

Wading in Quinnipiac Mud Guides Career Path for Beth Owen

the success story of a former Yale/Sea Grant Coastal Intern and Knauss Fellow

by Tristan Kading, Sea Grant Intern

Beth Owen never thought that when she began her studies in water science, policy and management she'd be wading knee deep in the Quinnipiac River collecting mud samples – and loving it! Beth is just one of many Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies graduate students and alumni to participate in an independent research project through the support of Connecticut Sea Grant. The internships have been as ambitious as they are diverse, and all have given participants a new perspective on the role of research in their future. The program is based at Yale's Center for Coastal and Watershed Systems.

Beth sampled and analyzed sediments for heavy metals from the lower Quinnipiac River. Her work has helped the City of New Haven carry out an ambitious plan to redevelop the Fair Haven district, which has long served as a home for industry. She supplemented the small amount of information on heavy metals in the Quinnipiac, as well as uncovered some clues as to the behavior of sediment in the river. Beth learned much more than just how to analyze mud though – her project caused her to gain a new respect for the community she was aiding.

"I felt a much stronger connection to New Haven after working out on the river for a summer collecting my data," recalls Beth Owen "and I was able to share my data with the city of New Haven after completion of the project." Ms. Owen found the internship particularly useful in supplementing her water quality policy studies, "The experience gave me a practical understanding of many aspects of scientific research that I did not have before." This internship led Beth to accept a year-long Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship with the NOAA Estuarine Reserves Division in Silver Spring, MD. She finished her fellowship in January of 2006, and she is now working as the education coordinator for the Maine Sea Grant College Program at the University of Maine.



Beth Owen as a Yale/Sea Grant Coastal Intern, on a sampling trip off Fair Haven, Connecticut. No wading in the mud this time.

About the author: Tristan Kading is an undergraduate in the University of Connecticut's Coastal Studies Program. He is interested in the chemistry of coastal and marine sediments. He wrote this article as a Sea Grant Communications intern.

NOTICE: The Connecticut Sea Grant College Program will be reviewed by a Program Assessment Team in October, 2006. The public is invited to send comments about the program to be made available to this team. Materials should be received by **Sept. 15, 2006.**

Please send comments to:
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