

# Mack's Again

Posted on [July 6, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 1, July 6, Wednesday

Start Mack's Inn on Mack's Inn alternative route, waypoint MI-152RR.

Stop near 03-075WT where Mack's Inn route merges back with main CDT route, just inside Montana border

Miles  $7.5 + 5.4 + 5 = 17.9$

The bus let me off at Mack's Inn around 8:30AM, where I finished the trail last year.



After a convenience store visit, I begin walking up a graveled forest road.

The road leads up to Sawtell Peak, a couple hundred feet shy of a 10K peak. Many ATV, 4wd, dirt bikes, and a few regular cars pass by.



The sky threatens rain. If this were Colorado, we would have thunderstorms with these clouds.



Just before the peak we divert onto a trail, and then do some cross-country route-finding.



Rain showers start and stop again all the rest of the day, maybe fifty times.



The route follows a creek for miles, with no visible path. You must constantly switch to the other side when your side gets too steep to follow. With the showers and summer growth, one must give up and do wet foot crossings.



Finally leaving the stream, wildflowers are in their glory.

I stop where the Mack's Inn alternate route joins back up with the regular CDT. Hope to find visible foot path tomorrow, just over the border into Montana.

# On the Border

Posted on [July 7, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 2, July 7, Thursday

Start near 03-075WT where Mack's Inn route merges back with main CDT route, just inside Montana border

Stop 03-270M somewhere in the Centennial Mountains and Targhee National Forest

Miles  $4.5 + 7.2 + 4.9 = 16.6$

After breaking camp, I found real built trail to walk on near the campsite that was not visible yesterday.



A sign describes the Experimental Sheep Station, active in July and August. No sheep were seen all day.



The trail heads westward all day long along the border between Idaho and Montana. The states use the actual Divide to determine their borders here.



Four people out day-hiking were surprised to see me coming the other way.



The trail climbs up high, near almost-10k-peaks, and I need to put back on gloves and windbreaker.



The trail merges onto an old road bed, wide and level, which follows along the top of a ridge for miles of great views.









The trail turns south into lower grassy rolling hills, still marked on the map as Sheep Station.

I make camp in a stand of trees. Skeeters lay siege to my tent.

[finished audiobook [Dark Currents](#), book 2 in the Emperor's Edge series, by Lindsay Buroker]

# Big Table

Posted on [July 8, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 3, July 8, Friday

Start 03-270M somewhere in the Centennial Mountains and Targhee National Forest

Stop 04-149WT Rock Spring, on top of Big Table Mountain

Miles  $1 + 5.9 + 4.9 + 7.4 = 19.2$

Leaving the Experimental Sheep Station and entering Targhee Forest, the landscape is a mixed patchwork of grass meadow and forest.



The trail passes Aldous Lake, and a few other small lakes during the day.



Skeeters and those flies that like to circle around you a hundred times are present in large numbers until a breeze in the afternoon cancels flight operations.



A number of trees are standing dead, assumed from beetle kill. Burned standing trees are also a frequent sight.



Late in the day the trail climbs up a steep ridge with good views.



The ridge broadens into a broad flat-topped area called Table Top Mountain. We follow what on the map is marked as an old pack trail.



Near Rock Spring is an old drinker, now dry, built so long that I wonder if it was built to service sheep herds.



Rock Spring now is a piped spring coming out of a pile of rocks.



A bear box is located near the spring, so I stop nearby to camp, glad not to hang food from a tree for one night.

# No Lima

Posted on [July 9, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 4, July 9, Saturday

Start 04-149WT Rock Spring, on top of Big Table Mountain

Stop 05-100M On border fence Montana-Idaho on Continental Divide, 2 miles from Modoc Creek.

Miles  $1 + 2.3 + 4.5 + 7.5 + 7.7 + 2 = 25$

Going down Table Top Mountain, we get views of surrounding landscape.



Back up on Little Table Mountain, the path goes along one edge, so one can enjoy views the whole way.



The trail goes along an old fence boundary, BLM on one side, atypical for timbered land. Here is what happened before GPS, kids.





More broad-leaf sagebrush appears with grasses.



On a road walk down to the interstate, I pass through a big encampment, perhaps a family reunion or similar group.



There was skeet shooting going on, and many dogs around, all well behaved. No one expressed interest in chatting, so I strolled on by.

At the interstate, no cell signal could be grabbed (Sprint) though multiple sources stated one could make cell calls here. *[Note: Several days later I discover this condition is fixed when I do a PRL Update on the phone.]* I had half a mind to go into Lima for the night and resupply, since a motel in town offered rides to hikers, but with no way to make a call, and not wanting to hitch on the interstate, I am out of luck. Fortunately there is just enough food to make it to Leadore, barely.

In the afternoon is a long road-walk.



Strong headwinds battle this poor hiker on the road and all the rest of the day.

Then the trail goes along fence boundary between states on the Continental Divide, on rolling grassland like southern Wyoming.



The trail is so rolling up-and -down to be exhausting near the end of day, so I stop short of my goal, a creek for water source.



I camp a little ways down from the ridge on a tiny bit of flat area. Tomorrow brings more up-and-down along the ridge but even higher mountains, in this section called the “Roller Coaster”.

At night the weather throws everything, strong winds, lightning, thunder, blowing rain, all night long is some commotion.

# Beaverhead

Posted on [July 10, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 5, July 10, Sunday

Start 05-100M On border fence Montana-Idaho on Continental Divide, 2 miles from Modoc Creek.

Stop 05-275M, on approach to cross the Continental Divide after spending the morning walking along the Divide in the Beaverhead National Forest

Miles  $2 + 5.7 + 7.8 + 7.7 = 23.2$

Rain showers in the early morning delayed starting a couple of hours, since I really did not want to break camp and start the day being rained on.

After a couple of miles descended down to Modoc Creek to get water.



The way is steep and far, so do not go down unless you are down to your last teaspoon of water.

The morning was spent following Divide fence-line again like yesterday, except the ridges were so much taller on the “Roller Coaster”.



Wind was strong enough to push me around at times. Dark clouds gathered and passed over, threatening a storm at high altitude. The temperature was bitterly cold with the gusting wind. In the distance I could see the dark clouds passing quickly over were followed by blue sky, so I kept walking and dealt with a little hail.

At mid-day the trail turned off the high ridge and descended down to reasonable altitudes and warmth.



I was so glad to see trees again after spending so much time on top of treeless grassy mountain.



After rambling past several water sources and giving time to get warm the trail proceeds back up to the heights, preparing to cross the Divide again, but not to walk far along fences again.

The climb up went quickly.



Rain and hail started at the crest as I was preparing to climb and cross the divide, and I ran out of time to complete my goal. Instead I sheltered among trees and prepared for another wet night.

# Oops

Posted on [July 11, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 6 July 11, Monday.

Start 05-275M, on approach to cross the Continental Divide

Stop 05-230M on the other side of the Divide a short distance

Miles forward... about 3

In morning the tent was surrounded with funny white stuff.





The top of the mountain was covered in snow, still coming down hard and sticking. White-out conditions made it hard to know how far down the mountain the snow extended. I decided to cross the Divide and go down a little ways and see if one could walk out of snow.



At first the trail was easy to see but as snow accumulated the path became invisible. A few posts marked the trail, but they soon disappeared and the only way forward was GPS, causing slow progress as you trudged through sagebrush and high grass covered in snow.

I had to make a difficult decision. As weather and challenging trail conditions slowed my progress in past days, I might take more days than expected and run out of food. This situation had been on my mind for a couple of days, but this was the precipitating event, literally. If necessary I would hike back to the trail crossing the interstate and somehow get a ride to Lima, MT.

Back down the mountain snow became rain.



Near Sawmill Trailhead I saw a group camping, a rare sight along the CDT.



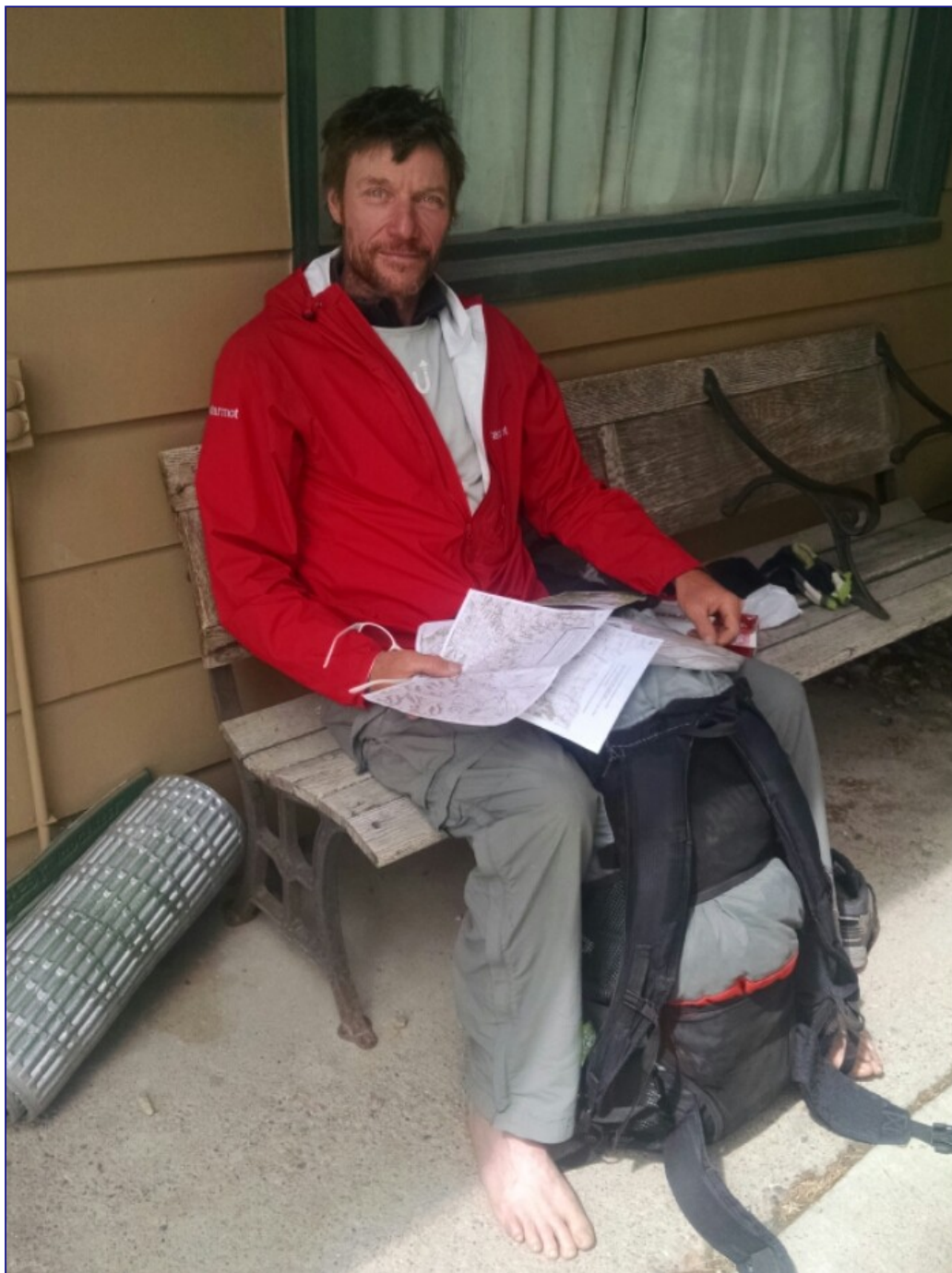
Turns out they were part of a wilderness experience group. One of the leaders pointed out that the trailhead road goes right out to the interstate with distance 15 miles, only a few miles north on the interstate from Lima.



That was a lot better than my plan of walking back along the CDT, along the Roller Coaster now covered in snow.

Some ranchers picked me up during my fifteen mile road-walk, and brought me as far as the interstate. One of the cowboys showed me the dirt access road, going all the way to Lima, and I still did not have cell signal, so I walked the 5 miles and got to town.

Mike at the Mountain View Motel got me set up with a tent site, shower, and laundry. Construction crews had taken all the motel rooms in town. He had me find DNA, another section hiker like me, and we had a good discussion about CDT methods and tools.



I rarely get a chance to talk to other long distance hikers at any length, and DNA gave me some good ideas. He was headed back to the trail today, so we might see each other again.

