



## Alex Rudney

July 1, 1970 - March 31, 2023

Alex John Rudney was born to Christine and Edward Rudney in Bridgeport, Connecticut and moved directly to New York City where he grew up. He spent many summers at Christine's childhood home in Stratford, Connecticut with his beloved grandparents, John and Helen Popp. Alex greatly admired and respected his mom and gained a father-figure when Christine and Joseph Yuskaitis married in 1980. Alex and his brother, Christopher, were always close. They shared a bedroom in the family's West Side apartment, shared a love for baseball and rock and roll, shared many of the same friends, and the same stunning blue eyes. Uniquely his own was Alex's bright red, wild, curly hair. With his signature head of hair, his clever wit, and his huge smile, he was clearly a fun character. He was also a humble intellectual, whose test scores earned him admission to the prestigious Bronx High School of Science.

After graduating in 1988, he headed West. He graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in Natural Resource Management and took his first seasonal Forest Service job with the Stanislaus National Forest in California in 1991. He worked several summers as a timber sale technician for the White River National Forest in Minturn, Colorado and worked winter night shifts for Vail Ski Resorts before being hired by the Forest Service permanently.

He married Dionne Wegele in 1998 and they had two sons, Zane and Wyatt. The boys truly were his pride and joy. The family moved to Salida, Colorado and bought a house where the boys grew up, spending countless hours playing catch with their dad. Alex was actively involved in his children's ever-changing interests, including Boy Scouts and team sports, and he made life-long friends with other parents he met through these activities. Alex enjoyed fishing with Wyatt and Wyatt's girlfriend, Maddie, and taking cross-country road trips with Zane.

Zane, having inherited Alex's love of the big city, is currently living in Manhattan and working with his Uncle Chris before starting graduate school in the fall. Wyatt, having inherited Alex's love of the outdoors, is currently working on a ranch in Salida. Alex lives on through both of his sons.

In addition to being a dedicated father, Alex was a dedicated employee of the U.S. Forest Service. He took to heart the agency's mission of "caring for the land and serving people." He served as a forester/silviculturist for the San Isabel National Forest since 2003. He also maintained fire qualifications throughout his career and responded to local and national wildfires.

Alex was a solid, genuine guy and he walked his talk. He faithfully brought his reusable coffee mug for his regular lattes at Cafe Dawn. He was always picking up trash in the woods, inspiring others to do the same. Alex was a lot of things, but materialistic was something he was not. He practiced reducing, reusing, and recycling to some extremes. His friends found it endearing that he wore shirts with holes, and that he athletically competed with them using outdated or duct-taped ski, bike and golf equipment.

He cared deeply about the state of the world and social injustices, yet laughed easily and found pleasure in everyday things. He enjoyed watching sunsets from his front porch and seeing his apple tree bloom in the spring. A neighbor recently described Alex as "one-of-a-kind and always kind."

Alex met Jen Swacina at the Salida Ranger District office and they declared June 7, 2019 as the date to be celebrated as the beginning of their relationship. Alex would light up when sharing stories about fun times with Jen, especially about seeing The Who in concert and taking the Amtrak train to visit friends in California. They created many memories - even through a pandemic - and had a lifetime of future adventures planned.

A tragic car accident took Alex too soon. He will be dearly missed by many, including his mother Christine Rudney, his uncle Ken Popp, his aunt and uncle Janet and Gregory Baxter, cousins Brian Popp, Michael Popp, Michelle Cook, Nicole Santamauro, Daniel Baxter and Rachel Baxter-Brown.

Donations for his children's future endeavors can be made through Greater Arkansas River Nature Association: <https://bit.ly/AlexRudney>.

A Barbeque and campout to share memories of Alex is planned for Memorial Day, May 29, at the Angel of Shavano group campground. Details will be updated here: <https://tinyurl.com/puckvrnm>