

## **Blistered Kind of Love** by Duffy & Angela Ballard (2003)

A fast-reading story of a couple who hiked the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. Each spring about 300 hopefuls start out at the Mexican border, but only 1 in 4 make it to Canada. Buy air-ambulance insurance. Trail Angels are those who help the hikers. Hiker boxes are the discarded supplies left behind for other hikers. Duffy's pack was too heavy at 53 lbs (Jardine's was 9 lb & he could average 30+ miles a day). He wanted to find his limits & push past them (face his fears).

Each person should carry 2 gal of water per day in the waterless desert sections. Hiker's Oasis at Kamp Anza & Hiker's Heaven at Agua Dulce was a blessing. The trail drops from 9000' San Jacinto to 1000' San Geronio Pass, then back up to 8500' San Bernardino. Hikers would always ask if others were going slower or faster than them & soon want to conquer the miles instead of smelling the flowers. Clinton Clark founded the PCT System Conference in 1932 with members as Sierra Club, Boys Scouts, YMCA & Ansel Adams. In 1970 Eric Ryback was the first to hike border to border, but it wasn't until 1993 that the trail was finally completed.

Sweat contains sugars, sodium & potassium – the combination known as electrolytes (& they must be replaced). From Lake Hughes a road cuts off 27-miles of waterless trail. Being at Kennedy Meadows on June 15<sup>th</sup> avoids a lot of snow (it can slow you down to one mph). They each carried 1.5 lb (+/-3000 calories) of food per day & were losing weight. Male hikers can burn 7000 calories per day. A male thru-hiker may lose 1-lb every 100 miles (PCT=27 lbs) & females 1/3 of that.

There were mosquitoes at Rae Lake, CA & later in OR. Creek fords can be dangerous. There is a 4pm ferry at Edison Lake to reach Vermilion Valley Resort. Kennedy Canyon is the 1000-mile mark & the hard mtns behind. Always consult the maps & guidebook or risk getting off the trail. There are a few shelters on the trail for hikers. They mostly hiked 20 miles a day, but had some 30-mile days.

Near Anderson, CA the Sierra Pacific Industries (timber) is the largest privately landowner in the state. At Ruffa Ridge they hit the half-way mark. The 30 miles along Hat Creek Rim was the longest waterless section of the PCT. Most hikers use the hwy 89 to bypass the overgrowth on section O. He had to hike a week without her (she went to a wedding) & felt life was meaningless without her (he later proposed).

Along the trail they had views of Mt. Whitney, Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, Shasta, Crater Lake, Mt. Hood, & Mt. Rainier. Some beautiful highlights were Burney Falls (CA), Marble Mtn Wilderness (CA), & Eagle Creek (OR). Redding was as hot as the desert. 2001 "Fying Brian" Robinson hiked the Triple Crown (AT, CDT & PCT) or 7400 miles in 300 days. Don't cook dinner in the same spot you sleep in. Some ride their horse along the PCT.

His parents met them for a few days in OR & they only had to carry day packs then met up at night. The trail in OR was easier & they covered more miles each day. Crossing the Columbia River (not safe to drink or swim in) brought them into WA & only 508 miles left. It got rainier near Mt. Rainier. When it is cold & wet you must keep moving to avoid hypothermia (avoid

cotton). In WA, the muddy logging roads weren't any faster than the overgrown PCT. The last 250 miles were in the North Cascades (America's Alps). Avoid Kennedy Hot Springs in the summer when the bacteria count is high. 7 miles past monument 78 (Canadian border) is Manning Park Lodge (where most return to civilization).

One trail angel got started one night when her husband was gone, she met some hikers. They were going to camp out on the grass, but she knew they needed a mother's love. She let them sleep in the guesthouse, but locked her doors just in case. Her husband came home drunk, found the door locked & went to the guesthouse. Both he & the hikers were shocked at the intrusion.

Quotes: "Always do right, it will gratify some & astonish the rest." (Mark Twain)  
"Adopt to the pace of nature. Her secret is patience." (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Books: Walk in the Woods [AT] (Bill Bryson); PCT: A Hiker's Companion (Karen Berger); The PCT (Schaffer); PCT Hiker's Handbook & Beyond Backpacking (Ray Jardine); The Longest Walk (WWII POW escape); Tao Te Ching (book of wisdom); Outdoor Lore (Clyde Ormond); Miles from Nowhere [23,000 miles on a bicycle] (Barbara Savage); Spirited Waters [kayak from WA to AK] (Jenifer Hahn); Everyday Wisdom [hiking tips] (Karen Berger)

Movies: Seven Years on Tibet

Note: see Go-Lite equipment. Use Flagyl tablets for Giardiasis (from bad water).