

News & Hiking Tips
from
"Windtalker
& Mom"

March 2012

Special Interest

Saturday, April 7th

"Windtalker" Native
American flute
performance
Beans in the Belfry Café
Brunswick, MD
7pm-9:30pm
www.beansinthebelfry.com

Thursday, April 12th

"Care & Feeding of the
Long Distance Hiker"
presentation
REI - Fairfax, VA
7pm-8:15pm
www.rei.com/stores/84

Saturday, April 21st

Front Royal, VA, A.T. Trail
Community Dedication
Day. 9am-4pm

May 18th - 20th

Appalachian Trail Days
Festival
Damascus, VA
www.traildays.us
"Windtalker" performance
Saturday morning, 10am

Saturday, June 2nd

National Trails Day &
Duncannon, PA
A.T. Trail Community
Dedication Festival
9am - 6pm
Duncannonat.blogspot.com
"Windtalker" performance
1:45pm

Friday, June 8th

Appalachian Trail Museum
Hall of Fame Banquet
Allenberry Resort Inn
Boiling Springs, PA
6pm - 9pm
(reservation required)

Saturday, June 9th

Appalachian Trail Museum
Festival
Pine Grove Furnace State
Park
www.atmuseum.org

Dream It!
Plan It!
Live It!

RMGHAventures

HIKING THROUGH MARYLAND ON DAY HIKES

Have you ever dreamed of hiking all of the Appalachian Trail in Maryland over a long weekend, but didn't want to carry a heavy backpack, 3-4 days' worth of food or stay in a shelter?

Here's a little trick that we used to do it with nothing more than day packs in a series of day hikes over a long Memorial Day weekend. Be advised, you will need two cars and you will be doing some driving each day. You will also need the *Appalachian Trail Guide to Maryland & Northern Virginia* and *Appalachian Trail Map 5-6*, both published by The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

Our adventure began on Thursday evening, when we arrived at Greenbrier State Park, in Boonesboro, MD, and set up camp. This would be our home base for the rest of the weekend. We finished each day here in the comfort of our embarrassingly large REI Kingdom-6 tent, took hot showers and, if we wanted, took a dip in the lake.

Early Friday morning, we drove both of our cars to the A.T. trailhead at Wolfesville Road, MD-17, dropped off one car, and then headed to Pen Mar Park, near the border of Maryland and Pennsylvania. Here we left our other car and spent the day doing a leisurely 9.6-mile hike south back to Wolfesville Road. At Pen Mar Park, we wandered around the large gazebo where, on summer weekends, the locals have ballroom dances. Along the way we took in the great views from High Rock, a popular hang-gliding launch point, had a snack near the section called Devils Racecourse and ate lunch at the Ensign Cowell Shelter. Then we drove back to Pen Mar, picked up our second car and drove back to Greenbrier SP for the night.

On Saturday, we dropped off one of our cars at the parking lot at US 40, near where the A.T. crosses over Interstate 70. It was back to Wolfesville Road and a wonderful 8.5-mile hike south. The ascent up from Wolfesville Road is a calf and lung burner, but once on the ridge, it is a wonderful walk the rest of the way. Be sure to stop and have a snack at the Pogo Campsite and later relax with awesome views of Greenbrier SP Lake and the surrounding countryside from Annapolis Rocks. We stopped for lunch at Pine Knob Shelter before completing the walk to our car. Then it was back to Wolfesville Road to pick up our second car, and back to the park before it got too hot.

Sunday, we left one car in the parking lot at Gathland State Park, at Crampton Gap. This day's hike would cover 12.3 miles, the longest section of the weekend. From the US 40 parking lot, we crossed over Interstate 70, on the pedestrian bridge, on a trip filled with history. First, we passed the original Washington Monument and climbed to the top for wonderful views of Boonesboro, MD and the surrounding countryside. Take time to tour the museum at Washington Monument State Park. Just before the road crossing at Turner's Gap, check out historic Dahlgren Chapel and just after the road crossing is the Dahlgren Campground, the only tent camping area on the A.T. with restrooms and hot showers. Along the way you will also pass an historic Civil War monument at Reno Monument Road. We stopped at the new Rocky Run Shelter for a snack before making the long climb up Lamb's Knoll where we were rewarded with a marvelous view from White Rock overlook. From here it is a long, steady descent to Crampton Gap. If the museum in Gathland SP is open, be sure to stop in.

Monday, our final day, began by parking one car in Harpers Ferry, WV, then heading back to Crampton Gap. The hike to Harpers Ferry is +/-10 miles, depending on where you park your car in town. This section of trail is very tranquil, but until you reach the Ed Garvey Shelter at 3.7 miles, there is not much to see, so enjoy the solitude. Stop at the Garvey Shelter for a snack or keep going another 2.1 miles to Weverton Cliffs and have lunch. Linger here, and view the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers, as well as Brunswick, MD and the C&O Canal. From the cliffs it is a steep, switchbacked, descent, skirting the Weverton Road Park-N-Ride lot and to the C&O Canal Towpath. Upon reaching the towpath, turn right. At 9.8 miles, climb stairs of the Goodloe Byron Footbridge and cross over the bridge into Harpers Ferry. You have now completed the 40+ miles of the A.T. in Maryland and were able to do it with nothing more than a day pack and were able to stay in a campground each night.

