

2020 Tudor Richards Award

Presented by Francie Von Mertens for the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 19, 2020.

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.

In 2020, we honor Sarah and Bruce Schwaegler. For Bruce, the award is posthumous. Less than a year ago, New Hampshire lost a true humanitarian, so very active in the nonprofit world. Both separately and together they have demonstrated a commitment to conservation in many ways.

Bruce's tireless work for many conservation groups in the state is well-known, from the Upper Valley Land Trust to the NH Wetlands Council. He was on the Advisory Committee of the Upper Valley Land Trust and the *Northern Woodlands* magazine, and a member of the NH Forest Advisory Board. After taking the first Coverts Cooperator class in 1995, he remained active and served on their Advisory Committee. He was most interested in nonprofit management and NH Audubon was one of the beneficiaries of his talents, particularly through board leadership and governance.

Sarah's love of field botany generated an eagerness to inspire that love in others, leading field trips for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, UNH Cooperative Extension, Upper Valley Land Trust, the NH Coverts Project, and places such as the Quincy Bog in Rumney, and Weeks State Park in Lancaster, NH. She has volunteered extensively for the Native Plant Trust, serving as its Upper Valley regional representative. Both she and Bruce were honored by the Trust for "teaching, planning events, serving on committees and for gracious and repeated hospitality to plant conservation volunteers." Sarah compiled a plant inventory for their town of Orford and



Sarah Schwaegler accepting NH Audubon's 2020 Tudor Richards Award in recognition of her and her husband Bruce's (below, deceased) contributions to conservation in New Hampshire.

Photos by Rebecca Suomala (above) and Kelly Wing (below).



contributed to the town's open space plan. She has also been a consulting botanist with the US Forest Service. Matt Tarr, a botany field trip leader himself, said that he has known of Sarah's work for his entire 20-year career at UNH Cooperative Extension.

It was Sarah's love of plants that infused Bruce's more traditional approach to land and timber management. What goes on in the forest understory, in meadows, what are the plants and their pollinators, and the big question: How to be good stewards of that essential biodiversity? Towards that goal, Sarah and Bruce worked closely with UNH Cooperative Extension wildlife biologists to develop stewardship plans. Very hands on, Bruce was often on his mower maintaining meadows and early successional habitats so important to biodiversity. Sarah and Bruce's son, Andy, when he was young, remembers his dad "devouring" a thick forestry management book as a somewhat new landowner. He became a Certified Tree Farmer and received the UNH Cooperative Extension's 1998 Outstanding Tree Farmer Family of the Year Award.

Over the years the Schwaeglers hosted field trips open to the public, hosted Coverts Cooperator workshops, and UNH Cooperative Extension outings. As a legacy to future generations, the Schwaeglers donated a conservation easement on their land and created a botany trail and sanctuary on this conserved land, supported by a nonprofit fund. There is also a video of the sanctuary that was created by Bruce's brother, son, and great nephew who plays Bruce's mother's violin: <https://youtu.be/eppECSPwzbw>. It is not only a beautiful introduction to the sanctuary but also a tool to help amateur botanists learn the basics of field botany, something both Bruce and Sarah were passionate about. They also donated a trail easement to the Indian Point Heritage Trail through their property that follows a route believed to be a portage path from the Lakes Region to the Connecticut River for both Native Americans and early settlers

Bruce and Sarah's support for each other's complementary passions and abilities created a strong partnership that benefited New Hampshire in many ways that will continue into the future. Adding their names to New Hampshire couples who have received the Tudor Richards Award—Fred and Betty Steele and Roger and Ann Sweet—will bring a smile of recognition and appreciation to many people in New Hampshire, past, present, and in the future.

It's an honor to present the 2020 Tudor Richards Award to Sarah and Bruce Schwaegler on behalf of NH Audubon. Tudor knew the Schwaeglers. He would approve.

