



JOHN CRONIN

Director and Chief Executive Officer
Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries

For 35 years, John Cronin has dedicated his career to public service and the environment. In 2000, New York Governor George E. Pataki appointed Cronin to help develop “a global center for river and estuary research.” Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries was founded in 2004 on the shores of the Hudson River with Cronin as interim chief. The board of trustees appointed him its first director and CEO in 2006.

The Wall Street Journal has called John Cronin “a unique presence on America’s major waterways,” a distinction affirmed by the breadth of his career. As an advocate, lobbyist, legislative and congressional aide, commercial fisherman, author and filmmaker, Cronin tackled a wide range of frontline issues, such as Clean Water Act enforcement, disposal practices at Love Canal, fisheries management, and the New York City Watershed Agreement.

Cronin is known internationally for his Hudson River work. He has authored three Hudson River laws and led the investigation of more than 100 water pollution cases, with far-reaching impacts on environmental policy. He served as Hudson Riverkeeper from 1983 – 2000, inspiring a legacy of more than 160 waterkeeper programs on six continents. For his accomplishments, *Time* magazine named him a “Hero for the Planet.” *People* magazine called him “equal parts detective, scientist and public advocate.”

Under Cronin’s leadership, Beacon Institute has adopted technological innovation as a central mission. Its River and Estuary Observatory Network (REON) will monitor the Hudson “source to sea” through a network of sensors and robotics that provide real-time data to researchers, policy makers and educators. REON will be emulated on rivers and estuaries worldwide; collaborating institutions include IBM, Clarkson University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Columbia University.

To inspire a new generation of innovators, Cronin has built the Institute’s education program around STEM skill training for students (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), and technology-based professional development for teachers. To advance new thinking in environmental policy, he is heading a science, technology and policy center with Pace University School of Law.

Cronin lectures nationally on environmental innovation, politics and law. “If the 20th century was the era of environmental brawn, the 21st century is the era of environmental brains,” he tells his audiences. “By harnessing the talent, intellect, and passion that resides in every segment of society, we can harmonize forever the human and natural worlds. This is the greatest challenge of the 21st century.”

Cronin is a co-founder of the Pace Academy for Applied Environmental Studies, a center for excellence at Pace University where he is Senior Fellow for Environmental Affairs. He is the founder of the Environmental Consortium of Hudson Valley Colleges and Universities, and co-founder of the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic. He co-authored the book *The Riverkeepers*, with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and has written numerous articles, including for the Op Ed page of *The New York Times*. He wrote and co-produced the film “The Last Rivermen,” named an outstanding documentary by the Motion Picture Academy Foundation.

Cronin’s work has earned him many honors including an Honorary *Juris Doctor* from Pace Law School, the William E. Ricker Award from the American Fisheries Society, and the Thomas Berry Environmental Award. He has been the subject of two books and extensive major media print and broadcast news stories, documentaries and profiles.



Photo by Lynda Shenkman Curtis

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