

2011 Tudor Richard Award

As presented at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, October 2011.

New Hampshire Audubon's Tudor Richards Award is presented each year to someone who best exemplifies Tudor's love and knowledge of the outdoors, and who works tirelessly and effectively for conservation in the state.

The award this year goes to someone cut from the same cloth as Tudor, a forester who has gone beyond that deep connection to be a force for conservation and natural resource stewardship. Geoff Jones' history of service is long and impressive. I suspect a good number of you are familiar with Geoff through field trips and workshops he's led; committees served on; and published writing. Currently he serves on the Harris Center's Lands Committee, and the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions' board. He's chaired the Stoddard Conservation Commission since 1999. The town of Stoddard, by the way, is 63% conserved acreage, and has one of the lowest tax rates in the state.

Geoff is an asset to any committee or project. He speaks his mind. There's no beating around the proverbial bush.

Multi-faceted, Geoff wrote *A Guide to Logging Aesthetics*, and helped write and then update *Good Forestry in the Granite State*. As longtime Director of Land Management for the Forest Society, Geoff kept an eye on some 45,000 acres, and worked—and inspired—landowners and volunteer stewards. Under his guidance Forest Society lands were the first “green certified” lands for sustainable forestry practices in the state.

To go beyond the lists, two people who have worked with Geoff sent along tributes.

Annie Faulkner, a force herself, wrote the following.

“In Stoddard, Geoff has been a tremendous advocate as longtime chair of the Conservation Commission. He organized Stoddard's first-ever investment in land conservation when the Robb Reservoir project was underway. Stoddard, like most small, rural towns, was not known for its public generosity, and town meetings commonly spent considerable time debating a hundred dollars here, a hundred dollars there.

*Under Geoff's leadership, the Conservation Commission requested \$5,000 toward the Robb Reservoir acquisition - bold enough some would say. On the night of town meeting, Geoff stood up and not only gave an impassioned case for the article, but also asked that it be amended from \$5,000 to \$50,000, a ten-fold increase. The amended article passed -- **unanimously**. None of this would have happened without Geoff Jones passion, leadership and hard work.”*

To give you a sense of the broad scope of Geoff's energy and commitment, he was a founding member of Concerned Cheshire Citizens who took on the State DOT when a huge highway bypass interchange was proposed for Keene, down the road a bit from Stoddard and Geoff's original home town.

Again, Annie Faulkner writes:

“The project as originally designed was a 10-year \$66 million addition of lanes, overpasses and ramps that would fill 30 acres of wetlands. At the time the grass roots group was formed, the project was a “go” from the perspective of city and state officials.

Geoff and the other founding members felt the project was too big and too costly in terms of dollars, environmental impacts, and the character of the city. Geoff gathered information from state offices in Concord, developed maps and other analyses, and presented in front of numerous boards, commissions, and citizens.

He always gave an impassioned case for why and how we could do better.

Against seemingly impossible odds, the project was redesigned with a much smaller ecological and economic footprint. Instead of overpasses, the roundabouts of Keene are a result of Geoff's and the grassroots group's efforts to bring a saner, safer solution. Gone are the traffic tie-ups of old."

Here's how Annie Faulkner closed her tribute to Geoff:

"Thanks for the opportunity to brag about Geoff. He's our hero!!"

Dave Anderson at the Forest Society and a good friend of Geoff's sent along a tribute that included tales of many rugged adventures that had Dave grateful to be back warm, safe and dry at his office desk!!

Dave writes:

"Adversity invigorates Geoff Jones. Raw, hard-won experience adds rugged texture to Geoff's resumé. For him the bigger the challenge, the sweeter the end result it seems. Geoff's passion for land conservation, enlightened forestry and protection of natural resources is unquestioned. His commitment to the wildlife, wild rivers, well-managed forests and wild places of New Hampshire (and far beyond) is undiminished even in the face of the longest odds.

Both Tudor Richards' and Geoff Jones' lives intersect at one special place: Lake Umbagog. It's a place they loved and also helped to manage and protect. The near-wilderness quality of the wild lake, the Androscoggin River and its forested tributaries spoke to them both during different eras.

While the wail of a loon under a full moon, heard when paddling or camping on a wild North Country lake, is all the tribute that Tudor and Geoff could ever ask for...

I trust and believe their ideals and the integrity of their respective lives and work will continue to inspire all of us and our collective conservation successors."

It is with great pleasure that New Hampshire Audubon presents the Tudor Richards Award to Geoff Jones. I know Tudor would approve.