Interview with conservationist Nicole Duplaix

French-American Conservationist Nicole Duplaix founded the Otter Specialist Group at the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Their work has contributed to the COMEBACK OF EUROPEAN OTTERS, like those pictured, in France.

A message from Ambassador Gérard Araud

Dear Friends,

The Embassy has been imbued with new energy as Washington returns to full speed, and new colleagues arrive. September has been filled with major moments for diplomacy. French and U.S. authorities proved once again our ability to work together effectively in difficult times. Our coordinated response to hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria allowed us to support our citizens affected both in the U.S. and in Caribbean territories of St. Martin and St. Barthélemy. The French network worked with local authorities to react efficiently and effectively in order to provide information and relief. We are grateful to all who mobilized, and to those who are now leading the difficult work of recovery.

Bright news came with the International Olympic Committee’s announcement that the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games will be hosted by Paris in 2024 and Los Angeles in 2028. That Paris and Los Angeles can celebrate this victory together is a testament to the Olympic values of solidarity, respect, friendship, and good sportsmanship we share.

The 2024 Olympic Games will take place exactly 100 years after Paris hosted the Games in 1924. The Olympic Games are just one example of France’s commitment to diplomacy through sports. With the Gay Games and FIFA’s Under 20 Women’s World Cup in 2018, a bid for the Rugby World Cup in 2023, and of course annual events like the Roland Garros tennis championship, we are making sure that France is a capital of world sporting, benefiting French people and tourists alike.

September was also the opening month of the 72nd Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. President Macron delivered his first speech to the UNGA in which he emphasized the importance of the Paris Climate Accord and defended the Iran deal. He stressed the necessity of multilateralism and a strong and united Europe to solve some of the world’s greatest challenges: climate change, terrorism, and the chaos in Syria.

Finally, President Macron inaugurated the French Dual Language Fund, which seeks to make high-quality bilingual education accessible to students of all backgrounds across the U.S. The Fund will help provide teacher training, give access to French pedagogical resources, and bring native speakers to public school classrooms, a fine example of French-U.S. educational cooperation.
The Embassy’s new hives

THE POPULATION OF EMBASSY WORKERS has just shot up from 260 to 200,260 thanks to the addition of new wings—so to speak. In late August, two new beehives were installed on Embassy grounds in Washington, D.C. as part of the “Green Embassy” project.

Since 2009, the Embassy has committed to improving sustainability. Until now, efforts have primarily included policies and renovations to reduce energy consumption by both staff and the building. The addition of the beehives, which will be kept by local beekeepers Eco Honeybees, brings a new focus on biodiversity to the Green Embassy agenda.

The bees will do more than help pollinate plants in the area and provide honey to the Embassy. “The hives are a tool that allow us to communicate about the fact that bees are endangered” according to Embassy intern Michel Li, who worked closely on the project. Pesticides and parasites have threatened U.S. bee populations in recent years, causing several species to be added to the U.S. Fishing & Wildlife Service list of endangered species for the first time.

“An overwhelming percentage of what we eat requires something to pollinate it” explains Larry Marling, one half of Eco Honeybees’ husband and wife team. “Honeybees are pollinators we can control and monitor, unlike bumblebees and butterflies.” Though he started beekeeping because he found it relaxing to watch the hives, the business has become “more of a quest, to show people how much they’re needed.”

The Embassy joins a growing community of urban beekeepers in Washington D.C. Eco Honeybees care for approximately 100 hives around the city, with clients ranging from individual homeowners to hotels and country clubs. Though there are 300 registered hives in D.C., the DC Beekeepers Alliance estimates up to 500 hives in the D.C. area, and they train 50 aspiring beekeepers each year.

Enjoy French musicals at the Embassy this fall

EVERY SEASON, THE EMBASSY’S CULTURAL SERVICES chooses a theme for the free films screened at the Maison Française. This fall will bring critically acclaimed French comédies musicales to D.C.

Though the musical is a quintessentially American invention, French directors have developed a charmingly French take on the form. Come discover the French musical through two fantastic films:

Eight Women/Huit Femmes by François Ozon
October 10
In an isolated mansion in the snowy countryside of France in the 1950s, a family is gathered for the holiday season. But there will be no celebration—their beloved patriarch has been murdered! The killer can only be one of the women closest to the man of the house. Was it his powerful wife? His spinster sister-in-law? His miserly mother-in-law? Maybe the insolent chambermaid or the loyal housekeeper? Could it possibly have been one of his two pretty young daughters? Eight women. Each is a suspect. Each has a motive. Each has a secret. Beautiful, tempestuous, intelligent, sensual, and dangerous...One of them is guilty. Who is it?