I got to chat with other hikers around the motel, after getting cleaned up.



Back on the trail tomorrow, with more food.

# Try That Again

Posted on [July 12, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 7, July 12, Tuesday.

Start Roadwalk about 15 miles from interstate along Sheep Creek Road to 05-253AP Sawmill Trailhead

Stop 05-327WT near Sheep Creek

Miles on trail: 7.4

Mike at the motel gave me a ride back to Sheep Creek Road exit 9 at interstate, but was not able to drive the gravel road. The road-walk went pretty well, and I arrived early afternoon at the trailhead.

Hiking up to the spot where I turned around yesterday, pellet snow started falling, then a steady rain. (The weather report said 30% chance of rain today and then clear for several days.)

Not many pictures today after the rain.

I climbed down the bad weather high-point, and eventually rain stopped... for a while. The pathway wound past some mountain with exposed rock, a change from the rounded grass-covered mountains seen in recent days.



DNA caught up with me and we hiked the rest of the day together with good conversation.



We ended stopping our hike a little early due to threatening rain, set up camp near each other, and he built a wood fire to boil water. We talked more until rain and cold drove me to shelter.

Tomorrow I might start earlier, since he is a faster hiker and will catch up.

# Bannack

Posted on [July 13, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 8, July 13, Wednesday.

Start 05-327WT near Sheep Creek

Stop 06-145M along Nicholie Creek

Miles on trail: 26

Interesting rocky mountains come into view that we may pass.





The trail comes to Bannack Pass.



This is somewhat confusing, since we will cross Bannock Pass (note difference in spelling) in a couple of days or so.

View back from pass



I meet the hiker Knees going south.



## Deadman Lake



At Nicholie Creek Bridge I have done roughly 25 miles, which was a goal DNA mentioned, so I wonder if he will appear soon.



Later I go along Nicholie Creek a couple of miles, looking for a good campsite among trees, and finally settling for an exposed site near the creek.

# Lakes and Ridge

Posted on [July 14, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 9, July 14, Thursday.

Start 06-145M along Nicholie Creek

Stop 07-025M Just past Morrison Lake

Miles: 22

The trail climbs and rocky mountains with sharp ridges loom ahead.



Then several lakes appear.



Here are *some cool bones*.



I thought DNA might have started behind me today, but do not see him pass. Maybe he took an alternate route.

After lakes I climb up to a high ridge and walk along the Divide for several miles.







Down from the ridge I am approaching the last lake of the day when I meet Toes, a southbound thru-hiker.



He says that DNA is ahead, just passing Morrison Lake when he was there an hour or so earlier. DNA may have passed me on one of several alternate routes today.

After a few more miles on dirt road the lake is revealed.



I walk a few more miles, but do not get far enough to see DNA's camp. Will start early in morning and try to catch up. He probably means to get to the pass and then town tomorrow, but I wonder if there is time for a tough hitch after a 25 mile day.

# Push to Leadore

Posted on [July 15, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 10, July 15, Friday.

Start 07-025M Just past Morrison Lake

Stop 07-249AP Bannock Pass and then hitch 15 miles south to Leadore, Idaho.

Miles: 27.3

In the morning I start early, trying to catch up with another hiker a few miles ahead. The road continues up a broad ridge, then past a nice piped spring off the trail that I use, then Elk Mountain at 10k elevation becomes visible, with Bannock Pass beyond.



Closer...



On the approach to Elk Mountain is good built trail, with controlled slope and few switchbacks.



Rocks mixed with grasses near the summit make a pleasing pattern.



For a very special reader (you know who you are), here is a view down the mountain slope.



As the trail descends further, we can make out the dirt road going over Bannock Pass in the distance.



As I get closer, weather threatens.



Down below forest and onto grassland, rain and wind attack briefly. Finally at 4PM after walking fast and hard all day, I reach the pass.



Now comes a tricky part. I did not have cell reception to get a ride from Leadore Inn, so had to hitch, or walk the fifteen miles to town. The road was lightly traveled, maybe one car every 15 minutes. After a 30 minute wait the first vehicle going my direction offers me a ride in the back of their truck.

In town at Leadore Inn a room was not available until tomorrow, but a tent and RV site across the road



I enjoyed a shower, and Sam, the hiker-friendly proprietor of the Inn offered laundry service, and best of all a good porch with fine conversation. I found DNA, arrived an hour or two earlier, already at the local restaurant. I get cleaned up and set up camp and start laundry and we both go back to The Silver Dollar for a well-earned meal.

The eatery had a stuffed bear for decoration, so we got a little silly.





# Leadore Zero

Posted on [July 16, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 11, July 16, Saturday.

No miles walked. Taking a break.





# Almost Famous

Posted on [July 17, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 12, July 17, Sunday.

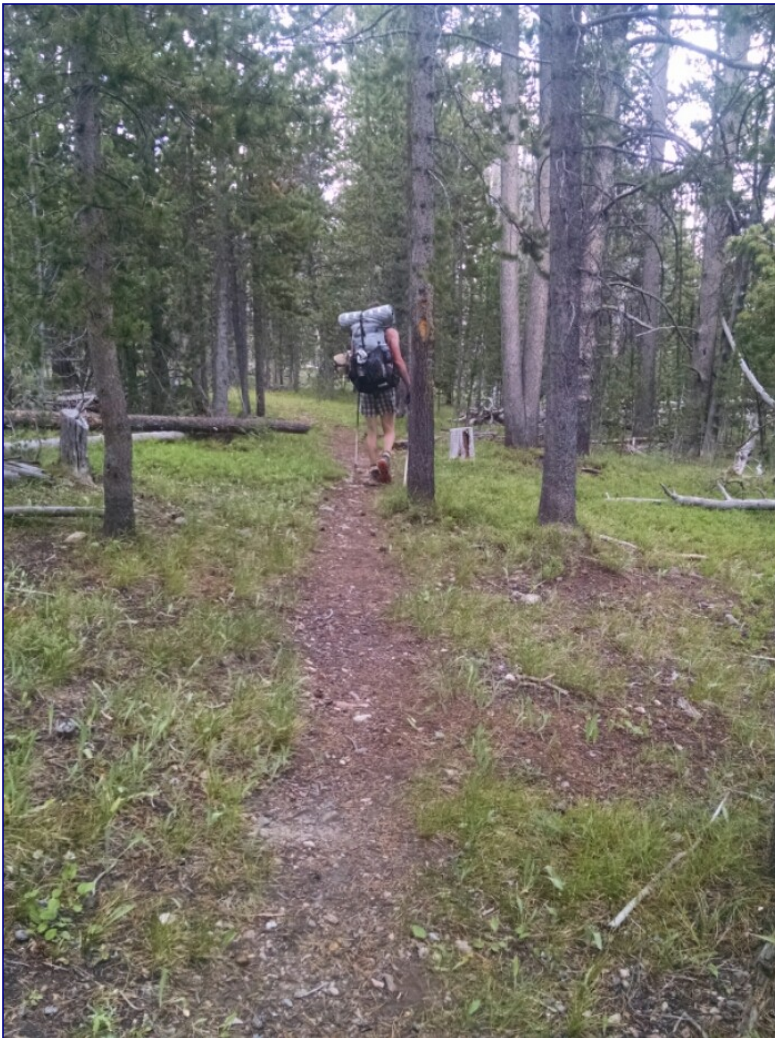
Start Leadore, Idaho and get a ride up to 07-249AP Bannock Pass

Stop 08-150M on a grassy ridge along the Divide

Miles: 16

Sam of Leadore Inn took us to Bannock Pass in early afternoon. Leadore has been very good to us. I will remember the town fondly.

DNA stripped down to boxer shorts and set a fast pace.



Apparently he hikes like this often.

We met two hikers who already completed the CDT and are returning this summer to finish some sections that they had to take alternates on before.



Hamburger and Steady were a treasury of information about the trail, apps, Sula, and more. Steady might hike the GET the same year I will.

We passed by the side of a mountain so steep it is a wonder trees can cling to it.



Southbounders Blue Sky, Johnny Rocket, and Grams stopped to talk. Rocket and I worked on a trail-building project together last year in New Mexico. And Rocket, Blue Sky, and I all hiked the AT in 2012, where they were part of Pile 'O Dudes hiking group. Johnny and I remembered each other– I feel almost famous.



We expect a big wave of south hikers over the next days.

We are in a section of trail with warning “Next on-trail water 48.9 miles”. Th situation is not completely dire, since that sometimes means getting off the trail 0.25 miles to get to a spring. It does mean water opportunities are rare, perhaps once or twice each day, so pay attention to maps.

DNA and I camped near each other on a high grassy ridge with clumps of trees for shelter.

Tomorrow I will start early, as is my routine, and DNA will catch up and likely pass.

# Crazy Joe

Posted on [July 18, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 13, July 18, Monday.

Start 08-150M on a grassy ridge along the Divide

Stop near 09-094XX on a flat hill of lodgepole pines

Miles: 20.9

Not far from our camp, I see a stock tank right next to the trail, not on any hiker map.



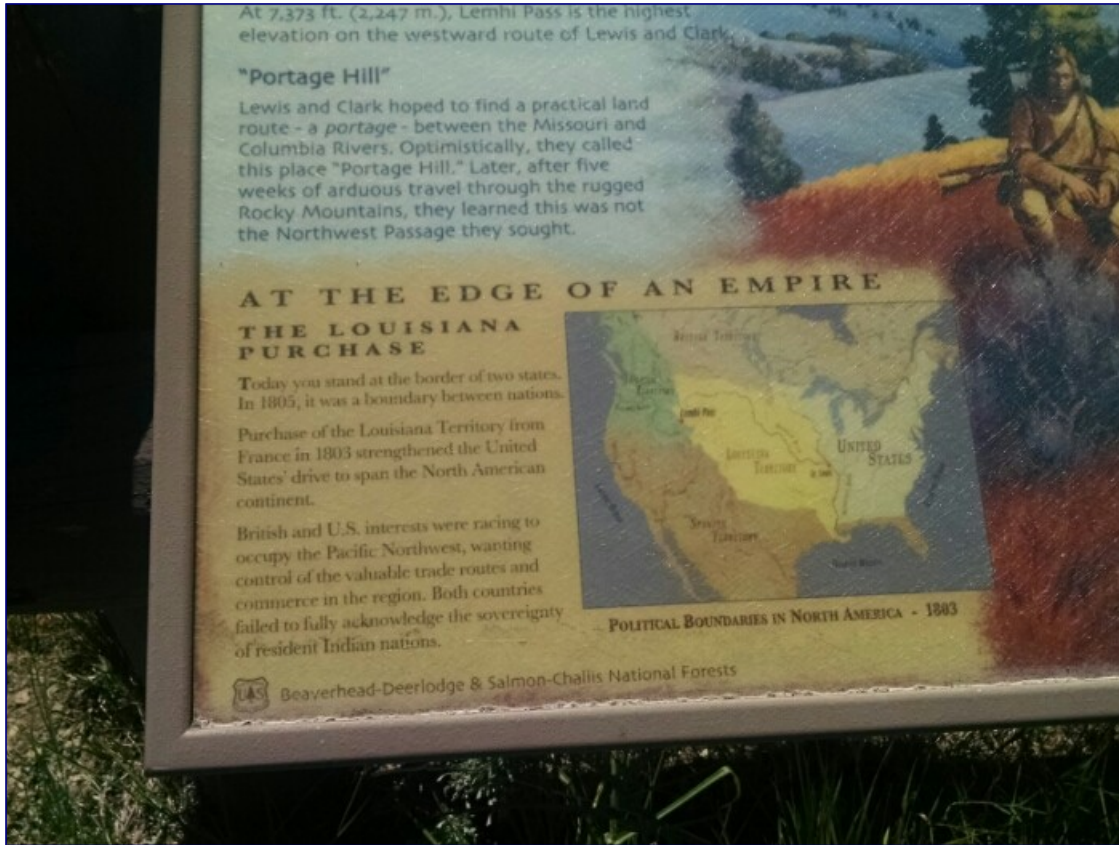
Most of the morning is on 2-track, in forest mixed with grass.



I descend down towards Lemhi Pass.



The pass is important to the Lewis and Clark history.





Near the pass is the Sacajawea Memorial Area, which has a spring that I used for water.



Climbing up out of the pass, I look back.



