

Appalachian National Scenic Trail
Georgia to Maine

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Adventure Guide

For Teens

The Appalachian Trail
in Harpers Ferry
National Historical Park



Explore, Learn, Protect

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Ready. Set. Hike...



Created in partnership with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy with support from Unilever, National Park Foundation, and Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Inc.



Getting Started

Use the Appalachian Trail brochure to answer the following questions about the Appalachian Trail—commonly referred to as simply the A.T.

Who was the planner to formally propose the construction of the Appalachian Trail?

Who combined forces to open a continuous trail by 1937?

How is the A.T. marked?

How are connecting side trails marked?

Who manages the Trail's day-to-day operations and who do they work with?

Which local Trail club maintains the Trail in Harpers Ferry?

How many states will you pass through on a "thru-hike"?

Map it

Hikers will use maps and guidebooks to plan their hike. They will need to decide where they will park, how far they can go, whether they can hike a loop trail or go up and back along the same route, the difficulty of the hike, how long it will take them, and what to pack.

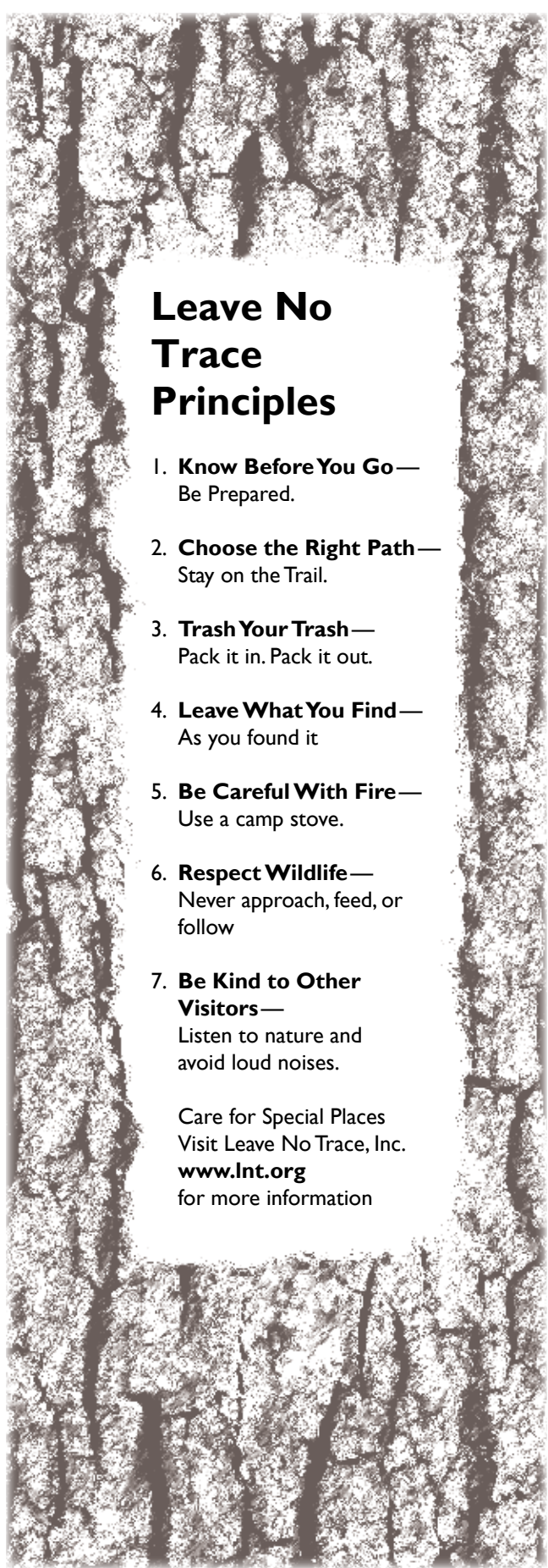
On the next two pages you will find a guidebook description of the A.T. through Harpers Ferry, along with a map of the A.T. highlighted in yellow.