In French with English subtitles

Love Songs/Les Chansons d’amour by Christophe Honoré
October 25
Ismail and Julie lead a blissfully romantic existence in Paris and are as likely to sing their thoughts as speak them. They meet a variety of equally passionate young people as they wander through the dream-like city, eventually inviting Alice into their lives and into their bed. The delicate balance of their idyllic world is threatened when death intrudes unexpectedly, challenging them to keep love alive through loss and mourning.

In French with English subtitles.

Scene from Love Songs. Above left: scene from Eight Women.
Nicole Duplaix, photographer and conservationist

Nicole Duplaix is a renowned photographer, conservationist, environmental researcher, and professor. A native of France, where she completed her studies, she moved to the United States and became intensely involved in global conservation research. She has spearheaded several conservation projects with organizations like the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

When National Geographic requested an image to go with an article on her work with otters, Duplaix decided to take the photo herself, which launched her career in photography.

**Can you describe your current work and most recent projects?**

My focus has always been on global conservation, particularly the conservation of otters. 13 species of otters are either threatened or endangered right now. I created the Otter Specialist group for the IUCN and we’ve had many conservation successes.

When I studied giant otters in South America, they were considered one of the 10 most endangered mammals in the world. The species has made a comeback due in part to this conservation program, though it’s still considered endangered. The same thing has happened with sea otters; many species that were previously critically endangered have recovered.

Similarly, the European otter has recovered in many areas. Apart from my research and conservation program involvement, I teach conservation biology at Oregon State University.

**How has your French-American identity shaped your approach?**

It has enabled me to do a cross-cultural comparison of the approaches to environmental conservation. France is at the forefront of conservation today. The IUCN was founded in Fontainebleau.

The European otter has had a great revival in France. The country has also abided by the nature regulations and enforcements set forth by the European Union.

The support of nature projects in France manifests itself differently than in North America, because nature projects are often endorsed by national or supranational organizations in France.

In North America, mostly in the U.S., there’s a long history of non-profit nature organizations spearheading conservation efforts. Both have done excellent work, and though there are differences between the two approaches, they have strong historical similarities in working to help conservation efforts.

**Which artists or mentors have influenced your work and career?**

National Geographic has a whole group of accomplished women working for them, like Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey. As an organization, National Geographic has always been very supportive of women in the field, and has encouraged women to do field research because they’re extremely reliable under very difficult conditions. That has been very inspiring.

I would consider all my colleagues at National Geographic as mentors. Of course, my colleagues at the IUCN, which has thousands of conservation biologists working for species or problems, have been influential. When you’re part of that team, you’re inspired everyday.

**How do you think climate change will affect the prospect of global environmental conservation?**

Climate change is evident in so many ways, some of them quite small. For example, if the temperature changes by a couple degrees, it could have a ripple effect on a whole species.

Take the giant otter in Brazil. Brazil has a rainy season and a dry season that are extremely important to local ecosystems. The waters rise 14 feet in many rivers, and otters go into the forest during the rainy season. When they come back, the giant otters build a den and have their cubs.

Now there are sometimes two or three rainy seasons a year, so this has upset the environment for all the animals living in this region in Brazil. The otters, for example, come back and their dens are flooded because the second rainy season arrives at a bad moment.

Another example is in Hawaii, there are some very rare birds that live on mountains in certain zones. If they move lower they’re susceptible to attacks by predators that didn’t use to be there, and if they go higher it’s too cold for them. They are trapped in this very narrow and strict niche all because of environmental changes. All ecological nations are at risk if environmental conditions continue to change—it could lead to the extinction of many species.

**Can you share one of your most memorable experiences working in the field of conservation?**

My time in Suriname has been one of my favorite experiences. It’s a small country, the size of the state of Washington. It is 90 percent forest and more or less uninhabited. I spent a few years doing research on otters and examining the rainforest.

When you see the rainforest in all its splendor, and then you go to other countries where the rainforest is being cut down for commercial products, countries like Borneo, you know what’s environmentally lacking. You realize what’s happening. You see sights of catastrophe and compare them to natural beauty.