Past the detour for Pattee Creek, I decide to double back and get some water, since I might be too slow to hike to the next spring before end of day. Where the Pattee detour rejoins the CDT, I see an actual trail angel next to his truck.



Crazy Joe is a semi-retired attorney, who parks his truck near trails in summer and day-hikes and does trail angel acts of kindness for hikers. He offered a camp chair, ice cold coke, and fun conversation. DNA showed up after a half hour, and turns out he already met Joe at another trail location. I might have stayed two hours talking and listening. Topics of conversation included but were not limited to the army, calciferous growth, military intelligence and bulges in clothing, White Castle sliders, accelerated evolution of enzymes, 101st Airborne, patent attorney work in Singapore, favorite rock bands of the 70's (with singing), and the guy in Canada lost with an axe wound tripping on mushrooms.

Hiking on, DNA and I find another flat place to camp, among lodgepole pines.



Southbounders met today: Washpot, Moonbeam, Kim Chee, and Waitup.

# Rock and Water

Posted on [July 19, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 14, July 19, Tuesday.

Start near 09-094XX on a flat hill of lodgepole pines

Stop 10-175M near Berry Creek

Miles: 27.4

After a brief climb the trail begins descending to Goldstone Pass.



I was not able to find the spring as described near the pass, so continued on.

Climbing up and sideways, the trail becomes rocky and continues so all day. From the state of one southbounder's shoes, the rest of the trail to Canada may be full of rocks.



Also, the trail crosses many creeks today, ending the dry section of 50+ miles of no water directly on the trail.

As the trail descends near Jahnke Lake and along Jahnke Creek and beyond, it becomes a solidly engineered thing of beauty, a pleasure to walk on. Good trail the rest of the day.



One unusual bit of trail work is that a two-track road appears to be made into a trail path by covering one half of the road with dirt, rocks, and logs.



I only got off the trail for a quarter mile in late afternoon. When I got back to true trail, a couple of southbounders told me DNA had just gone by and was just a few hundred yards ahead of me. I raced to catch up, and we walked together for a few miles to a campsite near water. Good day.

Southbounders today included Lucky Strike, Steven, Cheese Snake, Qtip, Dupont, and Llama.

# Slag-A-Melt

Posted on [July 20, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 15, July 20, Wednesday.

Start 10-175M near Berry Creek

Stop 11-182XX near a small mountain lake

Miles: 24.6 (likely more with recent switchbacks added to trail)

Another in a series of clear weather days is good for a day of hiking. The usual routine for the past few days is that I get up and start walking at 6AM to take advantage of cool temperatures. DNA starts out around 8AM, but hikes faster, so catches up with me in the afternoon and for the rest of the day I try to “draft” behind him to keep up, and we end up camping near each other.

Here is Rock Island Lake.





## Upper Rock Island Lake



The terrain is definitely more rugged, with plenty of rocks on pathways and all around. Water is abundant, in springs, creeks, puddles, rivulets, ice melting, and bog, altogether many dozen crossings in a day.





DNA catches up in early afternoon, earlier than he had before. I must be hiking slow today. He has time to swim in mountain lakes while I hike on, and he soon catches up. Here he is trying to do a snow angel in a drift.



Lower Slag-a-Melt Lake



Upper Slag-Melt Lake



I am really dragging by the end of the day, but manage to almost match DNA's pace, and we make good progress in mileage. We stop at a small mountain lake to make camp.



I only see one southbounder today, Colin from the UK.

We are both planning to exit in two days. DNA goes to Darby to meet up with his girlfriend to hike the trail together for a week. I am getting a package at Sula Resort, which is nearer on the same highway as Darby. Whether I stay overnight at Sula depends on wifi and other factors. I need to get to the highway early in the day to get as much accomplished in one day as possible. DNA just needs to get out later the same day.

(finished audiobook [Anne of Avonlea](#), by Lucy Maude Montgomery, read by Karen Savage)

# Exit Strategy

Posted on [July 21, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

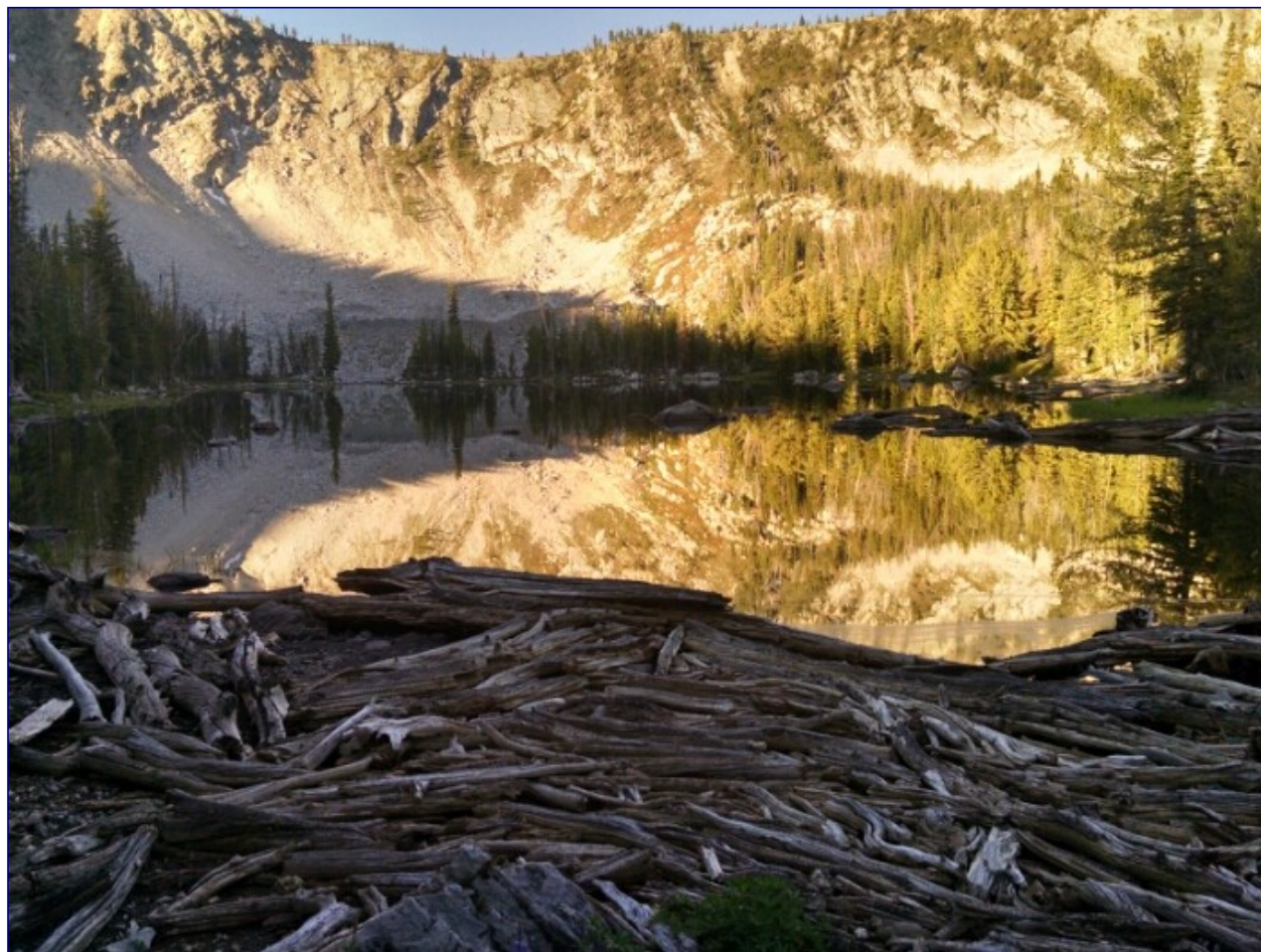
Day 16, July 21, Thursday.

Start 11-182XX near a small mountain lake

Stop 12-090M, 8 miles from Chief Joseph Pass.

Miles: 26.4

In the morning I see a good lake reflection.



Trail for much of the morning is along rocky ledges hanging on the side of the mountain.



The trail descends way down in altitude to Sheep Creek, where I meet a section hiker.



Rambler thought we might have met before, and asked when I hiked New Mexico. “Ah,” says I, “the long road-walk south of Silver City!” It is so fun seeing a long distance hiker you have already met in previous years! I feel almost famous again. [Scroll to April 12 of [this earlier post.](#)]



Ripe berries along the trail look like blueberries, but I am reluctant to pick in case of mistaken identity of plant variety.



Near Bradley Gulch is an old cabin, with intact glass windows.





I find the spring at Nez Perce Trail, the last water on trail for 29 miles. I did not bring enough water for all the up-and-down trail action getting here, so gratefully rehydrate and carry extra water to last the next morning.



A tipi, fallen down, is visible from the trail.



I wait a half-hour at the junction of the Nez Perce and CDT, to see if DNA would appear. He was ready to wait for me to catch up on previous days. I walk a few more miles, slowly, just to get a little closer for an early exit in the morning to hitch into Sula. I have a long to-do list to complete while in “town”, currently at 20 action items, so need an early start to get everything done.

In the final hour of hiking I see a doe bound down the slope at my approach, followed by a fawn exactly irritating its mother leap for leap. How pretty the fawn’s spots appeared in forest shadow. I know it is not some major game sighting like a moose or bear, but sometimes you need to appreciate the magic of what appears.

# Sula

Posted on [July 22, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 17, July 22, Friday.

Start 12-090M, 8 miles from Chief Joseph Pass.

Stop 12-165RX Chief Joseph Pass, then walk one mile on 43 to Lost Trail Pass, and go north on 93, hitch 13 miles to Sula Country Store and Resort.

Miles on trail: 8

The morning is overcast, and trail goes up-and-down, until the final few miles of dirt road.



I get to the pass in good time, around 9PM, by hiking hard. The hitch down to Sula Country Store and Resort came quickly, the first car that passed my direction.



Since Sula appeared to have wifi, I decided to hang around during the day doing chores, get a tent site, much cheaper than a cabin, and go up to the pass right after breakfast tomorrow.



Now time for lunch.



Southbounder Simple Soul had finished his chores and tried hitchhiking back up the mountain, but after a long time in the hot sun he did not get a ride.



One of the shop clerks took pity and gave him a ride part way up.

It turned out the wifi was extremely poor, based on satellite, possibly not worth the trouble to deal with. Regular web pages just would not load.

I also saw southbounder Penny of Penny and Mark, back at the pass trying to rendezvous with friends.

All the hikers I met today report a great amount of blow-downs in my next section.

# Not 500

Posted on [July 23, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 18, July 23, Saturday.

Start hitch from Sula to 12-165RX Chief Joseph Pass

Stop 14-020M, past Schultz Creek

Miles on trail: 20.0

Starting the day with a hearty breakfast at the grill in Sula Resort.





The staff had set out a hummingbird feeder outside the window for the enjoyment of patrons watching the little creatures.



The hitch took one and a half hours waiting by the road waving my sign. With Montana speed limits so high even on non-Interstate roads, it might be hard for drivers to stop. One car did drive past, then circle back and pick me up. A young botanist was returning from a bluegrass festival and doing some camping and hiking for the weekend. He is out here doing contract work for BLM, involving plant census, but he also spends plenty of time in the lab looking at distributions of chemicals within plants.

After Chief Joseph Pass, the trail goes along ski trails for some time.





Much of the day was spent walking in a forest of dead trees mixed with new growth. Blow-downs were kept cut away from the trail, but I was warned that some parts of the trail would have a lot of trees to climb over.



One one sign someone had scratched a message that 500 miles remain to the Canada border.



A few days later I do research and discover we still have a good bit more than 500 miles to go!

The only water opportunity for the day was at Schultz Creek, right on the trail and good water flow.



I walk a little beyond Schultz to make a a 20 mile day and run into many deadfalls on the path.



Only one southbounder went past today, Gnome God, headed for Sula.

# Bare

Posted on [July 24, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 19, July 24, Sunday.

Start 14-020M, past Schultz Creek

Stop 14-270M near creek

Miles on trail: 25.1

At mid-morning Surprise Lake appears.



Much of the day is among forest where all adult trees are dead, from beetle kill or fire, often still standing.



Trail crews have made an effort to remove fallen trees across the trail, but dead trees keep falling over time. In places you step over another tree every ten to twenty paces.





At the end of the day, on the last descent, trees become green and alive as the trail proceeds into the Pintler Wilderness.



