



THE DAN MACPHAIL MEMORIAL BURSARY BIOGRAPHY

The Dan MacPhail Memorial Bursary is awarded each year to a graduating high school student to support and encourage their further studies in science and the environment.

The bursary was established in honour of a man who was a friend to the Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation, and a friend of the environment.

Dan MacPhail was keenly interested in the natural world and the wise use of its resources. He also loved woodworking and boats. Born and raised in Cape Breton, Dan farmed and fished lobster and raised a family. He also served in the Second World War, then worked for many years as a ferry operator at Seal Island. With the construction of the bridge and the discontinuing of that ferry service, Dan took the opportunity to change the direction of his career and pursue his interest in natural resource management.

Dan was in his early 40's when he was accepted to the New Brunswick Forest Ranger Program, where he earned a degree in forestry. However, instead of becoming a forester as he's intended, he was quickly scooped up by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. He was a respected and capable fisheries technician for nearly 30 years, involved in the salmon hatchery program across the Maritimes, as well as field assessment work, particularly in the St. Mary's River. He was considered "THE" expert at deciphering information from salmon and trout scales, and made significant contributions to understanding the life histories of fish on many rivers in the region.

After retiring from DFO, Dan and his long-time partner, Polly Greene, bought property on Caribou Lake in the Mushamush watershed, and moved there in 1995. Dan continued messing around with boats, and when the black flies were bad he could be found in the basement peering through his microscope, reading fish scales sent to him by various agencies that knew his reputation.

Soon after moving to the area, Dan offered his expertise to assist BCAF in its water quality and fish habitat projects. Dan joined the Board of Directors in 1996 and was an involved as a hands on volunteer until his death in July of 2000.

Dan was generous with his time, skills, knowledge, and wisdom. His tremendous interest in nature inspired many. It is BCAF's hope that the recipient of this bursary will also find interests and life work that are personally rewarding and beneficial to society at large.