As a conservationist, I’m looking at the whole environment. There certainly are discomforts or difficulties when doing the work, but they pale in comparison to the important work I’m doing. I’ve been very lucky, as I’ve visited over 130 countries in the world, and each has broadened my view-point and made me understand the environment so much better. I’ve actually seen the environment’s evolution, and unfortunately, its demise in many places.

**Survey time!**

We need your help! We need your feedback on News From France. Give us your input by completing our survey online:

https://goo.gl/forms/h4RWscumFvNF04KA2

or email info@ambafrance-us.org with comments by November 15, 2017
A TOUR OF
THE FRENCH EMBASSY

SITUATED ATOP ONE OF GEORGETOWN’S
rolling hills, the French Embassy in Washington, D.C., is housed in a tasteful modernist
class designed by architect André Remondet and completed in 1984.

But what goes on behind Embassy doors? We take you on a tour of
some of the Embassy’s departments to explore life within one of D.C.’s
largest Embassies.

The building
With a staff of around 260, France’s Embassy in Washington, D.C. is the
largest in the country’s diplomatic network. The building went through
renovations in 2009 to implement environmentally sustainable practices,
joining the “Green Embassies in D.C.” movement pioneered by the Finnish
Embassy. The French Embassy now boasts one of the largest green roofs
in D.C. and energy savings programs have decreased electricity consump-
tion by 50%.

In 2015, authorities in Paris decided that all other French embassies
should emulate D.C.’s efforts, and consequently implemented a world-
wide program known as “Ambassade Verte.”

Chancery
We start in the diplomatic heart of the Embassy, the Chancery, where the
Ambassador, Deputy Chief of Mission, First Counselor, and a small team of
diplomats work. Their role is to foster French-American bilateral relations,
manage the Embassy, and act as a centralized body for the 10 French cons-
sulates in the U.S.

An important part of the work of the Ambassador and his team involves
organizing state visits and communicating French positions on policies
and international events to American governmental institutions. “We are all witnesses of our shared history,” explains First Counselor, Patrick
Lachaussée. “If there is a crisis in the Arabian peninsula or in North Korea,
we go to the State Department, to the NSC, to determine what they want
to do, what they think about the situation. We also share, with instructions
from Paris, our position and the actions we can take.”

Defense & Homeland Security
Next, we move on to the Defense department, charged with fostering
French-American cooperation with regards to global defense measures.

“We have two primary missions. First, to be advisors to the Ambassador
on defense issues, and second, to be intermediary between the Depart-
ment of Defense and the French Ministry of Defense for everything dealing
with French-U.S. defense cooperation,” explains Colonel Géraud Laborie,
the Air Attaché.

Though the department works most closely with the Pentagon, depend-
ing on the issue they may also organize meetings with the National Secu-
rity Council, the State Department, intelligence agencies, or other bodies
involved with questions of defense.

The U.S. and France are part of the same coalitions on counter-
terrorism and other issues, so both countries’ military trainees and troops
frequently work together to combat these international challenges. Laborie
adds that due to these programs and common interests, “we are at one of
the highest points in French-U.S. relations historically.”

Treasury, Agriculture and Ecology
Next, the Treasury, Agriculture and Ecology departments work side by side
physically in the Embassy.

The Treasury acts as a link between the U.S. and France with regards to
financial matters and French-American trade partnerships. Did you know
that French firms support 590,600 jobs in the U.S.? This is thanks to the
strong economic network cultivated in part by the French Treasury here in
the U.S.

The agricultural department represents France in trade negotiations in
the agricultural, forestry, fishing, and food industries, as well as follows U.S.
policies in those areas.

Culture and Science
The Office of Science and Technology (OST) and the Cultural Services both
aim to encourage the exchange of ideas.

The OST facilitates the free flow of information regarding scientific de-
velopments between the two nations by supporting innovators, improving
the visibility and mobility of French researchers and hosting events to con-
nect French and American scientists around the world.

The Cultural Service engages in highly visible diplomacy by organizing
educational exchanges and arranging French cultural events to promote
French culture in the United States. These two departments tackle the very
root of French-American relations: the pursuit of knowledge and cultural
exchange.

In D.C., the Cultural Services put on many free events at the Maison
Française—a beautiful events space which often hosts film screenings,
concerts, and other Embassy events. The space is also rented to outside
groups for galas, wine tastings and other events.