Answer the questions and plan your hike through Harpers Ferry.

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club produces the *Appalachian Trail Guide to Maryland and Northern Virginia with Side Trails*. The following is an excerpt for the Trail through Harpers Ferry (bold numbers display the mileage for each section):

Detailed Trail Data — North to South

- 0.0** Bulletin Board at end of brick walkway. An adjacent post bears A.T. blaze. Turn right and pass under trestle ahead. (Overlook on left has superb view of Potomac and Shenandoah confluence.) Then turn left onto Shenandoah St., the first street past the trestle. (On left is replica of fire engine house in which John Brown made his stand. Old Federal arsenal foundations are adjacent.) Go one block on Shenandoah St., passing building with “John Brown Story” sign.
- 0.1** Turn right onto High Street. (The park visitor center is straight ahead on Shenandoah St.) Turn left past first house on left and ascend very steep stairway. (To reach the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Headquarters and a post office, continue on High St. (becomes Washington St.)



Leave No Trace Principles

1. **Know Before You Go**—
Be Prepared.
2. **Choose the Right Path**—
Stay on the Trail.
3. **Trash Your Trash**—
Pack it in. Pack it out.
4. **Leave What You Find**—
As you found it
5. **Be Careful With Fire**—
Use a camp stove.
6. **Respect Wildlife**—
Never approach, feed, or follow
7. **Be Kind to Other Visitors**—
Listen to nature and avoid loud noises.

Care for Special Places
Visit Leave No Trace, Inc.
www.lnt.org
for more information

about 0.5 mi to its intersection with Storer College Place. ATC is on the left corner. A post office is two blocks farther.) Ahead, pass “Armory Workers’ Apartments” on right and continue straight up road, passing Robert Harper’s House (1775-81, the town’s oldest) on right corner and St Peter’s Roman Catholic Church (1833) on left.

- 0.2** Go straight up stairs, leaving road where road bears to right, and pass ruins of St. John’s Episcopal Church (1852) on right. Seventy yards ahead, go right at fork by “Harper Cemetery” sign. (Left path leads a few yards to excellent view from Jefferson Rock.)
- 0.3** Go straight at crosspaths. (Path on right leads a few yards to Harpers Cemetery.) Ahead, the Trail undulates along the cliff. Watch for poison ivy.
- 0.4** Go straight. Stay on cliff and ignore intersecting paths ahead.
- 0.7** Blue-blazed trail leads 0.2 mi right to ATC headquarters. Go straight on trail, veering left. Ahead go right at fork.
- 1.0** Descend cliff to junction of US 340 and Shenandoah St. Follow narrow pedestrian walk across bridge over Shenandoah River.”

