

Bud Murtha Volunteer Award 2023

[Jenny] Holcomb Farm bestows its highest honor, the Bud Murtha Award, on volunteers who mirror Bud's dedication to the ultimate community virtue: volunteerism. I didn't have the honor of knowing Bud, but I'm sure many of you did. And, we all have the good fortune of having his wife, Shirley Murtha, with us to keep the memory alive. Bud was an icon in our community, and by all accounts was the consummate UNSUNG HERO for the Town of Granby overall, and for Holcomb Farm in particular. As a volunteer, Bud was focused, persistent and loyal. As a Board member, he urged support for the Farm in public settings, and worked tirelessly behind the scenes. After Bud's passing in 2012, the Board of the FOHF recognized that The Farm will flourish so long as people continue to step up and demonstrate Bud's spirit of volunteerism, to further the legacy of Laura and Tudor Holcomb.

To that end, as this time, I would like to invite our good Friends Shirley Murtha and Eric Lukingbeal to help me recognize the 2023 Bud Murtha Volunteer Award winner.

[Eric]

You can't do better than Walter Ford and his consistent, long commitment to the Holcomb Farm. He is a kind soul who is truly bonded to the farmland and woods of Holcomb Farm. He has turned that bond into action on behalf of the land and community. Well beyond that, he gently guides others working on the land to pull together, create, and progress agreeably toward a common goal. Walter's most visible work has been 15 years of mowing paths through the meadows that we all take for granted, and gently coordinating the other mowers who join in that effort. But there is so much more. He just keeps chipping away, undaunted at the overwhelming task of wrestling with invasive plants that are trying their best to take over the fields, finding areas that need salvation, and then looping in other people to help willingly. He does trail maintenance. And he skillfully mediates as the dozen members of the Holcomb Tree Trail tribe struggle to find agreement on what trees to plant, where to plant them and which of our "on site" trees ought to be saved. For example, he has managed to spare the so-called "Cabbage Head Pine" north of the knoll from removal as he saw something there; he coordinated removal of the dense vines from a stunning

maple near the knoll. Walter Ford has vision, leadership, commitment and remarkable insight and kindness in all this.

Folks like Walter who live next to the Farm probably have a tie to the land that is a version of wildlife's, but he has translated this love for the land into action.

[Jenny] Walter, please come join us.

Shirley, can you please help us honor Walter?

[Shirley] As a member of the Tree Trail group, I have seen firsthand the amount of work Walter does, often of his own choosing. He doesn't expect commendation, he just wants to be sure it is done. When one considers that he has a full-time job with limited hours for volunteerism, what he accomplishes is amazing and we greatly appreciate it.