

Editorial

Ecological Economics Best Article Award for 1997

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In 1996, ISEE began presenting a ‘best article award’ for papers published in this journal. Initial funding for the prize was donated by Herman Daly and the award fund has since then been supplemented by contributions from other ISEE members. The editorial board of the journal votes to determine the winner from among the previous year’s full-length articles (Commentaries, Surveys, Analysis and Methods—not Editorials, News and Views, Letters, or Short Notes). The winner in 1996 was Robert Ayres for his paper ‘Limits to the Growth Paradigm’ (Ayres, 1996).

There were 70 full-length articles published in 1997. Board members voted for their first, second and third place choices. Nine articles received first place votes and 22 articles received at least third place votes.

This year’s Best Article Award for papers published in *Ecological Economics* goes to Susan Hanna for her article ‘The new frontier of American fisheries management’ (Hanna, 1997). She will receive a cash prize and a plaque, which will be presented at the ISEE biannual meeting in Santiago, Chile, November 15–19, 1998.

Dr. Hanna has served as ISEE vice-president from 1996–97 and has just been reelected to a second 2-year term. Her research has focused on institutional capital, property rights regimes and governance issues. In her award-winning paper, she analyzes the problem of sustainable fisheries governance as one of moving from the perception of the oceans as a ‘frontier’ with minimal institutional capital, to a ‘commons’ with appropriate levels and types of institutional capital. She lists the institutional capital necessary for sustainable fisheries governance as: “(1) a perception of the fishery as an integrated system; (2) an identification of stakeholders; (3) an allocation of decision-making power and responsibility which vests all interests and internalizes the source of control; (4) incentive structures to promote long-term management; (5) management skills among fishery interests; and (6) management processes that promote adaptability to change”. She then analyzes the progress of US fisheries governance toward achieving these levels and types of institutional capital. While there has been some progress, she concludes, we are still far from achieving the institutional capital necessary to assure sustainable fisheries governance. She notes that “The institutional capital which supports fishery management is also better matched to the frontier

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than the commons. Scarcity requires more sophisticated institutional capital than the existing rudimentary level and it is toward the development of this capital that American fishery management must move. ...The challenge facing American fisheries is to develop the new frontier of fishery governance in which all interests—the fishing industry, fishery agencies, environmental organizations and the concerned public—engage in a collaborative effort to sustain a resource of mutual value” (pp. 231–232).

The second place article in 1997 was Philip Fearnside’s ‘Environmental services as a strategy for sustainable development in rural Amazonia’ (Fearnside, 1997). In this article, Fearnside synthesizes several studies and quantifies the environmental services of Amazonian rain forests, including biodiversity maintenance, carbon storage and water cycling. He calculates a ‘medium’ value of 37 US\$ billion/year for the sum of these three services in the Amazon, or 29000 US\$/family/year. He also points out the need to ‘capture’ some of this non-marketed income in order to convert ecosystem services into the basis for sustainable development. According to Fearnside, this may be the greatest challenge facing rural Amazonia and, in fact, the world.

The third place article in 1997 was Martin Ricker’s ‘Limits to economic growth as shown by a computable general equilibrium model’ (Ricker, 1997). Ricker’s model included both commercial and non-commercial goods and values and was able to show the impact of changes in endowments (of natural resources, labor and energy), preferences and production possibilities on economic income (both marketed and non-marketed). He also developed and explained his model in fairly jargon-free language accessible to our broad interdisciplinary readership. The study’s conclusions included: (1) We need to expand indicators to capture true economic growth,

rather than only ‘commercial’ economic growth as measured by GNP; (2) All types of economic growth are limited—regardless of whether they are based on endowment growth, production efficiency growth, or changes in preferences; and (3) Economic growth does not measure pure utility growth, which is of great and increasing importance.

Other articles receiving first place votes were (in alphabetical order): Cameron, 1997; Cleveland and Ruth, 1997; Nelson, 1997; Perrings and Walker, 1997; Söllner, 1997; Stern, 1997.

Congratulations are in order all around for a job well done!

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