

2025 Tudor Richards Award

Presented by Paul Doscher at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 15, 2025.

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.

This year we give the award to someone who has made major contributions to the conservation of nature and our environment both here in the Granite State and nationwide, Sharon Francis. Sharon has had both a long and distinguished professional and volunteer career for over 7 decades.

Starting as a teenager in Washington State where she took on the task of challenging inappropriate logging in the Olympic National Forest, she forged a career in conservation that took her to Washington DC where she worked for Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall and First Lady, Lady Bird Johnson. After moving with her husband Harry to New Hampshire she became a champion for clean water, soon taking on the challenge of building a better public participation model for the EPA, first in the New England office and then as the national director for public participation. When she turned her focus to New Hampshire she became the executive Director of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, worked with the Harris Center to lead the Monadnock Crossroads project that engaged with nine communities to help their citizens address natural resources and address the challenges of growth. Another project, the Contoocook Greenway Coordinating Committee led to the successful nomination of the North Branch of the Contoocook River under the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program. Her coordination of the “All About Lakes” program is credited as being the stimulus that led to the creation of today’s NH Lakes Association.

I had the distinct pleasure of working with her in the 1980s as New Hampshire citizens took on the challenge of solving the problem of Acid Rain. She led the Ohio/New Hampshire Acid Rain Partnership which brought together citizens and experts from both states to educate them on the causes, effects and potential solutions to the problem. The yearlong effort forged a consensus proposal to Congress that recognized solving the problem required meeting the needs of all interests involved. The plan was ultimately a key element of the successful Clean Air Act amendments of 1990.

The list of Sharon’s accomplishments is long and impressive, but I would like to highlight these two, which tell you a lot about her abilities as an advocate, negotiator and educator:

- In 2017, Sharon received the Conservationist of the Year award from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.
- In 2024 Sharon was honored with the Merit Award for Lifetime Achievement by the US Environmental Protection Agency.



*Sharon Francis speaks after being presented with the 2025 Tudor Richards award at the Massabesic Center in Auburn.
Photo by Robert Vallieres.*

Today, NH Audubon, with whom she has had a long and collaborative partnership, adds to her list of honors. I am sure Tudor Richards, who knew her well, would be pleased. Sharon, I am pleased to present this award to you today,