Several southbounders today:

Dances with Chickens, Lee (You Again AT2012) and J, Steve and Christiana, and Holden.

[finished audiobook [Anne of the Island](#), by Lucy Maud Montgomery, read by Karen Savage]

# Pintler

Posted on [July 25, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 20, July 25, Monday.

Start 14-270M near creek

Stop near 15-205M, a few miles from the Anaconda Cutoff

Miles on trail: 25.2

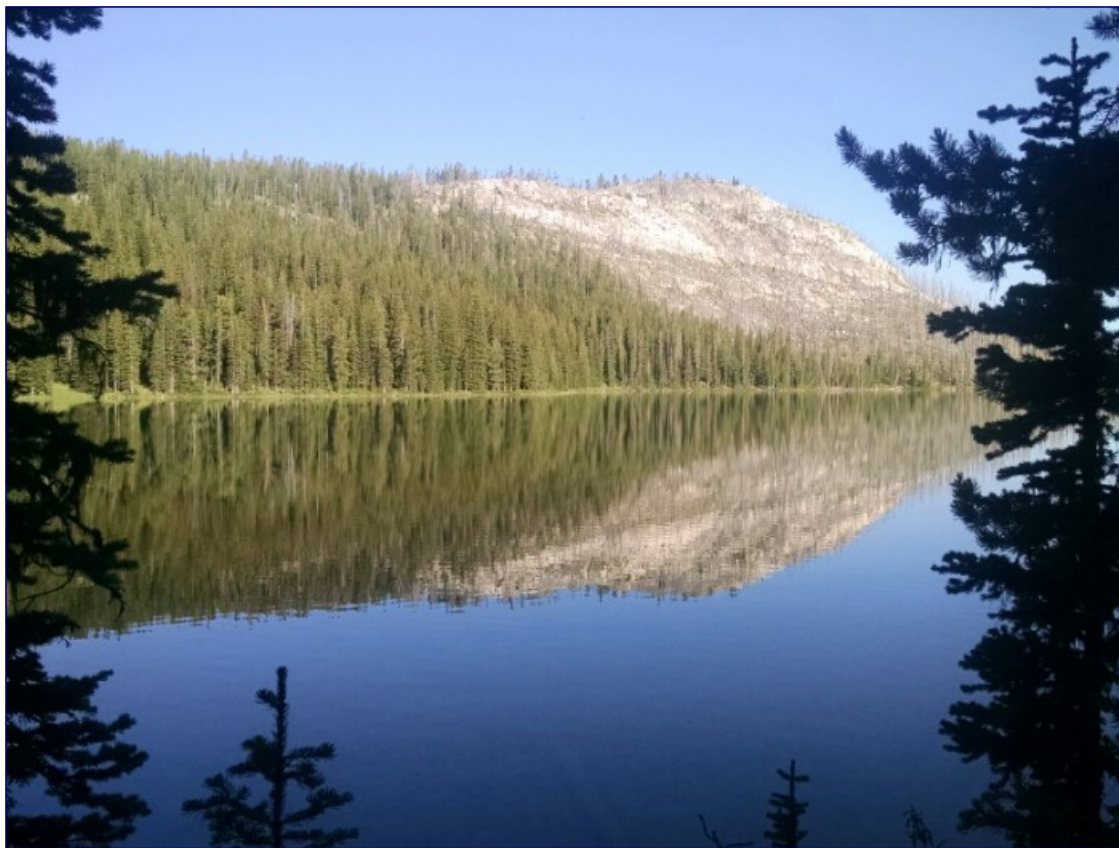
Your mission, if you decide to accept, is to hike in the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness, enjoy exceptional beauty, and whipsaw in elevation between passes and lakes, while crossing water many, many times.

After going over Pintler Pass (8738 feet), I meet southbounder Dawg.

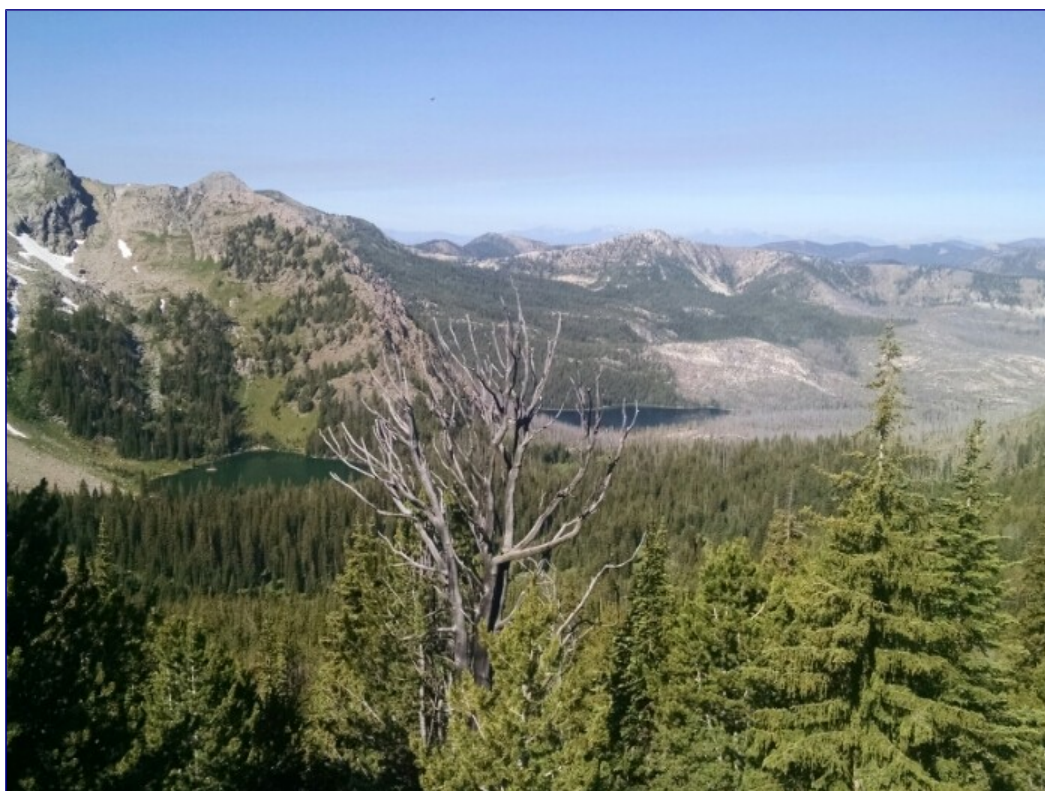


The two other southbound hikers today are Doctor Bob and Dora the Explorer.

I hike down to admire Johnson Lake (7667 feet).



Then up to Rainbow Pass (9052) and enjoy views.



Down to Rainbow Lake (8248).



Warren Lake is next.



Up to Cutaway Pass (9032). Here is a view from the pass.



A twisted tree tries to grow near the pass.



Over and down to Queener Basin, and I run out of daylight and need to find a tiny flat spot near the summit of Rainbow Mountain to camp.

Mission Complete.

# Anaconda Cutoff

Posted on [July 26, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

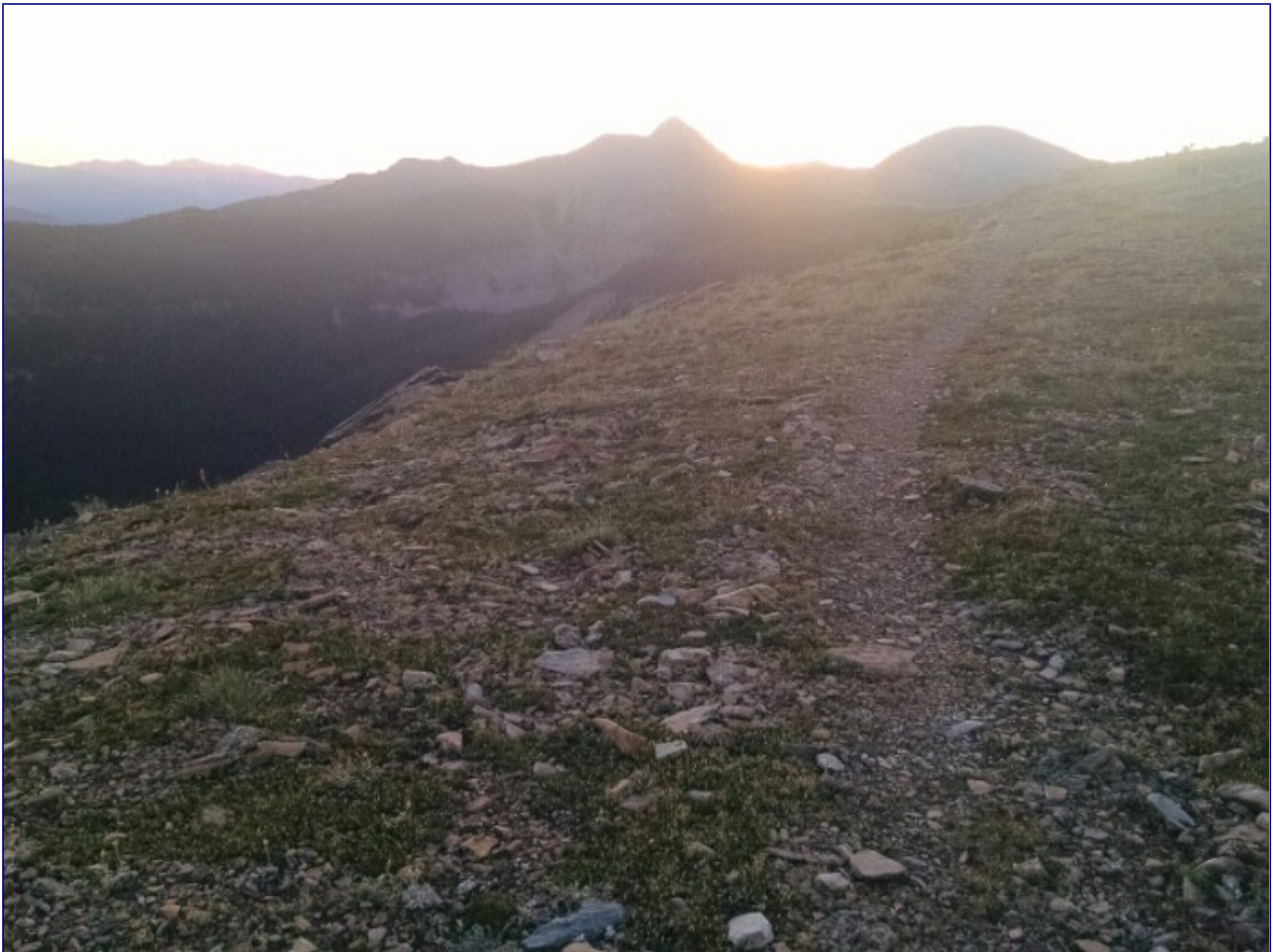
Day 21, July 26, Tuesday.

Start near 15-205M, a few miles from the Anaconda Cutoff, just below Rainbow Mountain summit

Stop in Anaconda at Big Sky RV Park, near AN260-M, mile 26.4 of Anaconda route

Miles on trail: 31.2

Finishing the climb to the summit of Rainbow Mountain, a landscape just before sunrise is on display.



On the way down, I see a moose!



A tree limb is blocking our view of the antlers. Let us see if he turns back to look after running off...





The first body of water for the day is Page Lake.



