

*In addition to answering the questions below, please attach a brief essay including highlights or unique aspects of your hike. Section hikers: Please include a brief itinerary of your hikes (e.g., a quarterly summary of which regions/counties you hiked).*

Although I had hiked at various places throughout the country while on vacations, this was a completely different challenge to take on once I retired. Because of a move and various 'life' commitments, I wasn't able to complete the trail as quickly as I had originally planned but because of that, I think it allowed me to enjoy the sections at a more leisurely pace and truly appreciate some of the beauty our state has to offer.

Some memories that stick with me include walking along the Lake Michigan beach with no one in site on the Point Beach section or the water views after the climb on the Devil's Lake section or an eagle fishing along the rapids on the Grandfather Falls section and finally hiking the last .2 of a mile with my wife to the Western Terminus. Along the way I was fortunate enough to see wildlife in many forms from hundreds of butterflies swarming wild flowers on a connecting route to a distant bear sitting that still put me on high alert. Some memories include adversities along the trail. There were more than a few days that my head net made life more tolerable against the mosquitos and the difficulties of hiking the Parnell segment shortly after a tornado had me blazing alternate trails because of downed trees.

I would be remiss if I did not include the many great people that helped me along the way. I thank the many trail angels, uber drivers, friends and family that made the hike possible. After giving me a ride on the Blackhawk segment, Andy Whitney invited me to join their weekly hike group and I did take him up on it once. But most of all, I thank my wife for all of her support – driving, doctoring and beyond.