

Thousand-Miler Essay

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When I asked Sue and Tom Kolb if I could hike with them on National Trails Day, June 6, 2020, I had no intention of hiking the trail again. I was missing hiking with my Walworth County friends and our Trails Day tradition of hiking twenty miles. My thought was to hike along with them on their journey here in the north. But then the idea hit me to hike the trail again. I joined Thousand Miler Wannabes and found people to hike with that I did not know. I'm not normally a person who does something like this. I found that the people I hiked with were very friendly and helpful. Most were much more knowledgeable about the trail and the Guthook app than I.

When I wanted to hike Underdown, Carla Moore shuttled me so I could solo hike it. This was my first time depending on me to survive the hike. I was nervous, exhilarated, a real mix of emotions, doing something I had never done before. Though I got mixed up in my direction, and had to pass a couple of men just sitting on the trail, I did it!

I did trail maintenance by clearing the trail. I took lots of photos. I stopped whenever I wanted. I spent time sitting on the bench on the top of the esker in silence. I did it my way. I will admit I was nervous to the end, not knowing what was around the corner, would I be out by dark? I felt quite proud of myself at the end. I had survived and found I rather enjoyed solo hiking. And it gave me more confidence when hiking with others.