

Whitney "Whit" A. Beals

November 16, 1946 ~ September 14, 2023 (age 76)

We deeply grieve the passing of Whitney "Whit" Beals (76) of Southborough, Massachusetts on Sept. 14, 2023. We remember him as a devoted husband, father, grandfather, stepfather, friend, and environmental steward. His family, friends, and community will deeply miss his outspoken love for family and friends, his wry w(h)it, kindness, zest for life, his never-ending well of stories, and his passion for the natural world.

Whitney spent his youth roaming every corner of Chestnut Hill Farm in Southborough and the current Beals Preserve. He attended Fay School, Phillips Exeter Academy, Harvard University, and the Yale School of Forestry (now The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies). He would attest that he was educated by and in the Forest. His long career included work with the Connecticut DEP, the Roaring Brook Nature Center, the Nature Conservancy in Maryland and Boston, the Town of Wayland, Sudbury Valley Trustees, and the New England Forestry Foundation, from which he retired in 2019. He served as a Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition board member from 2011 to 2021 and as a member of MLTC's Conservation Advisory Council. He also served as president of the Southborough Open Land Foundation and was a member of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee for more than 30 years. He was a long-standing board member of the Worcester Ecotarium. He was also the driving force behind the preservation of his family's land: Chestnut Hill Farm.



He had a tendency to stray from the prescribed path, and "Where's Whit?" became a common refrain among traveling companions who thought they had lost him. Whitney was not lost, just immersed in contemplation of the natural world. Whitney spent his life learning to understand and appreciate his place in nature. An avid outdoorsman, he enjoyed hunting and fishing, but he also enthused over growth – flowers, vegetables, insects, livestock – all of them not so much under his care, but under his observation. And trees – especially trees – that gave him a longer view of life, a deeper understanding of the Earth, and the glow of history to warm him in the winter. He loved sharing his love for Nature and his understanding of interdependency and connection.

In the last three years of his life, Whitney adopted a practice that he shared with his friends, family, and extended care team at Dana Farber. He would stand barefoot on the hill above his home, looking over the fields of his childhood, and loudly proclaim his gratitude for life's gifts. Those blessings to people and the land could be heard floating across the pasture as he stood surrounded by his dogs and steers. He encouraged others to adopt this practice and invited friends to join him in his morning gratitude ritual.

Whitney is survived by his wife Pamela, his children, Stower and Eliot, and his grandchildren, Ella and Ray. He is also survived by his step-children, Alice, Robin, and Eric, and step-grandchildren, Sage, Sequoia, Wolfgang, and Meri; his sisters, Suki, Molly, and Nancy, and many nieces, nephews, and their offspring. He was predeceased by his father Phil, mother Elaine, and brother George.

A Memorial Service will be held on December 2, 2023, at 10 AM at Pilgrim Church in Southborough, MA. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that memorial donations be made to the Southborough Open Land Foundation, www.Solf.org.