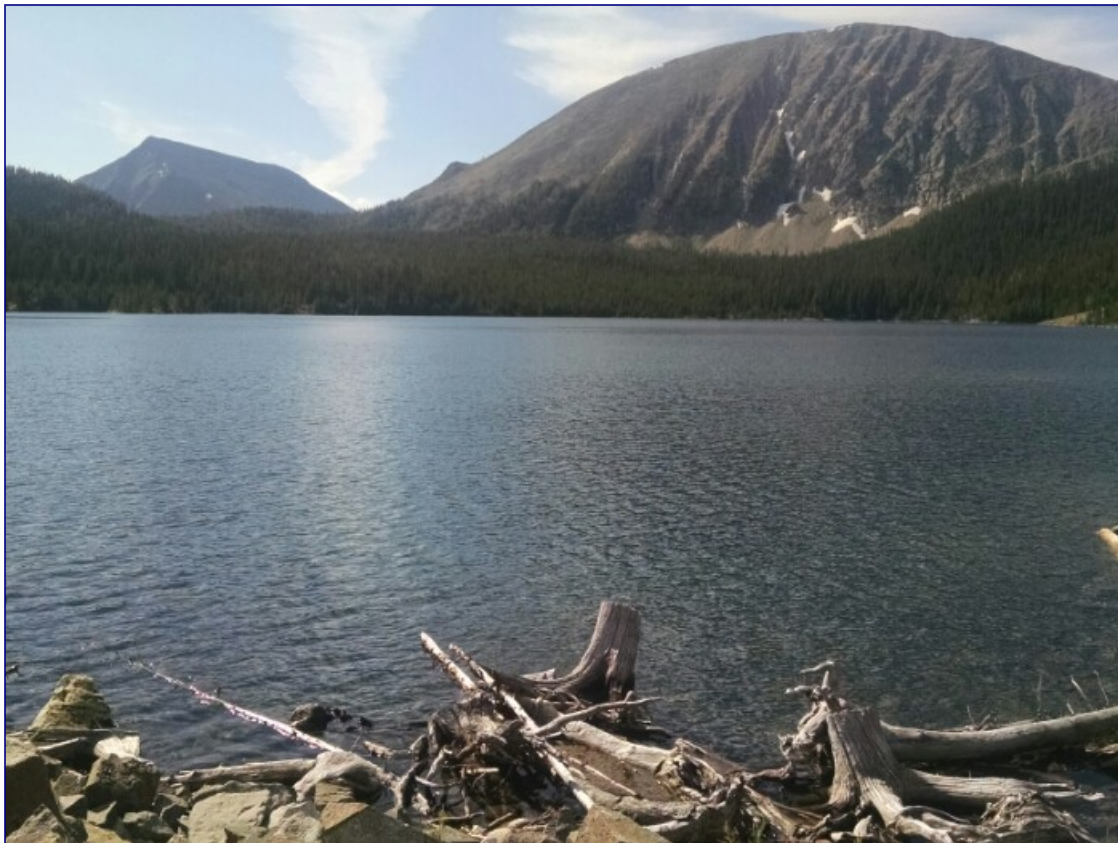
A buck is less scared of me than the moose.



Climbing, more views can be appreciated.



Down to Storm Lake, which is huge.



A rather steep climb up and down gets us to Twin Lakes.



Here is one Twin Lake, and you can use your imagination to see the other lake



The trail follows Twin Lake Creek down to the highway. Sometimes the path is hard to find. An old water flume is on display, which once delivered water to Butte.



# TWIN LAKES CREEK FLUME

**A Wooden Waterway ...**  
Like a continuous train of boxcars, the Twin Lakes Creek Flume transported water down a gentle man-made grade from Twin Lakes Creek to Silver Lake. Part of the Silver Lake Water System, and the greater Butte Water Co., the flume extended over 3 1/2 miles from a nearby diversion dam to the lake far below.

The flume was constructed by the Butte Water Co. in late-1890s to divert springtime run-off to the industrial users (mines, mills, and smelters) of Butte and Anaconda.

The all-wood flume served these communities for many years. In the 1970s, the lower 2-mile section of the flume was replaced with an asphalt-lined ditch. Finally in 2011, due to extensive deterioration, the upper 1 1/2 mile section was replaced with a buried pipeline. The pipeline lies in the shallow gully below, following the original route of the flume.



**And Engineering Marvel**  
The surviving section of the flume illustrates its sturdy wooden box design, capable of transporting over 40,000 gallons of water per minute. Built from old-growth Douglas fir, the individual planks are splined together to minimize water loss.

Please treat this historic structure with the respect due a rare fragment of an engineering marvel.



Engineering drawing shows the cross-section of the existing flume.



SILVER LAKE WATER SYSTEM

A long road-walk, 11 miles on Highway One, leads to Anaconda.



Talking to other hikers, we generally agreed not to hitch-hike the road walk, but if someone offered us a ride it would be impolite to refuse.

High speeds and narrow road shoulder make offered rides unlikely.



Rain falls today in three sessions, helping to lessen temperatures on the road. I get into Anaconda fairly late, around 8PM, and get a tent site and do shower and laundry quickly. Groceries for resupply will have to wait until morning.

Another even longer road-walk awaits tomorrow.

Near midnight southbounder Bright Eyes introduces herself at the RV park. Earlier in the day I met Half-Mile, famous in hiking circles for PCT work, and Elevated.

[finished audiobook [Anne's House of Dreams](#), by Lucy Maud Montgomery, read by Karen Savage]

# Reunited

Posted on [July 27, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 22, July 27, Wednesday.

Start in Anaconda at Big Sky RV Park, near AN260-M, mile 26.4 of Anaconda route, then accepted ride to Morel Road AN-372RL, mile 37.2 of Anaconda route.

Stop near 19-272GT, a few miles after Anaconda Cutoff reunites with CDT

Miles walked: 14.2 Anaconda + 5.8 CDT = 20.0

An early start gets me to the grocery store shortly after it opens. Repackaging food takes time, so I am back walking at 9:30AM. With a long road-walk ahead before getting to public land with water to camp, it would be better to be further along.

I need to ship some gear back home, so swing by the post office. Several old historic buildings are in this part of town.





The post office was built in a different time.



The nearby movie theater is reputed to be majestic inside.



I continue walking through downtown Anaconda, when I am accosted by someone at a hotel.



DNA is staying here with his girlfriend, and just happened to see my orange shirt go by in the window! They have a rental car, and offer to drive me past the long road-walk. Ahhhh, remember from last post when hikers said we would not hitch-hike this section, but that it would be rude to decline an offered ride? I accept, so wait on the porch until they check out.

They drive past Highway 1 and Highway 48 and drop me off at Morel Road near AN-372RL. Fond farewell to DNA and friend Xiangning.



I am walking past some long pivot irrigators that look like they were inspired by Buckminster Fuller and the tensegrity concept.



Hiking along agricultural land, this sign was of interest.



Is not this a gentler way to present a “no trespassing” sign?

An ATV comes past.



The route turns on to Dry Cottonwood Road, where I see a farmstead set up to mill lodgepole pine poles.



Two big tractors are attached to milling equipment at their power takeoff coupling.



In New Mexico this would be to make vigas, but here in Montana this might be for log cabins.

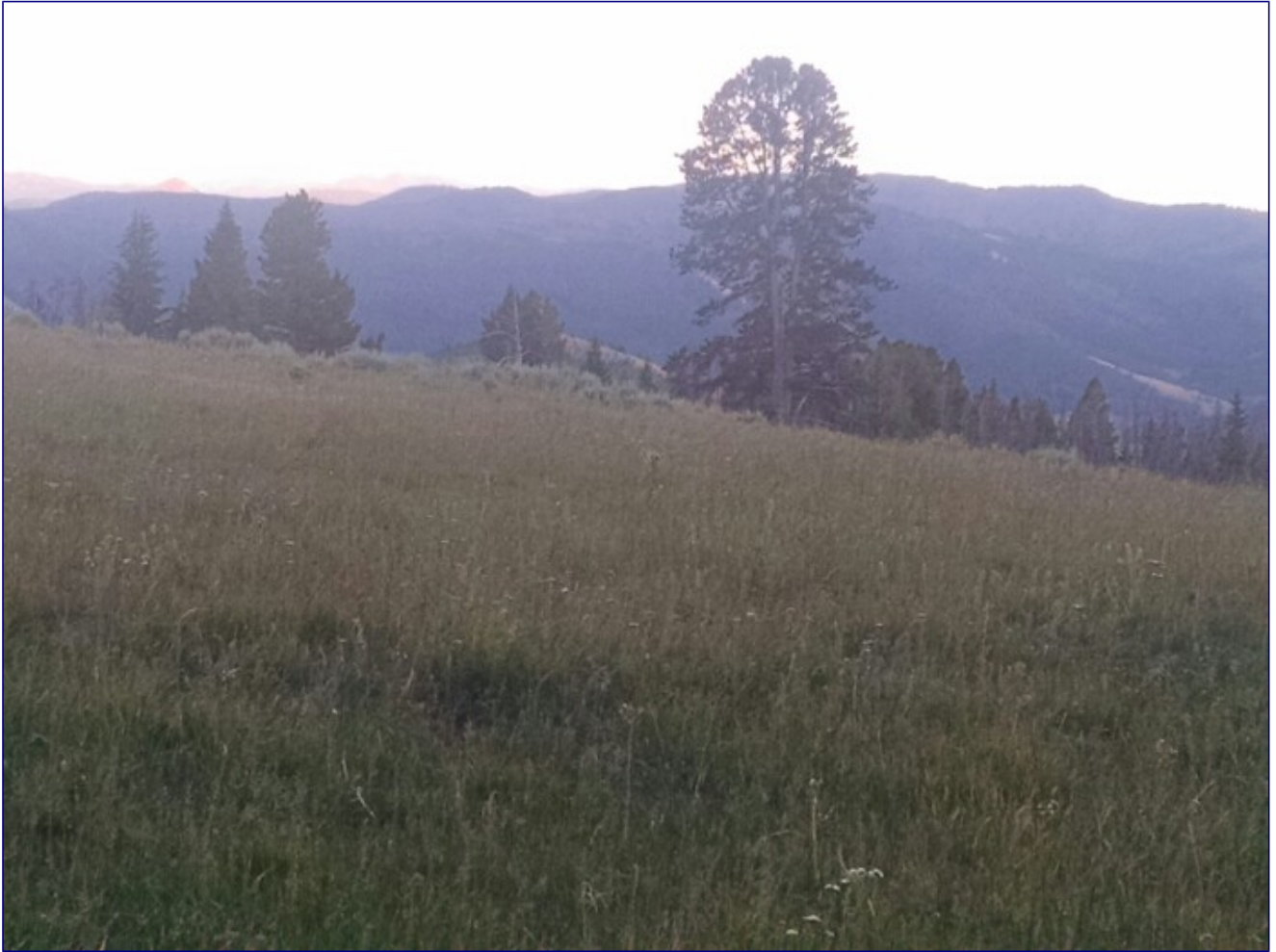
The route continues up gentle grade road and finally connects back to the main CDT.

My planned water source at Powderhorn Creek looks fouled from cattle.



A drinker has been installed at 19-272GT, so I gratefully camp nearby.







# Passing Through

Posted on [July 28, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 23, July 28, Thursday.

Start near 19-272GT, a few miles after Anaconda Cutoff reunites with CDT

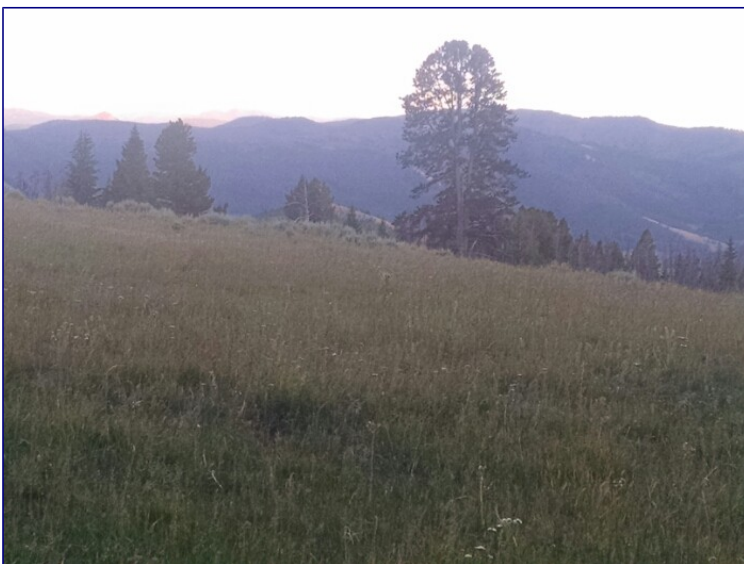
Stop 19-529XX Bison Mountain Loop

Miles walked: 25.7

The trail is now relocated away from Leadville, and I did not go off-trail to explore whatever remains.



No vistas today. If you can see over to the next ridge, it is just more dense forest like on your ridge.



Toward the end of the day the path goes down a narrow corridor of young lodgepole pines.



You can already see some young pine trees losing the race to the sun, falling over and dying early from too much shade from taller neighbors.

You know what likes to live in lodgepole pine forest? Spiders. They like to spin webs between trees. Several species are spinning, based on different web design. Bushwacking through one little section of dense lodgepole forest alive with spiders, I started thinking of Harry Potter, or Frodo...

