

2018 Tudor Richards Award

Presented by Francie Von Mertens at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 15, 2018.

Each year since 1983, NH Audubon has presented the Tudor Richards award to an individual or individuals who have worked tirelessly and effectively for conservation in the Granite State.

The 2018 recipient of the Tudor Richards Award is Nanci Mitchell.

Nanci has worked to protect land and wildlife wherever she's lived. From New York to Massachusetts to New Hampshire, she's been active with Conservation Commissions and land protection efforts that began 47 years ago when she lived in Buffalo.

New Hampshire gained a lot when she moved to Hollis in 1981, and soon volunteered for the Beaver Brook Association. At the time, the property had no permanent protection, and Nanci became a founding member of the Nichols-Smith Conservation Land Trust, created to hold conservation easements on Beaver Brook Association land, thereby conserving it in perpetuity. She also chaired the Hollis Planning Board Chair and served on several other town boards.

Environmental Education has also been an important focus for Nanci. She not only served as Education Director at the Beaver Brook Association but was also on the board of the New Hampshire Environmental Educators and the New England Environmental Alliance.

Nanci and her husband moved to Gilmanton, New Hampshire in 2000 where she chaired the Conservation Commission for 10 years, working practically full time to protect priority parcels of land and important natural resources. She oversaw the completion of a Natural Resource Inventory for the town that took four years to complete. She was also the Gilmanton Land Trust Board Treasurer for six years.

She's the treasurer and a founding member of the Belknap Range Conservation Coalition with a mission "to promote the conservation of open space, responsible stewardship, and low-impact public enjoyment of the scenic, natural, recreational and historical resources of the Belknap Mountain Range." Once again, Nanci was a key person in a land trust's creation. She took intensive GIS training at UNH to do the sophisticated mapping needed today. Protecting Piper Mountain was a recent goal achieved by the Belknap Range Coalition.



Nanci Mitchell (right) accepting NH Audubon's 2018 Tudor Richards Award from Francie Von Mertens.

Amanda Stone, neighbor and conservation associate describes Nanci as a “quiet leader.”

“When Nanci volunteers for you, you’ve got the best volunteer in town.”

She’s unassuming, very humble and uncomfortable in the spotlight.

Nanci walks the walk of conservation every day. She and her husband Charlie conserved their land, adding to it over the years, and helping to create an unfragmented block of 8,898 protected acres, with trails for the public. They were motivated to not only protect the land but also inspire others to do the same. In 2007, the Society for the Protection of NH Forests presented them with the Conservationist of the Year Award. They live simply in a homestead they built at the end of a steep dirt road. Their vegetable and pollinator gardens abound. They have hosted events at their house to promote land conservation and land stewardship that is compatible with wildlife. Nanci has also volunteered for NH Audubon since 2011 and comes in once a week, providing invaluable help with the annual Backyard Winter Bird Survey.

Nanci is the quintessential grassroots worker with clear vision who makes local land protection happen, contagiously passionate about land protection and environmental stewardship.

It’s with great pleasure that NH Audubon presents the Tudor Richards Award to Nanci Mitchell.



Nanci Mitchell, 2018 Tudor Richards Award recipient.

Photo by Rebecca Suomala.

