

Steven Robinson – 1946-2013

By Jane Braxton Little, Sacramento Bee

WESTWOOD – Steven Earl Robinson grew up in San Diego, but he lost his heart to the mountains and meadows of Lassen County's Westwood on his very first visit.

An avid surfer from the time he could pick up a long board, Mr. Robinson pursued the sport until he entered the Air Force during the Vietnam War. He served most of his time working at a communications center in the Philippines, finishing his tour in Washington, D.C.

His life was changed by a visit to a friend in the tiny town of Westwood. He returned to Westwood in a week with all his possessions "and never looked back," said his wife, Judy.

Mr. Robinson, who worked as a carpenter, loved the outdoors, especially fishing, she said.

But his true passion was Mountain Meadows Conservancy, the organization he founded in 2000 and served as a volunteer executive director until his death Feb. 17 after a lengthy illness. He was 66.

Mr. Robinson focused on halting a four-season resort planned for 7,000 acres of undeveloped land on Dyer Mountain – the biggest development proposal in the northern Sierra.

He was unpolished, plain-spoken and easily dismissed by would-be developers, who "seemed to mistakenly take him for a hermit," said Tom Mooers, executive director of Sierra Watch, a Truckee-based conservation organization. "What they couldn't see was Steve's quiet, effective role as a leader," he said. "The development has not been built and the mountain is still there."

Mr. Robinson's conservation work took him beyond Westwood to

the entire Sierra Nevada range, where he developed relationships with other environmental groups and gradually built support for Mountain Meadows.

Mr. Robinson served six years on the board of the Sierra Nevada Alliance and was honored in 2010 with the Bedrock Award, given for commitment and leadership that benefits conservation of the entire 400-mile range.

He is survived by his wife, Judy of Westwood; son, Sparke Robinson of Grass Valley; daughters, Jackie Oswald of Otis, Ore., and Jennifer Roberts of Westwood; and nine grandchildren.

Services will be later this year.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation in Mr. Robinson's name to the Mountain Meadows Conservancy, P.O. Box 40, Westwood, CA 96137.