an audio cassette served the additional functions of broader and long-term reinforcement of the project message and a means of supporting some project costs (see IV., Expense Report). 200 copies of the tape were made available through local retailers (Gros Morne), Heritage Associations (Terra Nova), and Park gift shops (Kouchibouguac). Over 50 were distributed free as promotional or informational materials.

Audience response to the cassette was highly positive, and many expressed interest in a recording of the entire program including narrative (due to time and cost constraints, only twelve songs were recorded). There were severe logistical constraints on the distribution of the tapes, which could not be offered for sale at the program site due to Park regulations. This, combined with international trade restrictions, made them extremely unreliable as a source of revenue (fortunately not their primary purpose). Both Newfoundland outlets sold out their supply, and have expressed interest in reordering for 1988.

In my view, a cassette is a necessary tangible product of any project of this type, and ideally would receive far more publicity and administrative management than this did. There is a legitimate concern that Park visitors not be continually hawked for money with the sale of products, which I strongly support. However, some alternative means of support must then be found (see III.A., Institutional Arrangements, and IV.A., Budget). As mentioned, a subsidized and well-distributed cassette could provide a lasting educational message and some fond Park memories.

## **LOGISTICS AND MANAGEMENT**

### **A. Institutional Arrangements**

This project was administered jointly by Environment Canada-Parks (Atlantic

# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

## Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

Regional Office) and three individual Parks: Terra Nova, Gros Morne (both Newfoundland) and Kouchibouguac (New Brunswick), through the International Volunteer Program. Volunteer Promissory Agreements were negotiated separately with each Park and the ARO (see Appendix B). The Project Leader (Lynn Noel) was registered as an International Volunteer with each Park, and retained as an Education Consultant by QLF/the Atlantic Center for the Environment, the project co-sponsor. For a detailed description of each organization's contribution, please see IV.A., Budget.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of those who helped turn this administrative nightmare into a dream come true. From Environment Canada-Parks: Stephen Suddes (then Interpretive Specialist, ARO) for the initiative to create a regional series in 1986; Blake Maybank (Chief Park Naturalist, Gros Morne), for welcoming the original CROSSCURRENTS program; Gaylene Marsh (CPN, Terra Nova), for her enthusiasm and support on the first stop 1987; Bert Crossman (CPN, Kouchibouguac) for outstanding interest in the project and for excellent publicity and recording; Doug Kolmer (Chief of Interpretation, ARO), for regional co-ordination and red-tape cutting; and Mike Rosen (Interpretive Specialist, ARO), for logistical support with contracts and field attention above and beyond the call of duty.

This project would have been impossible without the support and co-operation of Park staff too numerous to list here. Please see the Acknowledgements section for their names.

Finally, my warmest regards go to Larry Morris (Executive Director, QLF), Tom Horn (Program Director, ACE) and the staff of QLF/the Atlantic Center for their continuing vision and support of this project in its evolving forms.

## **B. Programs**

The facilities and resources of all three Parks were a pleasure to work in. Slide collections, audiovisual equipment, props, art supplies, microcomputers, performance spaces, and office space & equipment were all necessary to the success of this project, and readily available. This is a huge and immeasurable contribution to such projects, and I thank all Park staff who shared their workspace with me this summer.

Frequency of programs increased over the summer (see IV.B., Hours Worked). I presented a total of 3 programs (not including staff workshop) at Terra Nova (2 weeks); 6 at Gros Morne (2 weeks); and 9 at Kouchibouguac (3 weeks), plus one staff workshop per Park. This is due in part to research time needed (WILD THINGS was developed at Terra Nova, and L'ACADIE at Gros Morne and Kouchibouguac), but also to varying schedule and staffing concerns and uncertainty over project specifics .

I felt that 3 public programs/week was the bare minimum needed to justify a full-

# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

## Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

time position (and it is difficult to work part-time on such a project). For future projects involving regional programming, advance scheduling (contracts and dates established by April 30) is in my view essential to the project leader and certainly to Park staff responsible for preparing seasonal schedules. This in turn requires earlier fundraising and institutional commitment (see III.E., Financial). With a firm commitment, all parties could turn their attention to the necessary details of publicity both internal and external (see III.D).

### C. Travel and Housing

The EC-P International Volunteer Program is authorized to provide travel and housing to Park Volunteers, among other provisions. Travel was obviously a major project expense (see IV.B.), and was divided among Parks and the ARO. Additional travel support was provided by John Kraniak, a fellow Maritimes fan with whom I toured Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick gathering valuable material for L'ACADIE.

Each Park also provided housing, which was in each case a single room in a well-kept, pleasant house or bunkhouse shared with other Parks staff or International Volunteers. This shared space gave me an invaluable opportunity to live with and learn from young Canadians both French-and English-speaking (and some Germans as well!), and afforded many hours of provocative discussion comparing U.S. and Canadian perspectives.

