

Bob Richards Recognized for his Contributions to Keeping Tahoe Blue

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Long-time scientist will be the recipient of the 2009 Dwight Steel Award

On July 10th, 2009 at the Tahoe-Baikal Institute's Annual Friendraiser dinner, Bob Richards will be recognized for his long service to Lake Tahoe. Richards was the Captain of the UC Davis research vessel John LeConte for more than 30 years, braving all sorts of miserable weather conditions to collect weekly data about Lake Tahoe's clarity.

The Dwight Steele Award is presented annually by the League to Save Lake Tahoe and the Tahoe-Baikal Institute to honor Dwight Steele's selfless, determined, and equitable pursuit of the long-term protection of the Lake Tahoe watershed. The award is given in recognition of an individual who has demonstrated an outstanding passion for and commitment to the long-term protection of Lake Tahoe, and who embodies the characteristics exemplified by Dwight Steele, such as integrity, compassion, persuasiveness, and commitment to volunteer service. Past recipients include Bill Lane, Roland Westergard, Jerome Waldie, Dennis Machida, Patricia Ronald, Fritz Hungtington, and Richard Goldman.

Dwight Steele was a TBI founder and longstanding member of the League's Board of Directors. He also served on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Board of Governors where he was influential in driving policies to improve water quality and the natural surroundings of Lake Tahoe. A devoted volunteer, Dwight served as a mentor to TBI participants and others active in the protection of natural resources at Lake Tahoe and beyond. His example and leadership figure prominently in today's climate of environmental awareness and cooperative action in the Tahoe Basin.

Bob Richards, the 2009 recipient of the Dwight Steele award, is well known for the enormous number of boat trips he led on the lake, explaining the science behind Lake Tahoe's famous clear, blue water to groups like the members of the League to Save Lake Tahoe and the participants of the Tahoe-Baikal Institute's international exchanges. Richards' began his work at Lake Tahoe in 1969, when he was hired to collect data on the lake every three weeks throughout the winter. It is largely thanks to Richards that we have such consistent, reliable data on the clarity of the lake. Despite the fact that he retired in 2004, Richards' still serves as a docent at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences. In addition to collecting data about Lake Tahoe, Richards has also gone on two expeditions to Lake Baikal. Dr. Charles Goldman, who is the Chair of the Tahoe-Baikal Institute Board of Directors, says "I am delighted that Bob Richards' long service to the science at Lake Tahoe is being recognized by this important award. He is certainly one of the most knowledgeable people on the topic of Lake Tahoe, and has spent more hours on the lake than anyone I know."

The 2009 Dwight Steele Award will be presented to Bob Richards at TBI's Annual "Friendraiser" Reception and Dinner at Heavenly Mountain Resort's Lakeview Lodge at the top-of-the-tram on July 10th, 2009. In addition to the award presentation, the evening will feature an intimate dinner with TBI's distinguished group of young international environmental leaders, and a keynote address by Dr. Samuel Luoma and Dr. Marion Wittmann. Please contact the Tahoe-Baikal Institute if you are interested in attending or becoming a sponsor for this event. Call Jennifer Smith-Lee at 530-542-5599 or email jsmith@tahoebaikal.org.