Met southbounders Mud, and then Masshole and Stummy.

[finished audiobook [The Merchant Adventurer](#), by Patrick E McClean.]

# MacDonald Pass

Posted on [July 29, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 24, July 29, Friday.

Start 19-529XX Bison Mountain Loop

Stop 20-040WT first spring pass MacDonald Pass

Miles walked: 26.6

The morning opened with a skree/talus field to add some variety.



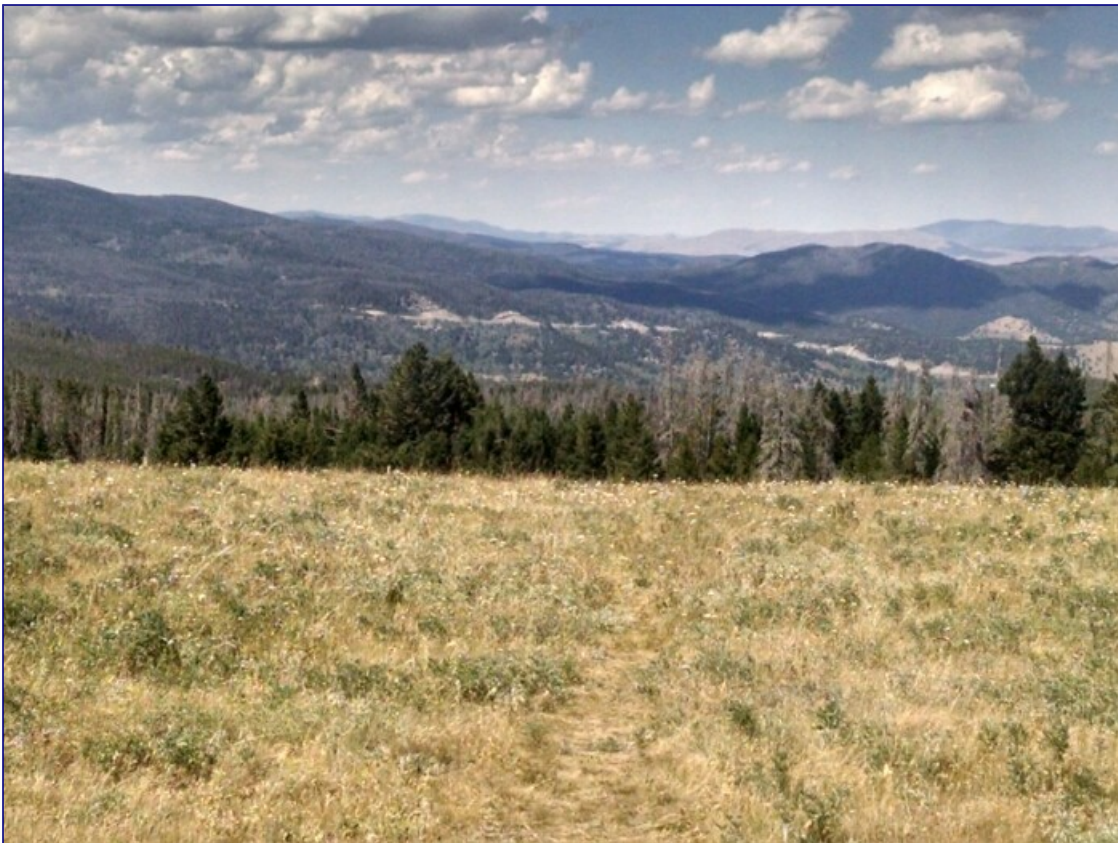
The trail followed a forest road for several miles. Then went on path and switched from road to road to path, rather confusing.

In places where a large number of trees are down, a great amount of chainsaw work might be required to clear a trail, and several good examples are on trail in this area.



The trail has recently been cleared of fallen trees, with sawdust still on the ground. Since I do not find paths around fallen trees, which would happen if cutting only happens once a year or less, trail crews seems to be really diligent about clearing trails and also roads of blowdowns in this area.

Near the pass we finally get some panoramic views.





This is the pass that hikers hitch to get to the city of Helena, known for a good historic district. However, it has not been many nights since Anaconda, the previous trail town, and I have enough supplies to get to Lincoln, the next trail town, so hike on!

I go beyond the pass and camp nearby the first water source, a small unimproved unprotected spring. The water was going just a trickle, so my little cooking pot was used to collect little dips of water and pour into water bottles. The next section of CDT has few water sources on trail. The next sure water is Dana's Spring, 20 miles away.

Met southbounder Smokey today.

# Dry Ridge

Posted on [July 30, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 25, July 30, Saturday.

Start 20-040WT first spring pass MacDonald Pass

Stop 21-070M along majestic ridge, about 13 miles before Stemple Pass

Miles walked: 27.0

Train whistles sounded clearly in the night, making me think of home.

Even early in the morning the scenery is showing more variety than recent hiking.



I met southbounder Brazil Nut early in the day, and no other hikers later on. She reported on how rare the water sources are ahead of me.

The trail passes by the ruin of a trestle. Fallen trees seem to help support the structure.



Was the trestle for a full railroad or for mining operations. Several old mines are nearby, and I am standing almost directly over the Mullan Train Tunnel, which could have replaced the trestle route. You can see a train exiting the tunnel in the distance.





I enjoy the patterns of forest and grasslands in the views today.



After 20 miles since the last water source, Dana Spring appears, a protected and improved spring almost right on the trail, with good flow.



Right after the spring the path makes a forced march up ridges with large elevation gain, but these are narrow exposed ridges with very fine views.



I pause halfway up the climb and sit on a log and enjoy the view while eating first dinner.





As darkness nears, I am still on narrow exposed ridgeline with strong winds, and the trail will not descend to more favorable camping elevation for some miles. Just down from the ridge a few trees provide good shelter from winds, so I camp high tonight. Here is a view of the mountain near where I camped.



# Stemple Pass Flesher Pass

Posted on [July 31, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 26, July 31, Sunday.

Start 21-070M along majestic ridge, about 13 miles before Stemple Pass

Stop 22-045M 2.3 miles beyond Flesher Pass

Miles walked: 27.3

Camp last night was just down from a high exposed ridge with great views, so I get to start the day walking in glory on high ridge.



Arty self portrait in early morning sun.



Coming down from the ridgeline, a couple with infant are picking huckleberries.



They show me the plant and berry to identify, and let me taste some berries they already picked. I ask about another berry that someone told me is edible, that these folks call squawberry, very tiny and red, the main understory for lodgepole pine forest along with huckleberry. Berries become a refreshing snack for me throughout the day.

A lookout tower at Granite Butte is closed, of course, but you can climb up partway and appreciate good vistas.



Here is what it looks like from the open middle level of the tower.



Not long after the lookout is a water source for the day, a half mile off trail at Gould Creek.

Haze still smears the sky, so you do not get as many photos of distant peaks.



The trail starts down to Stemple Pass.





On the other side of Stemple is a cross-country ski area which the CDT follows for miles.



Another narrow lodgepole pine corridor embraces the trail.



Part of the goal today is to make as many miles as practical, given several up-and-down climbs and detour to get water, and being loaded with extra water. More miles today means I can get to Rogers Pass and down to town in Lincoln at a reasonable time tomorrow.

Looking back on Flesher Pass, another climb up switchbacks near the end of the day can be a challenge to the will.



Dry camp is a few miles beyond the last pass, in good position for a pleasant visit to town tomorrow. No southbounders came past me today... how sad.

[finished audiobook [Love Among the Chickens](#), by P G Wodehouse]

# Rogers Pass

Posted on [August 1, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 27, August 1, Monday

Start 22-045M 2.3 miles beyond Flesher Pass

Stop Rogers Pass 22-249AP and then hitch 20 miles to Lincoln.

Miles walked: 11 .5

Haze from some forest fire still marks the sky.



We can see trail far ahead as travel continues on exposed ridges



A river valley below is just at the proper angle that we can see far along its length.



From the heights we can start to look down to Rogers Pass.



Walking last set of switchbacks takes the better part of an hour.



Lincoln has the reputation of a tough hitch, but I got a ride quickly. The guy was really nice, a computer network professional who works in a bar.

No southbounders seen today. I will not mention these hikers again unless I start seeing some more.

# Lincoln Zero

Posted on [August 2, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 28, August 2, Tuesday

Start off-trail Lincoln MT

Stop off-trail Lincoln MT

Miles walked on trail: ZERO

The day is for repairing gear, resting, and eating. Looking in a mirror last night, my torso is getting a somewhat skinny, so seeking out protein and fat for town food.







# Cold Ridge

Posted on [August 3, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 29, August 3, Wednesday

Start hitch from Lincoln to Rogers Pass 22-249AP

Stop 23-186WT at unnamed lake

Miles walked: 18.6

After breakfast, saw southbounder Red Bass, preparing to hitchhike.



After checking out of motel, went to north end of town and started to hitch. From Sula, I had learned not to hitch early in the morning, because the angle of the sun is too low for motorists to be able to read my sign, "Hiker to Trail".

A trail angel picked me up after just returning from binging Red Bass to the pass. This angel was staying at the campgrounds north of Lincoln, waiting for his nephew, a southbounder, to arrive.

Beyond Rogers Pass, more exposed high ridges make for inspirational walking.



Several dark clouds are forming overhead, but no indications of rain. The temperature is quite low compared to recent days

At Cadotte Pass, cold high winds batter this poor hiker. Two small buildings are on the pass.



Despite the wind and cold, vistas are magnificent.





The trail goes past Lewis and Clark Pass, with history notes.



We stay high (and cold) most of the day, with tantalizing rocky mountains nearby.



My planned water source for the evening, a good-sized lake, was completely dry.



But I had enough water left over from earlier for second dinner. Hope to find more water, and warmth, tomorrow.

# Follow That Stream

Posted on [August 4, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 30, August 4, Thursday

Start 23-186WT lake

Stop near 23-455M along Straight Creek, 12.9 miles from Benchmark Trailhead

Miles walked: 27.1

After climbing up from the dry lake, the path continues on high ridgeline with vistas.



Readers back east might not understand the extent of changes to the forest due to beetle kill or fire. In this photo all mature trees dead, including the background mountain. All mature trees gone.



Just think what that does to habitat for deer, bear, and other wildlife.

Now we take a break from high ridges as we parallel the Dearborn River for several miles.



Rocky bluffs can be admired while walking the river section.





Departing Dearborn River, the path follows Welcome Creek, jumps over Straight Creek Pass, and then follows Straight Creek for miles. More rock bluffs can be enjoyed on the trail.



I ended up camping in a burn area along Straight Creek, being careful not to pitch the tent near any tall dead trees still standing.



Met southbounder Legend today.

# Benchmark

Posted on [August 5, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 31, August 5, Friday

Start near 23-455M along Straight Creek, 12.9 miles from Benchmark Trailhead

Stop beyond 24-093XX, 9.8 trail miles inside Bob Marshall Wilderness

Miles on CDT: 22.7

The trail continues along Straight Creek for a bit.



An alternate trail to Benchmark continues along Straight, and, looking back, that should have been my route.

Instead we zig-zag up a different path. Rock bluffs look down on the trail.



Ford that river.



Arriving at the intersection to depart the CDT and walk a few miles to Benchmark Ranch, I met some backpackers finishing their section hike who offer me a ride.



That makes them certified trail angels.

Benchmark Ranch is located near the one stretch of CDT that is too far between trail towns. Hikers really do not want to carry more than six or so days of food at a time.



Benchmark Ranch, which operates a hunting/fishing/cabin/trail-ride business at the edge of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, offers a for-pay service to let hikers mail them boxes which are brought up to the cabin.



Hikers come to the cabin and find their boxes in the metal box on the porch.



Several boxes were waiting with mine.



A hiker box held extra supplies for us to investigate.



On the way back to the trail, hiking along road, I pass an air strip.



The trail angels say the airfield is open to anybody, but gets heavily used by Forest Service during some fire operations.



Back to the CDT, it is time to enter the vast Bob Marshall Wilderness.



A fancy bridge symbolizes entrance into the Wilderness.





On a mountain, lines of alive and dead trees mark the advance of bark beetle (or fire).



Got my supplies. Get to start a rugged and amazing section of trail. Good day.