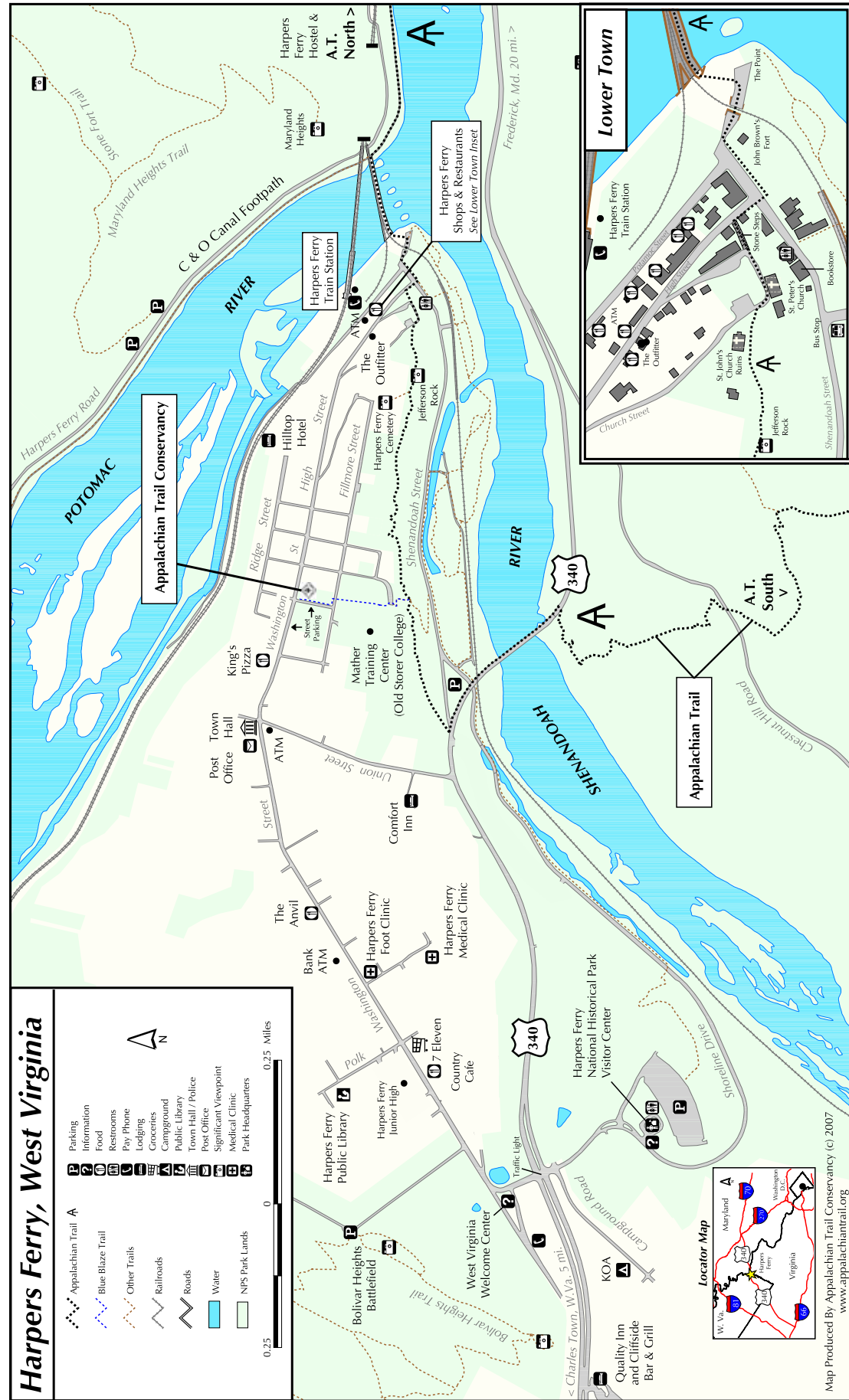
Questions

Based on the information above and the weather today, what would you pack for a hike?

Using the map key on the next page identify how trails are marked on the map and locate the A.T. and other trails. Identify a loop hike that you might take that includes the A.T., other types of trails and/or roads. What is the estimated mileage of your planned hike?

How long do you think it would take you to hike your planned route?

Note—You can also hike to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Visitor Center and Headquarters from the Appalachian Trail



ACTIVITY
3

Take a Hike

But Wait...

First, we want you to know a little bit about trail management. Many people think the Appalachian Trail is an “old Indian trail” or connected using old animal trails. Actually the Trail was constructed through the efforts of thousands of volunteers. Today more than 5000 volunteers continue to maintain the Trail from Georgia to Maine.

The Appalachian Trail is primarily a backcountry or primitive trail to provide a wilderness experience. We also want to protect the surrounding natural and cultural resources, so we design and construct the Trail with these values in mind.

Trail construction and maintenance involves the building of rock steps, bridges, and placing the path on the landscape so that it is not eroded by water. In some places water bars (logs or rocks placed in the Trail) divert water off of the Trail surface. Vegetation needs to be trimmed back from the Trail edges. Trail blazes and signs need to be placed appropriately so hikers can find their way.

While you are hiking, take note of the condition of the Trail.

