

2023 Tudor Richards Award

Presented by Paul Doscher at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 16, 2023.

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 recipient of the 2023 Tudor Richards Award is Karen Bennett. Karen has had a statewide impact through her many professional and volunteer activities. She has provided land stewardship inspiration to thousands and is one of the most respected conservation leaders in New Hampshire.

Karen's list of affiliations and volunteer activities is long and impressive. As a professional, she started with UNH Cooperative Extension as Hillsborough County Forester. I met her when she was in that roll, and in 1987 she helped me develop a management plan and prepare a timber stand improvement harvest on my 33-acre forest in Weare. She later moved to Merrimack County and then to a statewide leadership position with Extension.

It is hard to overestimate the role she played in that job. Among her notable accomplishments is her work as the coordinator and editor of *Good Forestry in the Granite State*, a publication that continues to be the gold standard for recommended sustainable forestry and land management practices.

Through her career she has reached tens of thousands of people with information about forest and wildlife management, current use taxation, selling timber, caring for shade trees, trail and road layout, forest ecology, soils, and many other topics of concern to landowners.

Not content to advance the cause of good forest management and conservation only through her employment, Karen has been a dedicated volunteer as well. She served on the Board of the Beaver Brook Association, including serving as President. When the position of Executive Director became vacant, she temporarily stepped into the job until a new person could be hired.

Jeremy Wilson, the Executive Director of the Harris Center for Conservation Education has written:

"Karen is one of the top board chairs in Harris Center history and led the board and staff up to and through the COVID-complicated 50th anniversary activities. She is extremely dedicated – attending a myriad of Harris Center events and programs in addition to board and



Karen Bennett (right) receiving NH Audubon's 2023 Tudor Richards Award from Paul Doscher.

Photo by Dyanna Smith.

committee meetings (and chaired both the Conservation Research and Community Programs Committees). She was also very helpful in launching the wildly successful Lab Girls program.

She has great communication skills and is a master at eliciting and managing comments and discussions among board and staff. She was always well prepared for all discussions, is a good listener, and never dictatorial.

Lastly, Karen is an enthusiastic cheerleader for the Harris Center, forestry, and forest ecology in the Monadnock Region and well beyond. (And she is still on the Leadership Team of the New England Society of American Foresters.)”

In her nomination of Karen for the Tudor Richards award, Nanci Mitchell wrote:

“I think that Karen’s contribution to conservation in New Hampshire is the enormous number of people who have benefited from the knowledge that she has shared with them. I often wonder how many Tree Identification classes she has taught and how many people left knowing much more about New Hampshire’s forests. She was a constant presence at the Coverts workshops, a program that has been offered annually since 1995 and has trained over 500 volunteers to promote wildlife conservation and forest stewardship throughout the state.”

If one were to make a list of short phrases that describe Karen they would include:

- Endless knowledge shared enthusiastically in fun and interesting ways
- Always gets the job done well
- A trusted and helpful partner
- Dedication and commitment
- A role model for girls and women
- A great communicator, good listener and master of facilitating important discussions

When I called her to tell her of the award, she said she was deeply honored, and especially so because she valued her long-time friendship with Tudor Richards and appreciated how much she had learned from that friendship.

Lastly, I don’t know anyone who has worked with Karen who doesn’t consider her a special friend.

It is my honor, on behalf of New Hampshire Audubon, to present the 2023 Tudor Richards Award to Karen Bennett. Congratulations Karen. I’m sure Tudor would be pleased with your selection as this year’s award winner.