# Chinese Wall

Posted on [August 6, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 32, August 6, Saturday

Start beyond 24-093XX, 9.8 trail miles inside Bob Marshall Wilderness

Stop SB-020M, mile 2.1 of western alternative trail in Bob Marshall Wilderness

Miles walked: 22.1

In the Bob Marshall Wilderness, most trail are named after the stream of water that they follow along. Typically the trail is up a hundred feet or more up the side of a mountain to even out the winding of that body of water and avoid the thick vegetation growing along banks. Here is West Fork Sun River as seen from West Fork Sun River Trail.



Today we get to experience something special, the Chinese Wall.

Behold a first look at the Wall in the distance



Closer, enjoy several shots of this sheer solid rock cliff, several stories tall.





Just as you think the Wall is going to end, the trail turns in such a way as to make more of the cliffs visible.





After several miles (!! ) along the Wall, a thunderstorm downpours. Here is a view of the path while hiding under a spruce tree.



As rain diminishes, cloud vapor rises on the Wall.



Hail from the thunderstorm is extra heavy in a few spots.



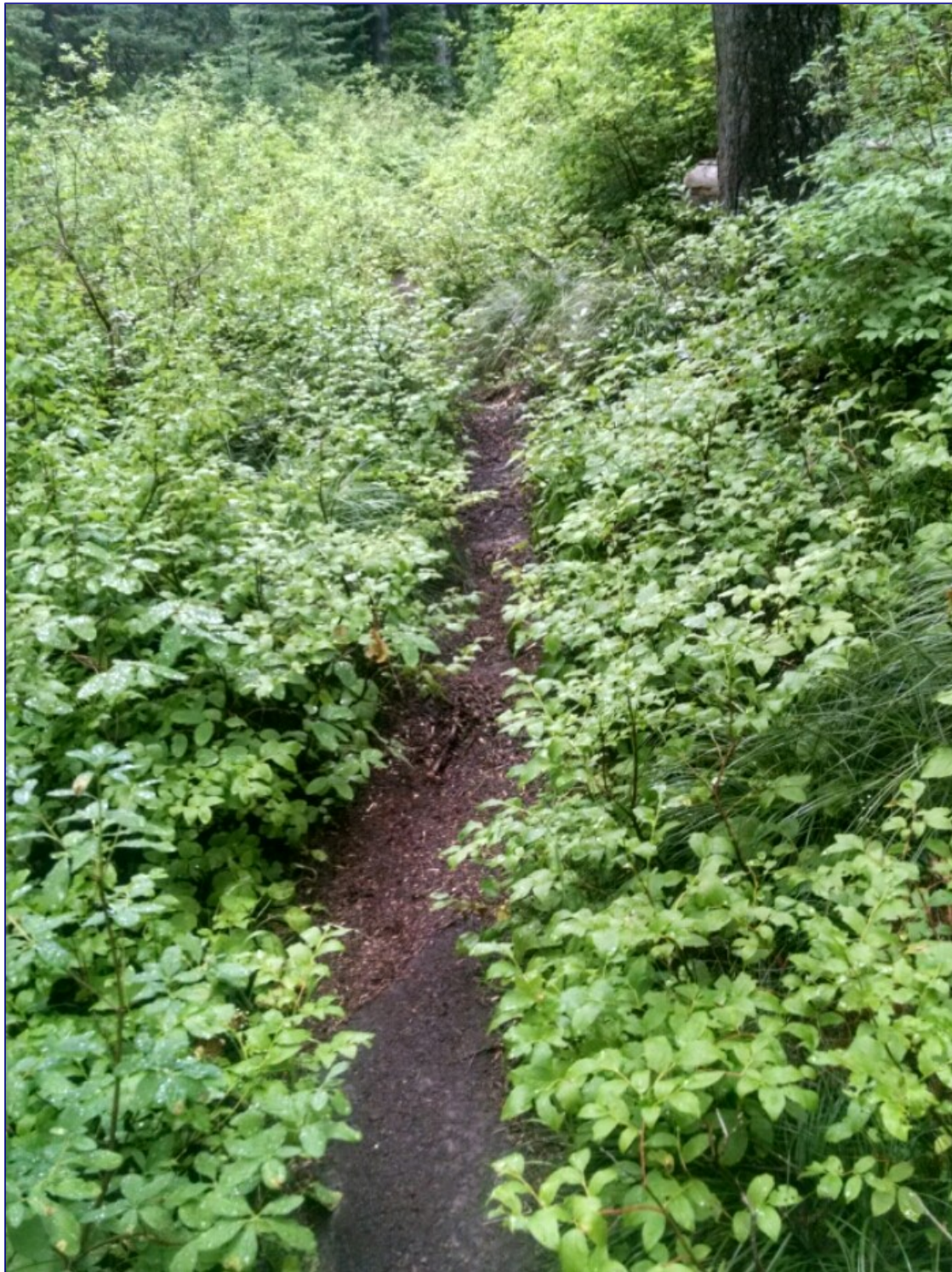
A junction designates where an alternate trail splits off on a western route from the CDT, which the Ley map suggest is more straightforward and has good views.



I take the alternate, and expect to rejoin the main CDT in about a day.



Thick tall summer growth overhangs the trail, wet and cold from the storm.



Walking drenches pants, socks, and shoes.

But still, the Wall. Which makes a really fine day.

# Switchback Pass

Posted on [August 7, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 33, August 7, Sunday

Start SB-020M, mile 2.1 of western alternative trail in Bob Marshall Wilderness

Stop SB195-M near Trilobite Range, mile 19.3 of alternative trail in the Bob Marshall Wilderness

Miles walked: 17.2

The trail starts wet and cold and clogged with plants overhanging the pathway, but transitions to shorter wet plants lower in altitude. The sky is overcast, and sun slow to shine into deep valley, when not blocked by clouds.

The forest seems thick and wild.





The way follows Spotted Bear River.

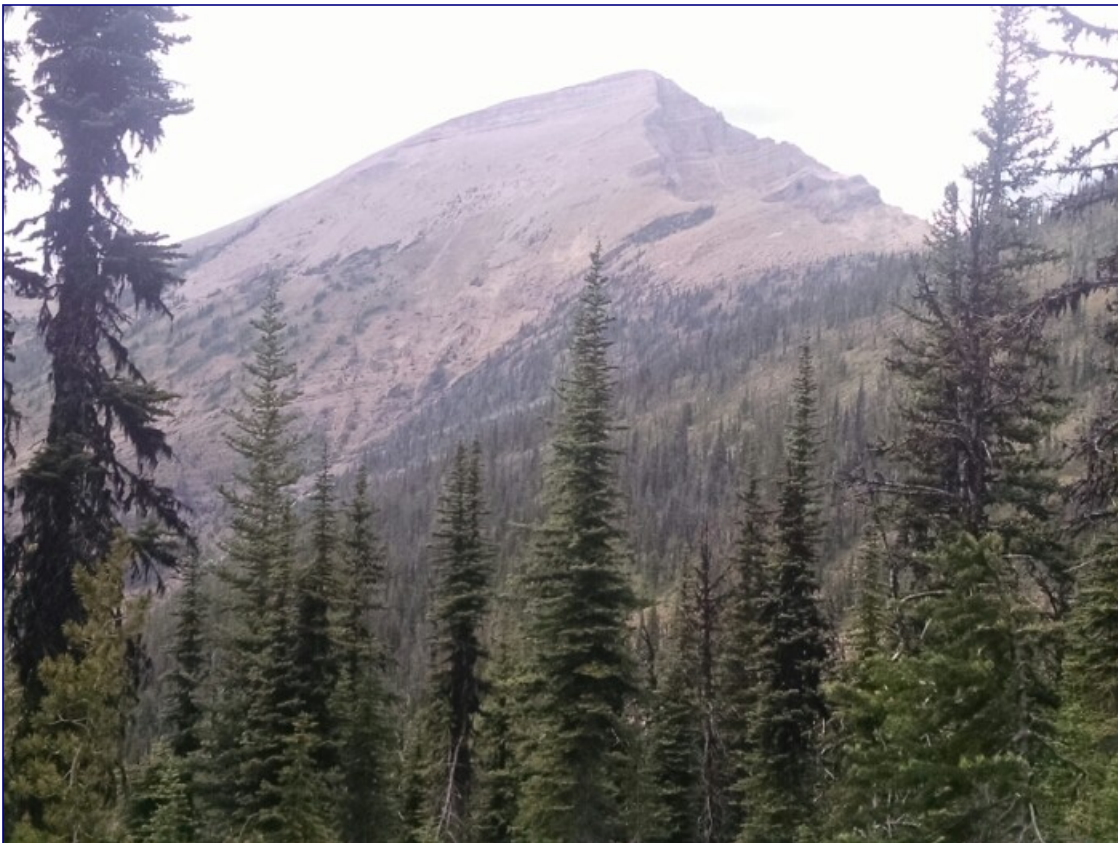


At mid-day I paused to dry gear for a half-hour while the sun was strong, before starting a long ascent. The sun makes brief appearances between clouds.

Observing rock formations while climbing, climbing...



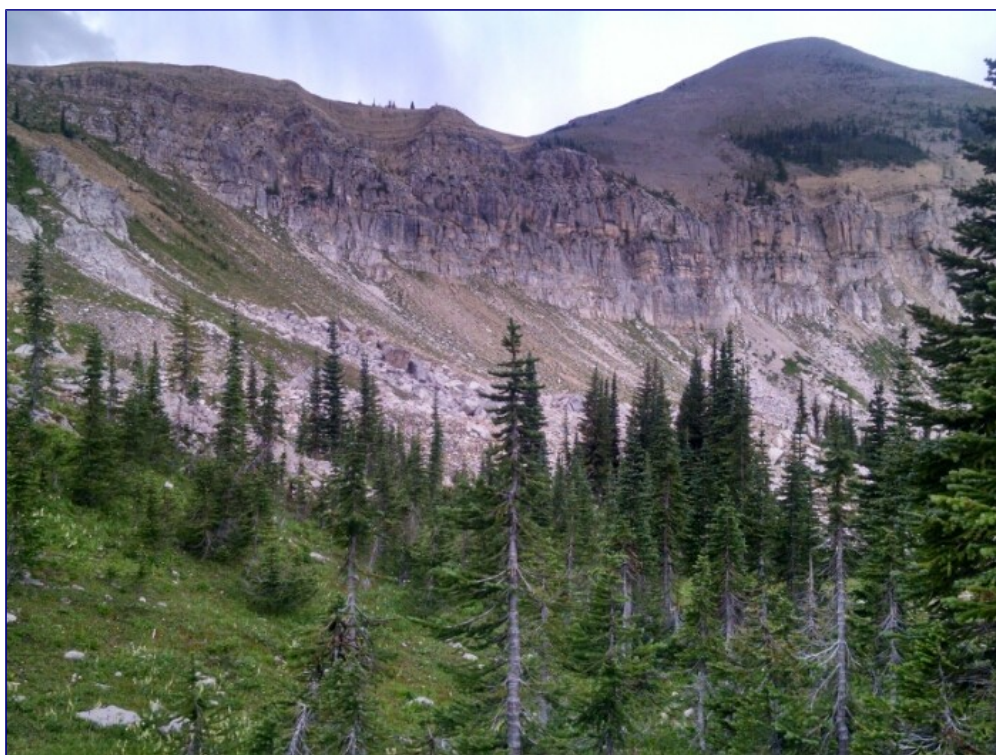
More rock and mountain peaks to admire while climbing to the ominously named Switchback Pass.



I race to reach the pass before rain catches me on exposed top.



More rock cliffs stand watch on the other side





Rain comes, comes again, and again. Pausing for downpours cuts hiking time. The trail going downhill is slippery, and I fall into mud.

Not many miles again today because of rain. How much longer will this weather pattern last?

