

## Philip Preston obituary

Philip Preston (OH), 84, died November 16, 2023 at his home, the Homestead Farm in Ashland, New Hampshire. In addition to his own stint on the 1956 Madison Springs Hut crew, Phil was part of an outdoors-loving family with a long pedigree in the Huts, including brothers Fred and David, who worked at Madison in the 1940s-50s, and Phil's nephew and nieces Brooks, Lynelle, and Cammie, who worked the Huts, Trails, and Pinkham in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Phil was born December 4, 1938 in Waban, Massachusetts, and attended the Rivers School, Deerfield Academy, and Williams College (Class of 1960). As a Reserve Officer Training Corps member of the US Army, Phil learned Polish at the Army's Monterey Language School to translate intercepted messages from Eastern Bloc countries. After years of listening, Phil finally had the opportunity to speak the language during a trip to Poland with his brother David and their wives after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Phil spent summers growing up on Squam Lake and in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. After college, Phil led Outward Bound courses on the coast of Maine and worked in Outdoor Education for the Walpole, Massachusetts school system. Together, Phil and his wife Peg hiked in Alaska's Brooks Range, the Chilean Andes, the Alps, Norway, New Zealand, the Grand Canyon, Canada, California, and Colorado. They paddled the Allagash River in Maine, the Green River of Utah, the Rio Grande through Texas, Temagami Lake area of Ontario and Baffin Island of Nunavut.

Phil published the first editions of the AMC River Guide Volumes 1 & 2 and authored a number of trail guides and maps, including White Mountains West in 1979 and the first mountain biking guide to the Squam Range. He also applied his talents directly to protecting and managing landscapes for public benefit by serving as the Executive Director of the Squam Lakes Association (SLA). Together with his brother Fred and other SLA members, Phil championed two of the most important conservation projects on Squam Lake; the protection and management of Moon Island and Bowman Island for public use. Phil later served as a Trustee on the Board of the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT) where he continued to mentor conservationists and AmeriCorp volunteers of the next generation.

Phil lived close to the land. He boiled maple syrup, pressed cider, brewed beer, harvested his own blueberries and rhubarb, air-dried all his laundry, and heated his home with wood, right up until his last days. If he was back to basics in these regards, he was ahead of his time in others by helping to deploy the first residential wind and solar projects in Ashland and facilitating conservation easements on private lands around Squam Lake.

Homestead Farm was Phil's labor of love for more than 50 years; a hilltop spread of 765 acres that he and Peg managed as a personal conservation project for wildlife, personal refuge and natural beauty. He cross-country skied, snowshoed, and hiked all of it, and built a network of trails. He marked the old cellar holes, tracked the old road grades, found the springs, and burned the meadows to stave off the encroaching forest. Best of all, he donated the land to the LRCT so that it would be

permanently protected and open to the public, so anyone can visit the Farm and enjoy it as he did.

Phil is survived by his brother David Preston and wife Barbara, brother Fred Preston's wife Granthia, eight nieces and nephews (Camille, Liz, Lynelle, Brooks, Chris, Chris, Leona & Heather), and nine grandnieces and grandnephews (Adeline, Preston, Summer, Sage, Corben, Ben, Emily, Carly & Sierra). He was predeceased by his wife Margaret "Peg" Dobbie and his brother Fred. Gifts in memory of Phil can be made to the Lakes Region Conservation Trust, the Squam Lakes Association, and Pemi- Baker Hospice and Home Health.