### D. Publicity

The late confirmation date of the project (late May) gave rise to serious problems with publicity. Fortunately, each Park has a guaranteed audience, and the tour was planned around peak visitation dates (July for Newfoundland, August for New Brunswick). Visitor numbers were high at Newfoundland programs (avg = 215 TNNP, 115 GMNP), where I replaced a staff member for the single evening program. At Kouchibouguac, multiple evening programs combined with the unusually low visitor numbers overall made for much smaller audiences (avg=31). (Francophone avg=53)

Many visitors complained that the programs were underadvertised. This is inevitable if the programs are not listed in the regular interpretive schedule (which usually goes to press in April or May). I prepared publicity materials at each Park (flyer, TNNP; Visitors' Centre poster, GMNP; program insert, KNP) upon arrival, and each program was announced by other Park staff at their programs, but advance publicity would have much improved visitor awareness of special programs. This is particularly important to a co-operative, multiPark, international project such as this one, where the regional approach is as important a message as program content.

The publicity problem was internal as well as external. Again due to the late and

# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

## Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

uncertain start date, Park staff were generally uninformed of the purpose and goals of the project; my status as an education consultant and representative of a U.S.-Canadian nonprofit agency, as well as International Volunteer; and the nature and scope of the programs. This was easily remedied with a staff meeting, and my thanks go to the CPNs who took the time to introduce me to their staff and vice versa. However, I reemphasize the need for an earlier contract date to allow lead time for inter- and intra-agency communications.

Several special mentions are due here. First, for the warm welcome I received at three "extra" performances: Salmonier Nature Park, Holyrood, and the Hangashore Folk Festival, Corner Brook, Newfoundland; and the Miramichi Festival, Newcastle, New Brunswick. These presentations are a valuable part of the project, as they bring the message of international exchange for heritage conservation to a wider audience and reap the benefits of that exchange in new songs and ideas.

I would like to thank Ralph Jarvis, Salmonier Education Director, for his warm friendship and hospitality and the chance to discuss Newfoundland wildlife conservation in global and local contexts with his talented staff. Warmest appreciation goes to Jack Osmond of the Bay of Islands Folk Arts Council and the Hangashore Festival staff for welcoming me this year to the Little Sculpin Children's Theater as well as back to the main stage. The chance to perform and jam with Newfoundland musicians is a very precious thing to this "Come-From-Away." Finally, I have a special place for Susan Butler, author of "The Mystical, Magical Miramichi" and organizer of the Miramichi Folk Festival, who introduced me to the warmth and welcome of the Miramichi River region. I look forward to more Festivals blending English, Irish, French, Gaelic and Micmac culture in song and story.

Secondly, thanks go to CBC-Radio Canada's Judy Berwell for her thoughtful interview and feature story on the project at Kouchibouguac. Bert Crossman deserves credit for arranging the contact, from which a 6-minute item was syndicated to Canadian morning radio. Copies of the item are available for demonstration only (not for airplay).

## VISITOR COMMENTS

### CC Comments

#### CROSSCURRENTS '87: AUDIENCE RESPONSES ;

- "One of the finest programs I've witnessed at a campfire." -- Bert Crossman, Chief Park Interpreter, Kouchibouguac National Park, New Brunswick
- "You are a great interpreter of nature and certainly the best entertainer in this or any other park. You have talent, grace and poise and we wish you

# FINAL REPORT: Crosscurrents 1985-87

## Arts and Folklore for Sense of Place: Interagency Project for Heritage Interpretation

- all the best." -- Chicago
- "As a secondary school teacher, I would say that this method of relating the environment and concerns to the public is very instructive and enjoyable." -- Ontario
  - "What a wonderful way to present history so everyone can enjoy it!" -- New Brunswick
  - "...presented an educational overview as well as excellent entertainment. What a dynamic woman!" -- Annapolis, MD
  - "It was a blast; she has a beautiful voice. I'll have to come back to Newfoundland now -- I have topophilia!" -- New York
  - "Your songs made me remember my own roots. Thank you." -- New Brunswick
  - "it was a terrific show. I loved all of the songs. And your singing was very good also. It was fun pulling on the rope. Your slides were very pretty. You drew (sic) the maps nice too." -- Stephanie, age 8, New Brunswick
  - "It would be a shame not to continue this program." -- Newfoundland
  - "Dans cette présentation, nous avons bien ressenti ce qu'était "l'esprit acadien" et c'est pourquoi il est encore vivant!" -- Montréal
  - "Très, très bon travaille...cela rassemble les gens, ça crée un esprit communautaire, cela fait aimer notre terre, nos parcs, notre Canada. Bien agréable!" -- Nouveau Brunswick

### FROM THE MAILBAG

- "A highly qualified, talented young woman who has impressed many of us in the environmental movement with her commitment to the cause, her energy, and her versatility." --Partha Sarathy, Chair, Commission on Education, IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources)
- "...fascinating, innovative, and in my judgment extremely relevant work." -- Charles Gritzner, President, National Council on Geographic Education (USA)