

## H. Meade Cadot Award, 2020

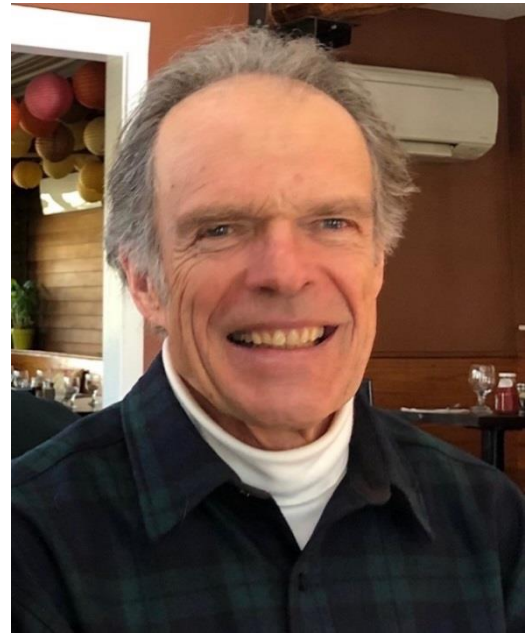
*Presented by Phil Brown for New Hampshire Audubon's Annual Meeting, September 19, 2020.*

The H. Meade Cadot Award is presented to individuals who have made significant contributions to NH Audubon's land protection work through partnerships. The award is named for its first recipient, Meade Cadot the first Director of the Harris Center for Conservation Education who established many partnerships to connect and conserve large blocks of land in the creation of the Monadnock Region's Supersanctuary.

The recipient of the H. Meade Cadot Award for Land Conservation in 2020 is David White of Sandwich, NH. Ever since I met David on my very first visit to NH Audubon's Alice Bemis Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary in beautiful North Sandwich, NH in 2004, I have been learning from him and the example he lives by. David is a tracker, a homesteader, and an exceptionally-skilled woodsman. David was (and still is) an eager Sanctuary Steward and a key volunteer in helping maintain the trails and boundaries at this then 220-acre wildlife sanctuary. In his early 60s when we met, I immediately realized I couldn't keep up with him on snowshoes...all these years later I still doubt I could!

David's land protection interests date back to 1987 to Maine's Pemaquid Peninsula, where he volunteered for what was then called the Damariscotta River Association. About a decade later, David and his wife CC (an accomplished land conservationist in her own right) purchased their homestead land abutting the Thompson Sanctuary. David and CC's visions started small in 1998 with an effort to map their local sub-watershed, Atwood and Heath Brook, which runs through the heart of the Sanctuary. After building their off-grid house deep in the woods, David's efforts to conserve more land within the watershed picked up. I was often guided by David's hand-drawn and color-coded property maps. David always had the latest scoop on which neighbors were in the market for selling, considering subdividing, or generally interested in land protection. With approval, but sometimes minimal guidance from NH Audubon, he was successful, through numerous conversations with his neighbors and area landowners, in helping NH Audubon acquire and fundraise for key additions to the Thompson Sanctuary: 41 acres in 2006, and 24 acres in 2011. These parcels buffer the prime wetland containing Atwood Brook and expanded an area of considerable importance to wildlife.

Maybe because of his deep knowledge of the natural world, his interpersonal skills, his cool head and steady voice, David has had considerable success in his dealings with numerous landowners over the years. This work isn't easy, and land is very personal to many people, so it takes a special kind of person. Other conservation groups instantly recognized this, too. In fact, David's contributions to the conservation legacy of Sandwich, and the region, go well beyond his volunteer work for NH Audubon. His mapping and contacts helped set the groundwork for the vision of a "conservation corridor" connecting the White Mountains to the Ossipee Mountains. The Thompson Sanctuary lies squarely in the middle. As a skilled tracker, David knows this region is very important to wide-ranging mammals like Black Bear, Moose, Bobcat, and potentially, northern mammals such as Canada Lynx and American Marten. David has worked closely with the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT), serving on its



*David White, recipient of NH Audubon's H. Meade Cadot Award in 2020.*

Board and Lands Committee for many years. Through his roles and additional local and regional land protection partnerships, David was instrumental in brokering the protection of 10 properties for a total of 1,165 acres in the towns of Sandwich and Tamworth. This doesn't even include his own property, 110 acres of which he and CC placed under conservation easement with the LRCT, and 41 of which they donated in fee. David truly walks the walk.

As a homesteader, David's work is never done. There is always something more, and one rarely gets ahead. Land conservation is the same way, and David's approach to it is similar. In 2014, his work with land protection partner, the Northeast Wilderness Trust, led NH Audubon to place a "forever wild" conservation easement on the entirety of the Thompson Sanctuary, now at 300 acres in size. This action will ensure that this important place for wildlife and people will be left to the natural processes. Further, David and CC (and other conservation partners) allow foot access to the sanctuary along a portion of their driveway and woods trails so the public can experience wilderness.

David is currently working with conservation partners around Red Hill in Moultonborough and Sandwich, and eight landowners who hold over 1,000 collective acres. This is a major regional land conservation priority and just one of the focus areas David helped to identify during his work on the Lakes Region Strategic Conservation Plan with several land conservation partners and professionals. This plan has set the groundwork for the next generation of land conservationists to protect the most resilient landscapes in the face of climate change, which David is actively trying to combat.

It is my great honor to present the H. Meade Cadot Award for Land Conservation to David White.



*David White (left) receiving peaches from Phil Brown in recognition of the H. Meade Cadot Award in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Photo by Hope Jordan.*

*“Healing ourselves and healing the planet are one and the same.”  
– David White*

From David White upon receipt of the H. Meade Cadot Award for Land Conservation in 2020

*“I am pleasantly surprised to receive this recognition from NH Audubon, and honored to take my place alongside my exemplary predecessors, Francie Von Mertens and Meade Cadot. In the course of my 33 years of volunteer work, primarily in the area of permanent land conservation, I have collaborated with at least nine land trusts and conservation organizations. I’ve had formal working roles with four of these organizations, the most recent of which has been Lakes Region Conservation Trust. You are the first to acknowledge my contributions with an award. I am gratified to know that you have valued our partnership so highly.*

*I appreciate the strength of partnerships and have always placed getting conservation accomplished above consideration of who should do it. My concept of conservation is very broad, not limited to land conservation per se. Conservation of the earth and all its species and diversity has been a core value for many years in the way my wife and I conduct our daily lives. On our homestead, we generate nearly all our energy; we conserve, compost, and recycle virtually all that is possible, and we make a strong effort to limit our consumption based on our best understanding of the consequences of our choices. My personal worldview informs my work as a conservation volunteer.*

*While I, personally, have enjoyed numerous conservation successes over the years, and while the conservation movement as a whole has had substantial victories, the sad truth is that, collectively, we are losing the fight. The evidence is pretty clear. The planet is on the verge of climate catastrophe. The terrifying loss of species is awful. Human numbers have overpowered the earth’s resilience.*

*I don’t mean to end my remarks on a pessimistic note. Rather, I want to share a perspective with you that I believe is essential if we, collectively, and the earth are to realize the benefit of our conservation efforts. **Healing ourselves and healing the planet are one and the same.** Healing, in this context, encompasses healing all aspects of our relationship with the earth. When we have examined this sincerely and honestly, and made appropriate and necessary changes, the planet will respond with gratitude and our work as conservationists will be made easier.”*