Health & Fitness

One of the areas that we cover in our presentation, "The Care & Feeding of the Long Distance Hiker," is that of foot care. In one of our first newsletters, we touched on some techniques we use to minimize, and even eliminate, blisters and foot pain. So, with the 2012 hiking season under way, we would like to review those techniques.

When we are asked what our most valuable piece of hiking equipment is, we always say, "Our feet!" It does not matter what other high-tech equipment you have with you, if your feet are blistered and sore, you won't get far and you will be miserable. Here are some tricks we use to keep our feet in good condition and blister free.

Hiking Shoes

First, buy a pair of boots that fit correctly. If they do not feel good in the store, chances are very good that they will not feel much better after they are broken in. A good-fitting pair of boots, however, will only get better as you wear them. When trying out boots, have the outfitter fill a backpack up with 30 to 35 pounds of weight and walk around the store with the pack on for 10 to 15 minutes. A pair of boots may feel great with no weight on your back but put a full backpack on and they can feel totally different.

Liner Socks & Foot Powder

We always use liner socks and try to get ones with no seams in the toe area. Seams can rub your feet raw. We also use a 50/50 mix of Blister Shield, available at most running stores, and Gold Bond Medicated Powder. Mix both in a Zip-Loc bag, turn your liner socks inside out, put them on over your hand and swish them around in the powder mix. Shake them off, turn them right-side out and put them on. We also recommend wiping your feet with alcohol pads. These pads are also useful if you need to start a campfire when wood is wet.

Food Rubs

We also give each other foot rubs each night, whether we are in our tent or in a shelter. For us, after 5 to 7 days on the A.T. without a shower, rubbing each other's feet was as close to being intimate as it got. Lay on your backs, side-by-side, facing opposite directions. Place one leg inside your partner's leg, as if you are going to "Indian leg wrestle." Now the fun part starts!

Pull on the toes to pop them back into place.

Using your fist, firmly rub up and down the bottom of the foot, from the ball to the heel, to loosen up the Plantar Fascia that runs the length of the bottom of the foot.

Using your thumbs, firmly massage the Achilles tendon on the heel on both sides. Holding the foot in both hands, use both thumbs and press firmly on the area between the pad below the big toe and the pad below the rest of the toes and massage slowly.

Using the palm of your hand, place it on the bottoms of the toes and press on all of them, bending them backward toward the instep of the foot.

Again using the palm of your hand, place it on the top of all the toes, bending them slightly down toward the bottom of the foot.

Grasp the foot with both hands, place both thumbs between the pad below the big toe and the pad below the rest of the toes, and twist the foot from side to side.

We thru-hiked the entire Appalachian Trail and the Long Trail without ever once getting a blister and we firmly believe that using these techniques will minimize, if not eliminate, the torment of hiking with blisters for you as well.

"The Walk" Update

In addition to a paperback edition, our latest book, *"The Walk – Reflections on Life & Faith from the Appalachian Trail,"* will also be available for e-Book readers. Within the next few weeks, you will be able to download this book to your Kindle, Nook, SONY WiFi Reader or Kobo Pulse, and other popular eBook readers; even Android phones. It will also be available at the Apple Store, to be downloaded to an iPhone, iPad, iPod touch, or on a computer with iTunes

Nutrition

At a recent presentation at the REI store in Rockville, Maryland, a woman in the audience asked if we could provide any advice on backpacking meals for vegans and vegetarians. We had to admit that there was not much we could offer other than the book, "LIPsmackin' Vegetarian Backpackin'" by Christine & Tim Conners. However, the very next day, we received our copy of "American Hiker," the magazine of the American Hiking Society, and inside we found a wonderful review about a new book specifically written for vegan and vegetarian backpackers. This extensive book, very cleverly titled, "Another Fork in the Trail: Vegetarian and Vegan Recipes for the Backcountry" was written by Laurie Ann March and is published by Wilderness Press.

The author addresses the culinary concerns and answers questions that vegetarians and vegans may have when venturing out onto the trail. The book contains over 160 recipes that are delicious and healthy. She even tackles the fears of people with allergies and sickness, like celiac disease. She sprinkles her own trail experiences throughout the book, so you feel like you are cooking with a friend. She also stresses the importance of dehydrating food. The book is broken down by sections, such as, breakfasts, lunches, snacks, dinners, desserts and baked goods, beverages and more elaborate dishes. Helpful icons at the top of the pages let you know if the recipe is gluten free, vegan, only for ovo-lacto vegetarians, or especially lightweight.

Ms. March is an avid outdoorswoman and cook who is the owner and editor of two very popular online magazines, www.OutdoorAdventureCanada.com and www.WildernessCooking.com. She also hosts wilderness cooking workshops.

This book, and her first one, "A Fork in the Trail," are both available at Wildernesspress.com and Barnes & Noble.

