

Kris Stein

December 19, 1960 - December 20, 2021

Kris Stein hung up her trekking poles for the last time on December 20, 2021. Kris died at her home in Ellensburg, WA, with family and friends close. She was 61.



Kris was born December 19, 1960 in Los Alamos, New Mexico, to Paul and Carol Stein; the youngest of 3 children. Her father was a theoretical mathematician with the Los Alamos National Laboratory, and her mother was a naturalist and artist. Her parents instilled a sense of wonder in the natural world, appreciation of the arts, and an ability to rationalize and think strategically — abilities that would shape her life. She grew up exploring the Santa Fe National Forest and Bandelier National Monument which led to a love of public lands. She was an avid hiker, angler, gardener, and artist.

Kris started her academic studies at Oregon State University at the age of 16, quickly earning a B.S. and M.S. in Forest Management and graduating with honors from both Phi Kappa Phi and Xi Sigma Pi. She married fellow OSU scholar, Rick Martinson, in Corvallis, Oregon in 1984. They were often hired as a research team for a variety of studies due to their ability to work and live together in remote areas. They adopted their son Kai in 1994 while working on a three-year assignment in Michigan.

Kris worked with OSU as a research assistant, and then was hired by the US Forest Service at Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument where she was instrumental in designing and planning visitor lodges, recreational facilities, and trails. From there she worked in various positions and assignments for National Forests across the country, ranging from recreation planner to District Ranger, to acting Chief of Staff for the PNW (Pacific Northwest) Regional Forester. Kris served as a national resource in NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act), contributing her expertise in environmental analysis to national environmental policy during extensive planning sessions in Washington D.C. The modifications she was involved with were recently published in the Federal Register and implemented as national policy.

The Forest Service was a good fit for Kris, and suited her love of public lands and pull of exploration and adventure. Her friends and family could not believe Kris' fortune at getting to hike, bike, ride horses, ATVs and snowmobiles, travel in rafts, canoes and jet boats, small planes and helicopters through (and over) vast and beautiful forests across the country. She enjoyed sending pictures of her work locations to her son (a dedicated office worker), showing her fishing off the back of boat after work or enjoying backcountry camps.

Kris served as a mentor for almost everyone she met. Her ability to manage people with compassion, kindness, and understanding while invoking her rational and strategic side inspired people to do their best work and move in directions they hadn't thought possible. Many of the the people she mentored have moved to senior positions in the Forest Service and often express their appreciation for her leadership and training. Kris recently congratulated a past employee on being asked to apply for a vacant Forest Supervisor position, saying he should be flattered. His response expresses the sentiment of many of the people she mentored: *"Not flattered. Got raised by the best."*

Kris was one in a million, and will be missed by everyone she touched in her life. She is survived by her son, Kai Martinson of Boise Idaho, sister, Stephanie Stein of Ellensburg Washington, brother Geoffrey Stein of Los Angeles, and long-time friend Rick Martinson of Bend Oregon.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the ALS Association in memory of Kris Stein.