Field Notes

Is it in good condition?

Was it easy to find your way?

Are there improvements you would suggest?

What was your favorite section of Trail?



Proud trail builders

Use this page to draw or write about your hike.



A Thru-Hiker's Journey

Read the following journal entries and answer questions.

Jan Leitschuh, A.T. Thru-Hiker, 2003

Trail Name: Jan Lite Shoe

May 29, 2002

The A.T.?!

Well, it appears I am going to tackle this 2,172.6-mile mountain wilderness walk from Georgia to Maine.

Why walk the whole Appalachian Trail? It's an enormous, uprooting, six-month project. I am embarrassed to say I know some reasons, but am not fully sure of them all.

When things are going well, there is a momentum to stay put. I love my town of Southern Pines, NC. I have prospered here for the last six years. I love my work, teaching and training horses. Backpacking is hard. That's why no one was more surprised than me when this hike emerged.

The next month, March, who shows up at my barn looking for work but Wendy "Philosophy" Cronkite, an A.T. thru-hiker. Bear in mind that, up to this point, I had never met a thru-hiker before.

So every morning, instead of jumping right on my first horse, I was pestering Wendy with questions:

What did you eat? How far did you walk? Were you scared, lonely, uncomfortable?

In April, I persuaded Wendy to take me and a neighbor out on an Appalachian Trail backpack. That incredible week changed the course of my life. Though Wendy suggested we turn back due to snow, equipment failure and rapidly falling temperatures, I decided to push on — alone.

As I informed Wendy of my decision to keep walking, I expected her to talk me out of it. But she never did. Instead, she gave me her guidebook. So off I trudged, into the snow and freezing wind, with my brand-new pack.



I had to confront a lot of stuff: my fears of being alone, worries about being far, far away from help, my anxiety at being left behind as stronger hikers passed by and disappeared into the forward horizon, my fears of the unknown and fears of being unable to climb a mountain. I discovered a whole new me, someone I'd never met before.

That April hike, when the wind screamed and stole my warmth and I learned how to bundle against the powerful gusts, I felt it. Every sheltered lee brought a sense of gratitude.

There it was, that sense of being shaken up. Of being just where I needed to be, of abundance, of deep nourishment and of wholeness. So, yeah, I'd like more. Bring it on. Even if it does mean lugging a heavy pack up a mountainside, over and over again.

Questions

Would you consider hiking the entire A.T. as a thru-hike (all at once)? Yes No

Would you hike it in sections? Yes No

What are your reasons?

Monday, June 2, 2003—1,000 miles later

It's a perfect hiking day. Yesterday's heavy winds did blow in pretty weather: low humidity, sparkling clarity and pleasant temps. We sit on a log at one point and get a snack.

"Notes," I said. "I do believe we are sitting on the 1,000-mile mark." We high-fived each other. A day of celebrations. The impact of that simple statement suddenly hits me.

