

Thru hiking



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

I never was one for the great distance hikes. Since most of my hikes revolved around hunting and fishing, the hike part meant time wasted hiking when I could be hunting or fishing. Hiking for camping trips as a kid was a different story. Since most of our camping gear was war surplus, it wasn't all that lightweight. Normal camp trip gear included a two-man canvas tent, complete with holes in the roof, a cot and mattress, jungle hammock, mess tent cook gear, lanterns, machete, flame thrower, and, well, you get the idea. Next came the food. Back then, us kids called it living off the land, which meant, anything for food you could swipe from home without getting caught. That meant it was usually in cans and original wrappers. Typical items included, half a ham, cookies, biscuits, bacon, canned peaches, candy, cake, bread, bottles of pop, and just about anything



This is part of the CDT from Torrey's to Gray's Peak in Colorado. These people have to know what footwear works.(Photo courtesy Wikimedia commons/xnatedawgx)

else. Heaven have mercy on the kid that brought vegetables. You load all the above into a WWI surplus assault pack and strapped it to a kid. The first kid to collapse under the weight determined the distance of our hike. Hopefully, it was at least out of sight of the parking area where a parent dropped us off. In recent years, there is a thing called thru hikers, which are folks who hike a long-distance trail from one end to the other in a single continuous journey. They complete the hike in a single hiking season, and they carry all their own gear, often camping along the way. The focus of these people is to complete the entire trail. Trails include the Appalachian Trail (AT) which starts at Springer Mountain, Georgia and terminates at Mount Katahdin, Maine. The trail extends approximately 2200 miles and passes through 14 states. Purportedly, the AT is the world's longest trail. Some three million people hike segments of the trail each year, but most don't complete it. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy estimates some 3,000 people attempt the journey each year, but only 25% complete the entire trail. The oldest person to complete the AT was M. J. "Nimblewill Nomad" Eberheart, who at 83, finished the AT on November 8, 2021. The youngest to complete the AT was 4-year-old Juniper Netteburg, who completed the feat on October 13, 2020, under her own power. She sure put my childhood hiking career to shame. Another similar trail is called the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) which begins at the Mexican border in Campo, California, and terminates some 2,653 miles away at Manning

Park, British Columbia. The PCT takes you longwise through California, Oregon, and Washington, before heading into Canada. The PCT was inspired by the AT back in 1926 when Catherine T. Montgomery proposed that the Mountaineers build a trail through the Western U.S. from Canada to Mexico. She is known as the "Mother of the Pacific Crest Trail." The first person to thru hike the entire PCT both ways, in a single continuous round-trip was Scott Williamson. He completed the "yo-yo" circuit on his fourth attempt in November of 2004, traveling 5,300 miles in 197 days, averaging 35 to 40 miles a day when not in snow. His ultra-light pack weighed less than nine pounds without food. For giggles, he did it again in 2006 and cut off two weeks from his first trip. The third trail I will mention here is closer to home, and called the Continental Divide Trail (CTD), that begins at the Mexico border at the Crazy Cook Monument, Big Hatchet Mountains, New Mexico. The CDT takes you some 3,028 through New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, before reaching the end at Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta,

and Glacier National Park, Montana, at the U.S. and Canada border. The official route of the Colorado portion of the CDT covers 735.5 miles, but there are a few alternate routes to shorten or lengthen that distance. This trail is not for the weak or faint-at-heart, as it follows the Continental Divide, reaching an altitude of 14,278 feet at Grays Peak, Colorado. The CDT has been described as "Raw, wild, remote and unfinished; it is a trail that will make use of all the skills of an experienced backpacker." And, if you so desire, upon completion of the CDT, you can continue on north into Alberta and British Columbia via the Great Divide Trail to Kakwa Lake in Kakwa Provincial Park and Protected Area, British Columbia, north of Jasper National Park. It's only another 680 miles. The Triple Crown of Hiking refers to hiking the entire length of the three major U.S. National Scenic Trails, the AT, PCT, and the CDT. Their total length is about 7,875 miles, with an incredible vertical gain of more than one million feet. The trip will take you through 22 states. The American Long Distance Hiking Association-West (ALDHA-West) is the only organization that recognizes this feat. At the ALDHA-West gathering, held each fall, the Triple Crown honorees are recognized and awarded plaques noting their achievement. As of the end of 2024, some 775 hikers have achieved this prestigious award. An incredible accomplishment in hiking is the completion of the Triple Crown of Hiking in a single calendar year. The first person to hike the Triple Crown in a calendar year was "Flyin'" Brian Robinson, who completed

