

Author and Activist Alan McGowan of Citizen BOAS Recently Featured on Close Up Radio

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES,
November 20, 2025 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- Alan McGowan, founder of Citizen Boas and a prominent science educator and policy advocate, is dedicated to making science accessible and relevant to the public. Drawing inspiration from Franz Boas, widely regarded as the father of American anthropology, McGowan brings decades of expertise as an educator, author, and editor to his ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between scientific research and everyday life.

McGowan's work explores the importance of communicating science clearly, especially as society faces pressing challenges including climate change, environmental degradation, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence. "Scientists, for too long, have been comfortable in their ivory towers and have not learned how to speak to the public in plain English," McGowan states. "That's beginning to change, but it hasn't changed enough. Both scientists and medical professionals need to engage with the media and the public in ways that are understandable and relevant."



A Legacy of Scientific Citizenship

Inspired by Franz Boas, who supported the idea of cultural relativity and tackled issues of racial superiority through scientific research, McGowan founded Citizen Boas to promote the idea of the "citizen scientist." Boas, after witnessing the compassion of indigenous people during his travels and facing the rigid structures of German academia, devoted his career to making science work for the public good. "Boas reached out to the public with his work and felt that science needs to serve the people," McGowan explains. "His advocacy, particularly against notions of

racial superiority and for intellectual freedom, set a powerful example.”

McGowan’s first book, “The Political Activism of Franz Boas, Citizen Scientist,” explores Boas’s strategic placement of students in academic departments nationwide, ensuring that his philosophy on anthropology and cultural studies would take root across the country.

Advocating for Science Communication and Policy Change

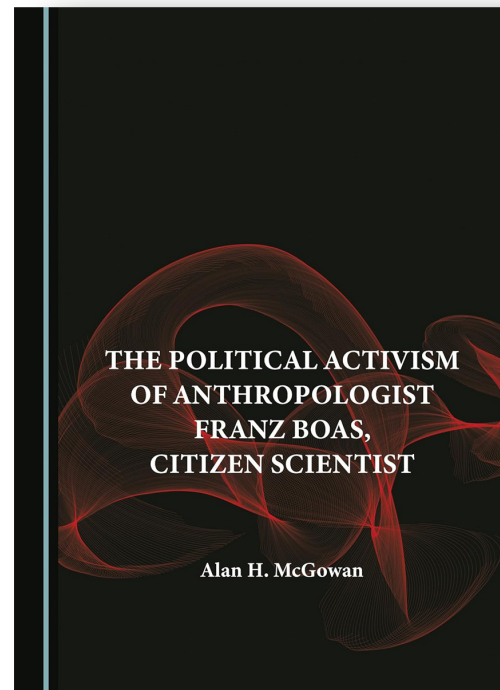
With a background that includes leadership roles at The New School—where he served as chair of interdisciplinary science and environmental studies

programs—McGowan continues to teach courses on renewable energy and urban ecosystems. In the classroom, he encourages students to engage with social change movements and work with environmental organizations.

McGowan also notes the urgent need for improved science literacy among elected leaders. “We used to have an Office of Technology Assessment in Congress, which looked at the social effects of scientific developments. Without it, Congress has no systematic way of understanding the impact of scientific issues, including COVID-19,” McGowan shares. He credits the rapid development of COVID vaccines to decades of taxpayer-funded research and calls attention to the need for responsible policy and industry practices.

As executive editor of Environment Magazine, McGowan works to ensure that scientific research is presented in a way that is approachable for the general public. “Our goal is to have professionals write articles that are readable and applicable to everyone, not just experts,” he asserts.

McGowan is candid about the environmental challenges associated with renewable energy, such as the mining of cobalt and lithium needed for electric car batteries. “Mining can be dangerous and exploitative, but with proper protections in place, it can be done safely. There is ongoing research on alternatives to these rare minerals, though no perfect substitute exists—yet,” he notes. McGowan encourages critical thinking about “green” solutions, addressing both their promise and their limitations.



He also highlights the global dimensions of climate change, energy production, and water scarcity. Despite progress in renewable energy investments in countries like China and the United States, he points to the environmental costs of data centers and the need for advances in water purification technology. "Water is the new oil. We're going to have to take dirty water and make it clean to meet the needs of our growing digital infrastructure," he explains.

Looking Ahead: "Life and Death in the Anthropocene"

McGowan is currently at work on his next book, "Life and Death in the Anthropocene," which will examine how human activity is shaping the current geological era. He stresses that while the global north contributes the most to environmental problems, solutions require international cooperation and broad public engagement.

Ultimately, McGowan believes that the future of science—and the health of society—depends on open, honest dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and the public. "Science should serve people, not just advance knowledge for its own sake. By bringing scientific understanding into everyday conversations, we all benefit."

About Alan McGowan and Citizen Boas

Alan McGowan is an environmental scientist, educator, author, and policy analyst. Through Citizen Boas, he is working to build stronger public understanding of science and to promote dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and the general public. He remains deeply engaged in both teaching and writing, serving as a resource for everyone who is navigating the complex relationships between science, society, and policy.

Close Up Radio recently featured Author and Activist Alan McGowan in an interview with Jim Masters on Friday November 14th at 10am EST

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For more information, connect with Alan McGowan at <https://www.citizenboas.com/> and <https://www.c-span.org/program/book-tv/the-political-activism-of-anthropologist-franz-boas-citizen-scientist/639623>

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