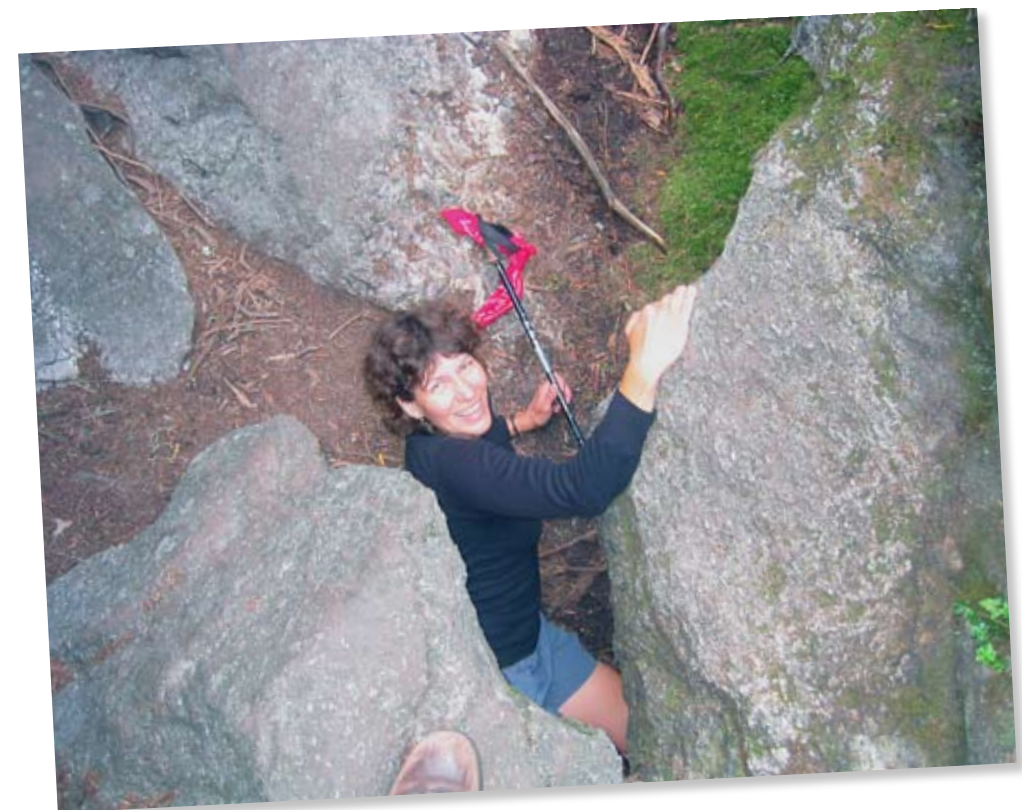
"I've walked 1,000 MILES!" I shout to the woods. It feels good.

It's a big walking day, and my feet are weary. But spirits are high. I will have visitors from home today. Two buddies from back home in NC are coming up to Harper's Ferry for a few days to visit me.

I know they will start down the A.T. towards me, and I guesstimate we will connect about 4 pm. Sure enough, here come Nancy and Sarah Jane. I can't wipe the grin off my face.

"You need trail names out here on the A.T.," I informed them.

Nancy is christened Catbert, after the evil Human Resources Director in Dilbert, and Sarah Jane becomes Treadmill, since she's been active in that venue lately.



The four of us cross over the busy Shenandoah Bridge, up the bluffs and into the old bluff town Harpers Ferry, pinned as it is between the Potomac and the Shenandoah Rivers. This is the “psychological halfway point” for thru-hikers, though the real half point won’t be for a week or so.

Catbert crams us into her small car and carts us off for steak dinners. Notes and I embarrass ourselves by eating great quantities. I notice I must make an effort to recall my town manners.

Tuesday, June 3, 2003

Catbert drove me to the post office, where I collected a boatload of packages. Then she stuffed me and a few other thru-hikers into her four-door Toyota and took us for a hearty breakfast of pancakes, sausage, eggs, OJ and coffee.

Then to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy office in Harpers Ferry, ATC’s headquarters. This group oversees the A.T. I got the traditional picture taken. I was number 198 to go through the ATC offices this year.

Back at the hotel I set about opening my packages. My heart was warmed, and I felt tears prick my eyes. Suddenly, I was so homesick.

First, my LongTrail partner Clyde sent me some lightweight white photon lights to use while night hiking or privy hunting. Guess he didn’t want me to run broadside into a moose.

Vicki Kiser sent me pictures of Fudgie, a horse I bred, foaled, raised and trained. He looked splendid. Fudgie owns Vicki now. Vicki included an abundance of that all-important food group: chocolate.

My final package really brought the tears down. My landlady, Dottie sent me a note and a handful of pictures of Rocket (my cat) and Pogo (my scruffy little Benji dog).

I missed them!

A thousand miles walked and 1,172.6 more to go. Not even halfway yet! How am I going to hang in there another three and a half months? I am really missing Southern Pines, NC. Yet I want to keep walking.