Consulate
Our Embassy houses the D.C. Consulate, one of 10 French consulates
around the country. The Consulate serves the District and surrounding
states of Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, as well as handling civil services (such as registering births, marriages, and
deaths) for the eastern United States.

Headed by Consul General Michel Charbonnier, consular officials are re-
sponsible for protecting the interests of French nationals abroad, be they
permanent residents or temporary visitors. The consulate serves as a point
of communication and manages administrative processes like voting and
issuing passports to French citizens. They also issue visas for non-French
citizens traveling to the country.

Cafeteria
Finally, we stop at the Embassy’s cafeteria, Le Café Descartes. Chef Mark
Courseille, a jack of all trades who worked for many years as pastry chef
at a major D.C. restaurant, tries “to stay true to French culture” while taking
a playful approach to French cuisine. In true French spirit, Courseille and
his staff make sure mealtimes provide a respite from work by cultivating
“a good, relaxing atmosphere.” The cafeteria isn’t just for Embassy staff
either; visitors are invited to enjoy a French lunch by making a reservation
with Le Café Descartes!
## The Embassy from A to Z

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chancery</strong></td>
<td>The diplomatic heart of the Embassy, the Chancery is where the Ambassador and a small team of diplomats work.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Center for Space Study (CNES)</strong></td>
<td>Implements France's space policy &amp; continues to sponsor the historic French-American alliance on space policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS)</strong></td>
<td>Supports French scientists working in North America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consulate</strong></td>
<td>The D.C. consulate serves the District and surrounding states—Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware and Pennsylvania. They also handle vital statistics for the eastern United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Services</strong></td>
<td>Seek to promote French art, literature, and education in the U.S. while also fostering exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customs</strong></td>
<td>Provides information concerning French custom policies and on importing and doing business in France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dept. of Agriculture</strong></td>
<td>Represents France in trade negotiations in the agricultural, forestry, fishing, and food industries, and follows U.S. policies in those areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dept. of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Energy &amp; Transportation</strong></td>
<td>Facilitates cooperation &amp; information-sharing between French &amp; American authorities on climate change, biodiversity, energy, and transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Treasury and Economic Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Acts as a link between the U.S. and France with regards to financial matters and facilitates French-American trade partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finance and Administrative Department</strong></td>
<td>Manages the budget, human resources, credentials, privileges, immunities, and events held on Embassy grounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Homeland Security Office (SSI)</strong></td>
<td>Represents the Ministry of the Interior and France's two police forces, the National Police and the National Gendarmerie.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Justice Attaché</strong></td>
<td>Represents the Ministry of Justice; facilitates judicial cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>La Maison Française</strong></td>
<td>Encourages cultural exchange &amp; friendly relationships by hosting a variety of events.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Office for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations</strong></td>
<td>Helps create a network of transatlantic civil society organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Office for Nuclear Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Analyzes the technical, scientific, economic, political, and industrial influences of nuclear energy in the U.S. and France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office for Science and Technology</strong></td>
<td>Facilitates the free flow of information regarding scientific developments between the two nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office of the Defense Attaché</strong></td>
<td>Presents and defends French defense policy; advises Ambassador on defense matters.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paymaster General</strong></td>
<td>Known as the “Government’s Accounting Station,” one of the main functions is to oversee the payment of pensions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Press &amp; Communication</strong></td>
<td>Relays official French positions on global issues to the American public and conducts research on French-American media relations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Real Estate &amp; Civil Engineering Regional Office</strong></td>
<td>Manages properties owned or rented by the French Republic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taxation office</strong></td>
<td>Provides information concerning French taxation policies and tax treaties between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.</td>
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France develops floating wind turbines

How does this technology work? Wind turbines are mounted on offshore flotation devices and generate electricity from water. Their buoys and blades make it easy to cultivate hydraulic energy regardless of water depth. The concept was introduced by Professor William Heronemus at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in the 1970s, however it was not until 2009 that the first full-scale floating wind flotilla—the Hywind—was assembled and deployed.

In France, the four turbine units are being developed in Provence, Leucate, Gruissan, and Groix. They will be launched at various points in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Though built based on the Hywind model, each turbine will have a completely different floor plan and will take into consideration different marine conditions.

This technology is also extremely efficient, tailored, and viable for its price. According to experts from the National Renewable Energy Lab in the U.S., turbines can rely on natural energy sources instead of man-made technologies. Because of that ability, floating wind can eventually become economically competitive with mainstream energy sources like gas.

