

7-7-2022 (Thursday)

To whom it may concern.

My name is Sanjay S. Shoney and my trail name is Found A Way. I started the trail on 11-16-2019 at the West Bend Segment and completed at the Western Terminus on 7-4-2022. My initial plan was to complete the trail in 12 years at 100 miles per year but then I decided to do 8 miles per week to complete it in 3 to 4 years. In the beginning, I hiked Waukesha and the surrounding counties then I moved towards Dane and Columbia counties, Shortly, after getting to Dane County, I started hiking the eastern section up to Sturgeon Bay and the central section up to Marathon County. Last May, I finally got into the Northwoods. Winter hiking proved to be difficult and I decide to wait to hike there until late Spring thus I decided to add the Western Bifurcation to simply get the mileage in.

I would say that my journey has been difficult due to family and work obligations as well as the time and travel needs involved. I actually quit twice but then decided that quitting is not a strong quality for my kids to witness so instead I increased my pace for completion and I realized that I will have to hike the Northwoods solo for the most part.

My fears were and still are real and numerous from the beginning. The fear of dogs is still strong but the fear of crossing rocks and bridges without railings has lessened. If crossing logs looks scary, I go through the water. At the central crossing of Wood Lake this late Spring I had a very difficult time and named myself "Found A Way" as I was eventually able to get through the segment. On 8-8-2020, Laura Hinesh named me Lil Step (as I was overly cautious) and this held until I called myself Found A Way.

I am fortunate that my wife has supported me from Day 1 and that she was nearby in the car on the CRs as like I said my fear of dogs is high. I am also fortunate to have built a network of hiking friends to keep in touch with as I plan to continue hiking eight miles a week in one shot (per week) for life.

I have never been shy about talking about God and never will be but I have learned that at times it is best to keep it to myself. I have tried to share my journey as much as possible as I believe that my experiences may help others to complete the journey.

I am very proud of myself for completing this trail as like I said it was very difficult for me especially after I came to the realization that I would be hiking solo most of the time. My faith in the Lord has always been strong so this Spring I said God let's do this as I am in a major jam and I need to complete this trail asap.

There were a few sections that I was terrified of doing alone so I specially want to thank Laura Hinesh and Sue Greenway for hiking Grassy Lake with me, Mary Johnson for hiking the Blue Hills with me, Sean Emmerich for hiking Thornapple with me, Marilynn Shaurette, Joan Zeitler, Bruce Davis, Jen Davis and Dory Witzeling for hiking parts of Jerry Lake and Lake Eleven with me. Also, a big thank you goes to Mike Butterbrodt for too many reasons to mention here.

I had a mental breakdown on 7-1-2022 after I finished my hike of the southern half of McKenzie Creek. At the same time, I knew that recently I had nice spiritual talks with Marilynn Shaurette and Joan Zeitler and that God had brought us together. After the hike and after getting to my hotel, I told Marilynn (my shuttle) I can't do this right now and I may just go home. I told her that I believe in the power of prayer so if you are willing, please pray for me while I take a nap. She obliged and I told her after I woke up in

an hour that her prayer worked and that God had healed me and I completed the IAT per my schedule (7-4-2022 at 6 AM at the western Terminus).

I have come to the realization that I love nature and hiking and thus I hope to continue lifelong.

Thanks

Found A Way

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