

Friday April 8, 2022

Greetings Greg,

Just a few points to clarify some of my rambling interview responses.

Mike McReynolds was the San Francisco Bay Area Chairman/Director/Coordinator and spearheaded the entire Bay area opening 2 days of events, including the opening ceremonies in the Polo Park and arranged the crossing of the Bay Bridge on the 2nd day of HikaNation. Using Glenn Seaborg's name as a door-opener, Mike communicated with California State Assemblymen and Senators, Department of Transportation personnel, etc., to coordinate activities for the first 2 days (or more).

Glenn Seaborg was the California Coordinator and he scouted out the entire route across California, providing detailed directions for each day's journey and securing in advance, campsites for each night. He lead us on the hike on weekends, and then Jeannie Harmon took over on the weekdays to navigate the way through California. While Mike McReynolds was the "main man" for the Bay Area, Glenn Seaborg was the "main man" for the entirety of California.

California was the most structured state with designated routes and campsites. While the routes were specific, the potential to lose sight of the lead hiking group was real, so throughout California, we were fairly close together while hiking...thus the producing the "line-hiking photos". Some nightly campsites were spacious in Tilden Park, Briones Park, Diamond Mines Park, while others were tightly packed in in places like a roadside campground.

Once we were out of California, the route opened up, as did the spacing of the hikers during the day, and at night at the campsites. Each state had a Coordinator and they provide sometimes detailed routes, and other times generalized routes for their states.

Nevada and Utah were similar...a lot of dirt back roads, jeep roads, some pavement, and a lot of trails. Some days, we were told the next campsite would be on the jeep road or trail, 15 miles ahead, so the hikers left when they wanted and arrived at the campsite when they wanted....hikers spread out hiking in tiny groups or solo hikers. Once we arrived at the campsite, tents were spread out, rather than being tightly packed into a small area.

Monty Montgomery was the on-site coordinator and followed us when possible with his van and airstream trailer. Usually he would "drop" the airstream on a paved road area when we were in backcountry Nevada and Utah areas, and he would drive the van, with its' 100?-gallon water tank, to provide water to use as needed.

While each state had a HikaNation coordinator who planned the route and some activities through the state, Monty Montgomery was the HikaNation "on-site" Hike Coordinator. Monty drove his van and Airstream trailer parallel to the HikaNation route and provided numerous functions, including, but not limited to: coordinating with state

planners, advance scouting/altering of planned route, meeting with locals & dignitaries & media, providing water/food/aid in desolate areas, transporting hikers to and from the hike, providing resupply trips to nearby towns, etc.

In states like Kentucky, it was mostly road walking, but the campsites were not designated by the State Coordinator, so Monty would drive ahead of the group, knocking on doors of locals to see if we could camp in their fields, or he would go to towns, seeing if we could camp in the local parks or church grounds, etc. Some days he could not secure a campsite, so we camped tightly along the narrow roadsides or on steep embankments next to the road.

Which brings me to the logistics of my side trip in Kentucky. I took off with a couple of friends to visit their relatives in Ohio and Michigan, and then we returned to the point we had left the group. My 2 friends resumed hiking to catch up to the group, knowing the road route of HikaNation in advance....no one was waiting for them to show them the way. I decided to visit family in Atlanta and Toccoa, Georgia, and then my parents graciously offered to drive me back to Kentucky to resume the hike. Knowing the route of HikaNation, we located Monty and his van near Ewing, Virginia, where I gathered more route information from him. Then my parents drove me back to I-75 in Kentucky where I resumed my catch-up hike along most of the roads HikaNation had followed. I finally caught up the group after a grueling week of hiking. (Glad to be back with the group after 4+ days of catching up with mileages of 4.5, 27, 30, 29, and 34.)

So that was typical of others' side trips. Some hiked ahead, took a side trip, then rejoined HikaNation. Some fell behind like the example above. Some resumed the hike right where they left off (like my friends and I), while others were content to skip a portion of the hike.

In comparison to the Appalachian Trail, the hiking in Nevada, Utah, and western Colorado was much more remote than the A.T. Lots of open desert and canyons in Nevada and Utah with hiking in deserted areas along jeep roads, and visiting tiny little Nevada towns by dry lakes. It was great.

The A.T. crosses a road and access to civilization probably at least twice a week (except for Maine), so it's not as remote as some think.

Whoops, this was suppose to be brief.

William Ewart

Gregory Thomas interviewed William Ewart on April 7, 2022, for an article that was published on April 12, 2022, by the SF Chronicle. The article was meant to commemorate the beginning of HikaNation, April 12, 1980.

SF Chronicle article:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2022/bay-bridge-cross-country-hike/>

HikaNation: How a historic
cross-country backpacking
revolution started on the Bay Bridge

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