

A Walk for Sunshine

by Jeff Alt (2000)

He did a charity hike on the AT for his brother's resident care facility (Sunshine). A good measure of quality is the bed sore ratio. He got 90% of his gear donated by mfr. Dehydrators preserves nutrients & save weight. About 2500 hikers start each spring, but only 10% complete the 2111-mile trek. 30 miles from the start, the trail goes right thru Walasi-Yi Center (outfitters) where he lightened his load by 5#.

Most of the trail is under a canopy of trees, but there are some beautiful views from the mtn tops. Hot Springs, NC is a wonderful town for tourists. He would process things in his mind while hiking. A month on the trail gets the body ready to handle the entire trail. VA is the easiest state in the AT & PA is the hardest.

Towns (resupply pts) are in valleys & hiking out of them with a full load is a challenge. To save weight, most backpackers don't care enough food to offset the calories burned & so their dominant thought is food. When they get to town, they can eat like a horse. There are shelters all along the AT. It takes an army of trail volunteers to keep the trail clear after a storm.

Shenandoah NP is one of the most beautiful places along the AT, but also crowded since the trail is next to Skyline Dr. It is a tradition to eat a ½ gal of ice cream at the AT mid-point. NH shelters (cabins) can be expensive, but thru-hikers can work for room & board. Mt Washington, NH has the worst weather in the US & can change any time. Mahoosuc Notch (boulders) is the hardest mile on the AT.