The French government is hugely supportive of this endeavor, investing more than €300 million into turbine construction. If all goes well, by 2020, the expected year of the launch, France will be a pioneer of floating wind technology.

Monnaie de Paris, France’s oldest business

THE PARIS WE KNOW TODAY is a hub for business, but did you know that its first enterprise was established over a thousand years ago?

During the 9th century in France, King Charles II wanted to foster commercial unity throughout his kingdom and thought a single currency would be an effective way to achieve this goal. Thus in 843 he opened the Monnaie de Paris, a government controlled center, otherwise known as a mint facility, to manufacture an official French currency.

As the economy grew increasingly complex, the institution opened mint workshops around the country, per government orders. With this expansion, the mint industry flourished and the Monnaie de Paris’ responsibility extended beyond manufacturing coins.

In the 16th-17th centuries, the Monnaie de Paris started to produce national medals. Today, it handles both traditional and nontraditional tasks of a mint facility. After President Charles de Gaulle declared that the French minting industry should remain mostly outside of Paris, even more facilities opened up around the country.

Today, the mint engraves and packages coins, burnishes flans, or metal disks, and produces the Euro for multiple countries. As a designated EPIC, a state-backed center of industry and commerce in France, the Monnaie de Paris has unveiled a number of exhibitions on minting at its location in Paris.

If you visit France’s oldest business today, you can take a tour of its grounds and shop for replicas of some of its most valuable coins. But most importantly, you can experience the rich history of France’s minting industry. Though the world was entirely different in 843, the Monnaie de Paris can connect us to this distant past with a single coin.
Launch of French dual language fund

THIS FALL SEASON KICKED OFF on a high note with the launch of the French Dual Language Fund in the presence of President Emmanuel Macron on September 20 at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

President Macron addressed the audience with a powerful and moving speech in which he highlighted the importance of bilingualism in our increasingly globalized world. Languages function as a means to bring people closer together by allowing people to understand one another's cultures, perspectives and ideas.

The Cultural Services of the French Embassy, who started the Fund along with partner the FACE Foundation, is dedicated to making high-quality bilingual education accessible to students of all backgrounds across the U.S. The Fund aims to support the development of existing French dual language programs, as well as to spearhead the launch of new programs across the country.


President Macron meets with students after the launch of the Dual Language Fund. Students from New York French Immersion programs performed an original theater piece and sang both the French & U.S. National anthems as part of the launch ceremony.

Major French exhibits in the US this fall

FRENCH ART ENTHUSIASTS will have plenty to see this fall! Among the many cultural projects taking place throughout the United States, two major exhibitions have just opened:

On September 12, the first U.S. iteration of the Palais de Tokyo-based exhibition, "Hors les Murs," opened as part of the sixth edition of EXPO CHICAGO (Sept. 12–Oct. 29, 2017). Curated by the Palais de Tokyo’s Katell Jaffrès, the group exhibition presents emerging artists from both the French and Chicago art scenes. Through the exhibit, Jaffrès delves into the dialogue between architecture and artistic process.


The museum will present Bourgeois’s written works, which are little-known yet comprise 1,400 printed compositions, primarily on fabric. While most of her works were created primarily in the last two decades of her life, some date to the beginning of her career in the 1940s.

More information:

Palais de Tokyo exhibition: http://frenchculture.org/visual-and-performing-arts/events/palais-de-tokyo-hors-les-murs-expo-chicago
Louise Bourgeois retrospective: https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3661
THE LOIRE VALLEY along the Loire River in central France takes on a new color in the fall. Thanks to its moderate climate, pleasant landscape, and incredible sights, it's an ideal destination for an autumn trip.

Historically, its location gave the valley great strategic importance. During the Middle Ages, many rulers and nobles established their strongholds there, and centuries later their castles were replaced with Renaissance châteaux, now the area's main attractions.

One of the most notable châteaux of the Loire Valley is the Château de Chenonceau, which spans the River Cher near the small village of Chenonceaux in the Indre-et-Loire department. Serving as the residence of royal personalities like Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de' Medicis, it gained the moniker “Château des Dames.” Today, it is the most visited château in France after Versailles.

The Loire Valley is also known for bicycle tourism. “La Loire à vélo,” a long-distance cycling route, allows visitors to go for pleasant bike rides or walks near the calm waters of the Loire while admiring the beautiful castles.