the trip in 2001. The first woman to make the trip was Heather "Anish" Anderson in 2018. By the end of 2018, only 10 people had completed the Triple Crown in one calendar year, with Anderson being the only woman. Several women have achieved or neared the 10,000-mile mark through thru hiking, notably Madison "Peg Leg" Blagden, who became the first woman to complete the Border-to-Border Calendar Year Triple Crown (AT, PCT, CDT) in late 2025, exceeding 8,000 miles and continuing on to reach over 10,000 miles in that year alone. She definitely showcased incredible endurance. I can't imagine how many pairs of hiking shoes she must have worn out in that year. I once hiked some 80 miles on an eight-day trip in the Weminuche Wilderness Area, back in the 70s. It was a pretty rough trip, all in the interest of fishing, but it was nothing compared to what these thru hikers are accomplishing. I better eat my Wheaties if I am going to hit one of the long-distance trails. Nah, I'm retired from my long hike career.

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Colorado Honeybee Festival names Las Colonias Park in Grand Junction as its home for 2027

SPECIAL TO THE MDP The Colorado Honeybee Festival (CHF) will move to Las Colonias Park in Grand Junction for its free annual celebration of honeybees and pollinators, the Festival Committee announced. The 2027 festival will be held Saturday, April 10, 2027. CHF moved to Cross Orchards Historic Site in 2026, a change that brought record attendance and a natural pairing between the festival's mission to educate about pollinators and Cross Orchards' agricultural heritage and educational programming. That growth showed the Committee just how much room the festival needs to keep thriving, and in June 2026 the team committed to Las Colonias Park as its new home for 2027. "Cross Orchards gave us a wonderful year, and we're grateful for everything the site and its staff did to help the festival succeed," said Laurie Priddy, CHF President. "The crowds we drew showed just how much this community loves the

festival, and Las Colonias Park gives us so much to be excited about as we keep growing." Las Colonias Park, part of the Grand Junction Parks and Recreation system along the Colorado River, brings a long list of upgrades for the festival: dedicated food-truck hookups with water and electric service, eliminating the need for generators; expanded parking with easier, safer access for attendees; permanent restroom facilities; and significantly more open space for vendors, activities, and attendees to enjoy. The Committee is grateful to Cross Orchards Historic Site for a wonderful 2026 festival, and has invited Museums of Western Colorado, which oversees the site, to remain involved with the festival at its new home in 2027. Attendees can expect the same live music, food vendors, educational lectures, Bee Costume Contest, Spelling Bee, and wide variety of vendor booths that have made the festival a community

tradition. Vendors and volunteers are encouraged to visit coloradohoneybee.org for updates on registration, sponsorship, and festival details as they become available. "Our mission hasn't changed," Priddy said. "We're still committed to a free, family-friendly festival that helps our community understand just how important honeybees and other pollinators are to our agricultural economy, locally and beyond." About the Colorado Honeybee Festival The Colorado Honeybee Festival is a free, annual celebration of honeybees and pollinators and their importance to Western Colorado agriculture. Founded in 2008, the festival is run entirely by volunteers under a 501(c)(3) volunteer committee that includes Jean Tally, Carol Zadrozny, Laurie Priddy, President; Dan Bean, Treasurer; Michelle Gosage, Coordinator; Ellen Scott; Dixie Burmeister; Chris Christianson; and Bridgett Gutierrez.

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