Thoughts of Jan’s A.T. Journal

What were some of Jan’s challenges and/or sacrifices?

What were some unexpected or special moments for her?

What would you miss the most if you hiked the A.T.?

What would your Trail name be?

September 18, 2003 — The Day

So this was it. The Day.

I arose early and packed my pack for the last time. I ate a hearty mountain-climbing meal at The Appalachian Trail Cafe in Millinocket, ME, which opened at 5 am. I caught a glimpse of Katahdin, with the early sun painting her very top. My stomach did a flip-flop of excitement. I was ready for this climb, which I had heard was hairy but also spectacular.

The icy Katahdin Stream kept me company on the first half mile. This lively brook was a joy to behold, as clear as glass, so clean the water looked pale aqua in the deeper pools and each stone on the bottom stood out.

So much for a “footpath” in the wilderness! Sometimes I was hanging onto the rock face by teeth, earlobes, toenails, shoelaces... or so it seemed. If I thought too much about it, it was mind-boggling. So, I didn’t permit thinking.

One of the sketchiest moments was when I had to climb up one downward tilted slab. If you slid, you would slide into the abyss, and that was gonna hurt. To say the least. I had to trust the traction in my Trail runners—that was all that stood between me and a really big slide.

I found myself wondering how 80-year-old Earl Schaffer had climbed this final mountain, or the blind hiker Bill Irwin. It was a head shaker.

There is a painted sign on a rock: “2 mi” it says, with an arrow pointing to the summit. Every single person I saw pass that sign exclaimed out loud: “TWO more MILES!” They couldn’t believe after all that effort, the summit was still so far away.

But I continued on up the mountain. The white, decomposing granite began to give way to a reddish-pink granite as I reached the final ascension. I could see The Sign up there! The end of the Trail!

So I did what I came to do. I walked up to it. As I did, I choked up for the first time.

It just hit me like a logging truck. I have just walked the entire 2,172.6 mile Appalachian Trail!

And then I whooped. Exultantly! It is done!

One step at a time, my poor battered feet took me from Springer Mt., Georgia to Katahdin, Maine.

Another thru-hiker had taken my camera and snapped a few shots for me.

It was time to go. I was reluctant to leave. I wasn’t quite sure how I was going to get down. Plus, this was a mountain like none other I’d been on. In every direction the views were jaw-dropping. A sheer drop here. Twin peaks over there. Over 40 lakes down there. Hard to tear the eyes away.



It was indeed a fitting mountain upon which to conclude an epic journey. I started back down Katahdin the way I had come. It took awhile, and I was alone, but I came down faster than I went up. The sun was washing over everything now, and I felt very peaceful. My depleted muscles, however, felt anything but. I was tiring fast.

With relief, I signed out at the bottom. This mountain was harder than I thought it would be, but not impossible. A mountain like none other.

So this was the journey’s end, but of course, all endings are also beginnings.

I found myself wishing I had done this A.T. hike in my early 20s. How differently my life might have turned out!

*Jan Leitschuh has recently completed a book: “The Ordinary Adventurer”

More Thoughts of the Trail

Now that you have read sections of Jan’s journal, has your answer to the question of whether you would consider hiking the Trail changed? Yes No

If so, what changed your mind?

If not, was anything confirmed for you?

Do you think people need the Appalachian Trail as a national resource? Yes No
Why?



Congratulations!

You are now an Appalachian Trail Jr. Ranger.

Thank you for volunteering to evaluate the activity guide. Your feed back will help us improve this program for future Jr. Rangers.

Don't forget to pick up your A.T.Volunteer pin!

Please answer the following evaluation questions. When completed, return this booklet to a Ranger at the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Visitor Center.

You can also return it via mail to: Rita Hennessy, National Park Service, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, PO Box 50, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

What did you like the most about the activities?

What did you like the least?

Was anything confusing or unclear?

Are there changes to specific activities that you would propose?

Other comments: