

//23/81



Dear Reese,

I received a copy of your first Hika Nation Virginia Bulletin today from the Kentucky Parks people. The Bulletin is a great idea -- keep them coming.

I work for Missouri Parks as Coordinator for the Ozark Trail and I served as Missouri's Hika Nation Coordinator.

I'll share a few thoughts with you that will help Hika Nation in Virginia. If you have any questions, give me a call soon, for I will be taking a leave of absence from my job in a few weeks in order to join Hika Nation to the Atlantic. My home number is (314) 443-5742.

Ernst: Doug Billips is no longer with Kentucky Parks but is still serving as Hika Nation Coordinator.

His address is 338 Scruggs, Berea, Kentucky
zip 40403

Al Schneider

Division of Parks and Historic Preservation
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Phone (606) 986-1685. You ought to get in touch with him. I believe the Jenkins crossing is out. I'm sure he would welcome help in planning the entry to Virginia. We were trying to figure a way of including the Cumberland Gap. Damascus is, of course, still in as the AT entry point.

2) at this time there are about 50 hikers. I would expect that number to stay fairly constant to Damascus. Please mail your Virginia Bulletin to the hikers. Doug could give you the Kentucky mail dates. I would expect quite a few hikers (perhaps scores) to join us, especially on weekends, as we walk the AT. This will pose real logistics problems, and everyone will have to be patient and ready for the unexpected. I spoke with Craig Evans in D.C. and Bob Proudman at Harpers Ferry about a number of HikaNation issues. One concern I have is the pace on the AT. Could you give Bob some input on AT terrain difficulty (perhaps he already knows). HikaNation hikers are tough but hiking 6 days a week, month after month is really hard on ones body -- and mind. Would a 9 mile per day, 10? 11? be wise. Can you vary it from 8-13 so that the hikers



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move at a pace that allows ³ time for some enjoyment of the scenery, some time for loafing, some time for cooking & sleeping & more loafing. ~~and~~. The hikers averaged about 13.5 miles/day across Missouri and most of that mileage was on roads which are fast but really pounding on the knees. For what it's worth, I would guess an average near 10 on the HT would be good. Check with Bob, Craig, and Monty for their views.

3) Whenever you can arrange a special event for the hikers, they would really appreciate it. a hot, tasty meal; a warm building; fires; showers -- all these really help. If you have some folks around who would like to help HikeNation but cannot hike, they could lend their assistance with a vehicle. On rest days hikers need help getting into a town to dry sleeping bags, shoes, etc.

Monty is hard pressed to get everything done. Someone with a car could just contact Monty and offer their services - he'd put them to work.

If some backpack store showed up with a van load of equipment at Damascus that would be great. We could assemble a list of equipment needs and get it to you before we hit Damascus.

4) Be sure to let the press, new hikers, everyone know that Hika Nation does not move as a single unit. Hikers break camp and are on the trail anywhere from 7:30-12:00. If a hiker feels sluggish, he may not even make it to camp that evening and just make up the extra miles the next day. However, if there are AT sections where we all must camp at a designated site, let us know and we'll get there. (By the way be sure to tell us of special problems of any kind, eg, bears. Hika Nation is used to taking food into the tents in the evening. Bear proofing will have to be



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strongly emphasized and the ⁽⁵⁾ extra time needed to do this will have to be subtracted from the hiking day mileage.)

You have a great group of people heading your way. We hope as many people as possible will come walk the FT with HikaNation. Use HikaNation in whatever way you can to promote trail awareness. Are there new sections of FT that could be dedicated when HikaNa. arrives? Can you get the press out walking with us? Get radio stations to walk along with a tape recorder. You come up with the wild ideas, and HikaNation will help get them accomplished.

One final point: its hard to buy good food as one hikes across the country. a number of hikers really appreciate home baked whole grain breads, good cheeses,

(over)

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Fresh Vegetables!

nuts, dried fruits, etc. Anyone
interested in getting a food coop or
health food type store to help restock
the hikers would find their efforts
appreciated.

Write or call me if I can
be of any assistance.

For Hika Nation
& HHS

Al