

The Inaugural Bourne-Chew Award Presented to Dr. Brian Beal

The Bourne-Chew Award was established to recognize “outstanding contributions to education, outreach, extension, aquaculture or shellfisheries. It is expected that the recipient will excel in each of these arenas...It should be reserved for truly outstanding individuals who excel in each of the areas of specialization.” Dr. Brian Beal is the inaugural recipient of this award.



Brian Beal in front of screen during presentation of a taped interview with Neil Bourne and Ken Chew. Special thanks to Linda Heimstra for facilitating the interview which took place in Nanaimo, B.C.

Brian has a distinguished career as an educator, researcher, grantman, and dedicated outreach specialist. What is perhaps most impressive is that he has managed to do all of this at a satellite campus of the University of Maine, in an economically and educationally deprived environment, Washington County, Maine. This is a true testament to his dedication, perseverance, and above all, talents. While engaging in all of the normal activities of a university professor - the courses, the committees, the time sinks - Dr. Beal was engaged in an active and highly productive research program studying shellfish biology, population biology, resource management, aquaculture, and environmental impacts on several commercially important species including the softshell clam, northern quahogs, lobsters, and most recently sea urchins. His work is of the highest caliber and published in top-tier journals. He also serves as Director of the Marine Field Station for the University of Maine at Machias, and regularly serves on national and international advisory groups.

His outreach activities are unparalleled. The Downeast Institute for Applied Marine Research and Education (formerly the Beals Island Regional Shellfish Hatchery) is a stellar example of what is possible under the right guidance and leadership. This facility was established in 1987 and since that time has flourished as a research center, an aquaculture facility, and as a classroom, not only for university students, but for grammar school and high school kids also. Their mission is “to improve the quality of life for the people of Downeast and coastal

Maine through applied marine research, technology transfer, and public marine resource education. Brian serves as their Director of Research and has done an outstanding job of shaping the research efforts to fit with local needs and scientific realities, i.e. he has provided a realistic sense of what questions can be answered and directed the research to answer them - all the while engaging students at all levels in

associated outreach activities, projects, and hands-on experiences in the aquaculture arena. Several of these projects are summarized in the attached materials including clam enhancement efforts, growth of clams to transplantable sizes using upwellers, green crab trapping and predator exclusion studies, enhanced wild clam recruitment and even sediment buffering for coastal acidification. His 27-year efforts culturing juvenile American lobsters were summarized in the NSA Quarterly Newsletter (2013(3)).

Many of Brian’s efforts have been in conjunction with small business development in an economically deprived section of the country where one in three children live in poverty and where education is not always a top priority. He has embraced this challenge and increased participation in NSF-supported programs for these under-represented groups of K-12 students, teachers, undergraduates students and fishers as they have been encouraged to become engaged in hands-on, inquire-based activities designed to better understand the local marine environment and the role that fisheries and aquaculture can play in local economies.

He freely gives of his time and talent to other organizations and currently serves as Chairman of the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center and Treasurer of the Cobscook Bay Resource Center. In a recent testimonial, Dr. John Federico established an endowment fund for educational scholarships at the DEI and said “I see the work at the Downeast Institute as a most tangible manifestation for how we should all work with and within our natural surroundings. I hope that we can all become worthy stewards and cohabiters of this very beautiful region, and would like others to appreciate the effort that it takes to be responsible stewards of the land and sea around us”. There is little doubt that Brian Beal’s research and educational efforts have had, and will continue to have, a profound impact on shellfish aquaculture in particular and on the regional economic and environmental well-being overall.

From his nomination letters:

“Brian exemplifies what both Ken Chew and Neil Bourne represent: commitment to sound science, a genuine desire to help integrate the shellfish/aquaculture community into the local ambiance at all levels – from beginning students to the working waterfront by demonstrating what can be done and providing hands-on access to resources to get the answers to questions of importance to the community.” John Kraeuter



“In my mind, Dr. Beale exemplifies what we look for in individuals who have the breadth of experience that enables them to foster outreach effectively in ways that are transformative to the industries they serve.” — Joth Davis

“Brian Beal is the ideal recipient of the Bourne-Chew Award” — Rich Lutz

CONGRATULATIONS, BRIAN!