[finished audiobook [The Black Arrow](#), A Tale of Two Roses, by Robert Louis Stevenson]

# Strawberry Creek

Posted on [August 8, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 34, August 8, Monday

Start SB195-M, mile 19.3 of alternative trail in the Bob

Stop 25-072XL Elbow Creek Junction

Miles walked: 27.1

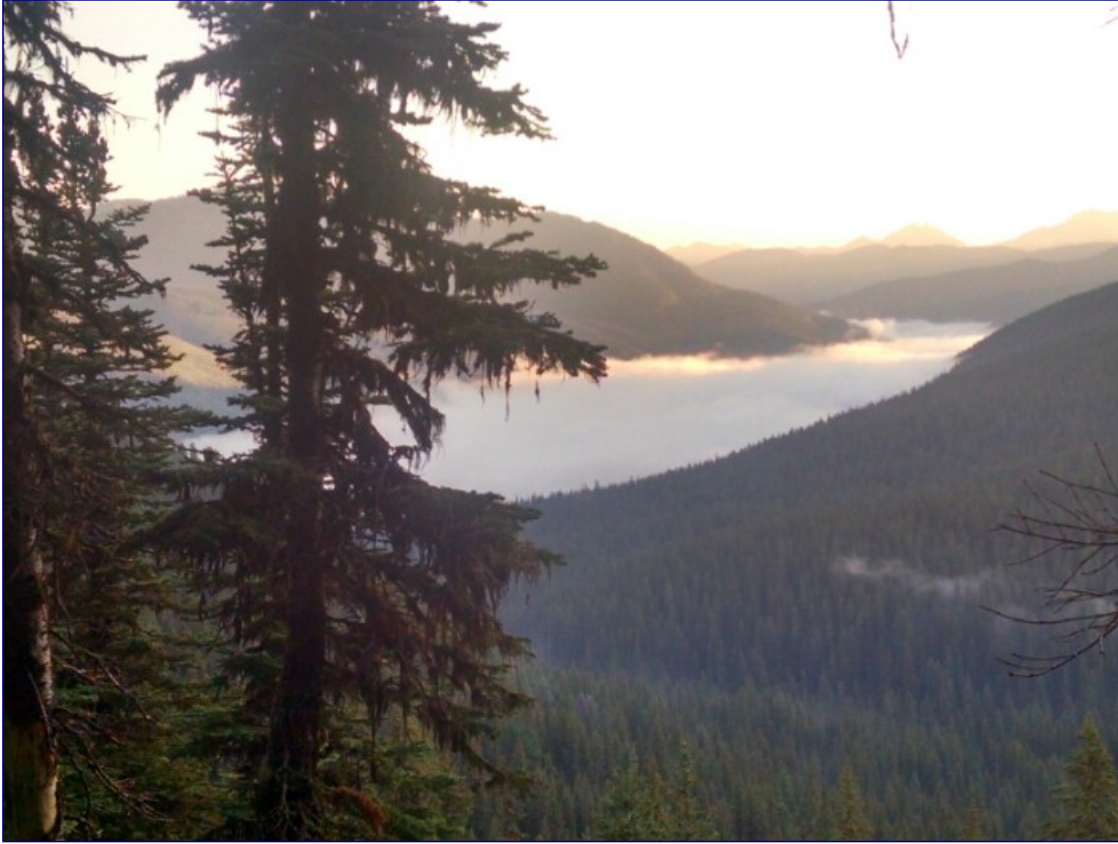
Still below Trilobite







Looking down at fog in river valley



Which I walk down into.



Cold and wet.

Trail follows Strawberry Creek for much of the day, with few views, but slow steady climb as the trail follows up-stream.



We get one view of cliffs near the end of following the creek. The mountain has broken rock instead of layered solid stone.



A burn area here seems different, either recent or from a hotter fire. Still smells of carbon. Note the wildflowers thriving among dead burnt trees.



Around Muskrat Pass, the trail really becomes overgrown.



At my destination for the day, Elbow Creek, I get to enjoy modest rock formations from my tent.



# Challenge Accepted

Posted on [August 9, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 35, August 9, Tuesday

Start 25-072XL Elbow Creek Junction

Stop Summit Campground 25-356WT near Marias Pass

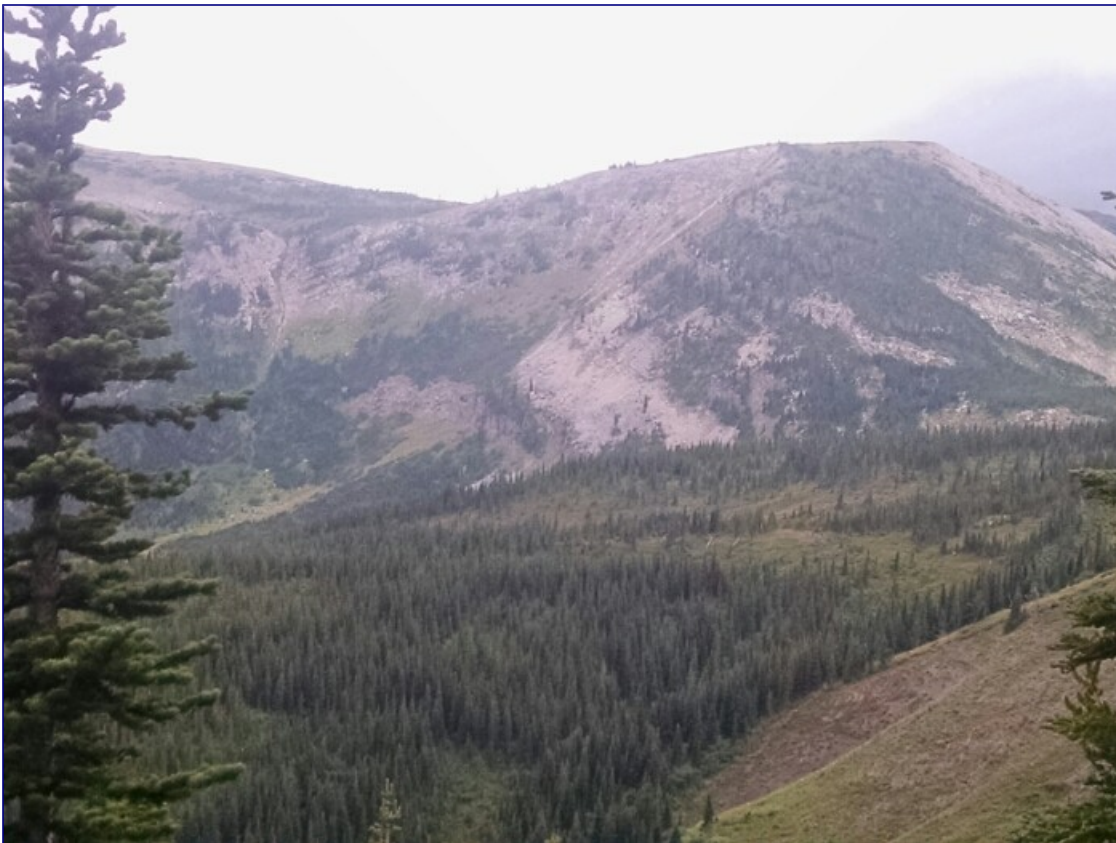
Miles walked: 28.6

The goal today to make long miles, so tomorrow can arrive at East Glacier in good time.

Blah trail for a few miles, thickly overgrown, wet plants from rain in the middle of the night, until it opens up to view of ridges to be walked in the distance



Some quick views while on the ridge.





A storm cloud races towards me from the next ridge over.



Rain hits on the way down from my ridge.

*Rain starts near the top of the ridge, but with little wind. Is the CDT being too easy on me?*

From past days experience I am determined to walk through the storm, not wait for a pause in rain. More wet tall plants along the path drench my clothes.

*The path down is not steep, so I do not slip and fall in muddy trail. Is the CDT being too easy on me?*

Walking along Two Medicine River Trail, an old road, I make good time. Then on Trail 137, craziness.



A large burn and beetle-kill area had dropped trees aplenty across the trail, and saws had not cleared deadfalls as in most of northern Montana. DNA mentioned this stretch, and was amazed to learn it had still not been fixed. Progress climbing over downed trees is agonizingly slow– the seven to ten mile section might take double or more the normal time to hike.

A southbound hiker had also mentioned this trail, and said Ley showed an alternate on his maps. He did not explain WHY the alternate, but now I know why. I took the alternate route, continuing on Two Medicine and doing plenty of wet-foot crossings.



Soon it starts to rain again, for hours.

*I could have persisted on trying Trail 137, and been stuck scrambling over logs in the rain. Is the CDT being too easy on me?*

Paused to eat first-dinner under a tree.

Joined back to regular CDT around 8PM from my detour around Trail 137.



The sun shown through just as it was setting.



I had not planned to get as far as Summit Campground, but I am so close, so hike quickly on. A sign says to see the camp host, so I knock on the RV, and a nice lady gives me a G2 drink, lets me set up my tent on her campsite, and lets me run an extension cord to the tent so I can recharge electronics overnight.



# Enter East Glacier

Posted on [August 10, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 36, August 10, Wednesday

Start Summit Campground 25-356WT near Marias Pass

Stop town of East Glacier, near border of Glacier National Park, at Brownies Hostel

Miles walked: 15.5

Rain pounded the tent all night, and continues this morning.

Looking for the CDT in the rain on the other side of the highway across from Summit Campground, the location is almost at the end of this rainbow, but I need more precise coordinates.



The park service might be in charge of trail maintenance here, because a weed-whacker came by recently to cut down plants.



Later on, away from day-hikers, the trail has thick summer growth clogging the pathway, just like on forest service land. And, of course, with the heavy rain my clothes get drenched. In the morning, under these conditions, you have to hike as fast as possible to keep core temperature high enough.



Impressive views of mountain above the trail are not here, because of rain and fog. The sun does not peep through until late morning.

Finally arrive at Brownies Hostel in mid-afternoon. A room in the men's dorm is available for two nights.



After shower and laundry, I do tasks in the common room and am struck with how many people are around and how busy everyone is making preparations for trips. National parks have so many more visitors than national forests that it is hard to adjust my perspective.

Going to the ranger station tomorrow to see if backcountry campsites are already full up for my trip through the park should be... interesting.



# East Glacier Zero

Posted on [August 11, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 37, August 11, Thursday

Start near Glacier Park border at town of East Glacier, Brownies Hostel

Stop Brownies Hostel

Trail miles walked: ZERO

The main task today is to take a shuttle to the ranger station at Two Medicine, one “town” over, and get a backcountry permit.

The shuttle leaves at the lodge.



I decide to take the earliest shuttle at 8:15AM. The shuttle web site said one could not make a reservation less than 24 hours ahead, but the front office staff at the lodge got me signed up, no problem. The driver said I could take an earlier return shuttle as a walk-on if I ready early.

While waiting for the shuttle, the lodge has an all-you-can-eat (AYCE) breakfast buffet at very reasonable price, perfect for hikers.

Two Medicine is quite beautiful, and I will be hiking here tomorrow.





The ranger at the station could not be nicer.



The system that the Park Service uses is that you have to reserve particular back-country campsites in advance, and keep to the schedule, no matter the weather or circumstances. In spite of this being a busy season with most campsites already reserved, she was able to work with me to find a reasonable schedule. One or two days had to be low mileage because of site availability, but I am pleased with the overall plan.

Now to get food ready for the trip tomorrow...

[finished audiobook [The Heavenfield](#), Book 1, by Ian G Hulme]

# Two Medicine

Posted on [August 12, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 38, August 12, Friday

Start near Glacier National Park boundary at town of East Glacier, Brownies Hostel

Stop Two Medicine Campground 27-107TH

Trail miles walked: 10.7

Walking up from East Glacier, berries were at the peak of ripeness.



Instead of Blueberries for Sal, it was Huckleberries for Sagebrush.

Climbing more, trees were few, giving a sense of openness, and potential for sweeping vistas.



Lower Two Medicine Lake can be seen in the distance.



Views get really good as we climb towards a peak.





Over the peak and going down towards Two Medicine Campsite, the vistas get so good that I start to wonder why I bothered to take all those earlier photos of Montana.







Several day hikers were out today, and one ranger that checked my permit and a few park volunteers. One pair of hikers stopped to chat for several minutes about my trip and recent advances in gear.



I saw a herd of animals on the trail, near the terminus, that were hard to identify.



Sorry, they went by too quickly for a good shot.

All the developed campsites everywhere in Glacier were full, I hear a ranger tell a camper, but a couple of sites are reserved for hikers with backcountry permits.



The campsites are near Two Medicine Lake, with Rising Wolf Mountain as background.



The camp store has some goodies, though I just got out of a town.



A light rain in the evening stops just before the ranger talk at 7:30PM, on wildlife survival strategies during winters in Glacier.



Two different people mistook me for hiker HOB (acronym for “Hiking Or Biking”),who one said is a north-bounder who recently finished in Waterton.

[finished audiobook [The Heavenfield](#) Book Two, by Ian G Hulme]

# Morning Star

Posted on [August 13, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

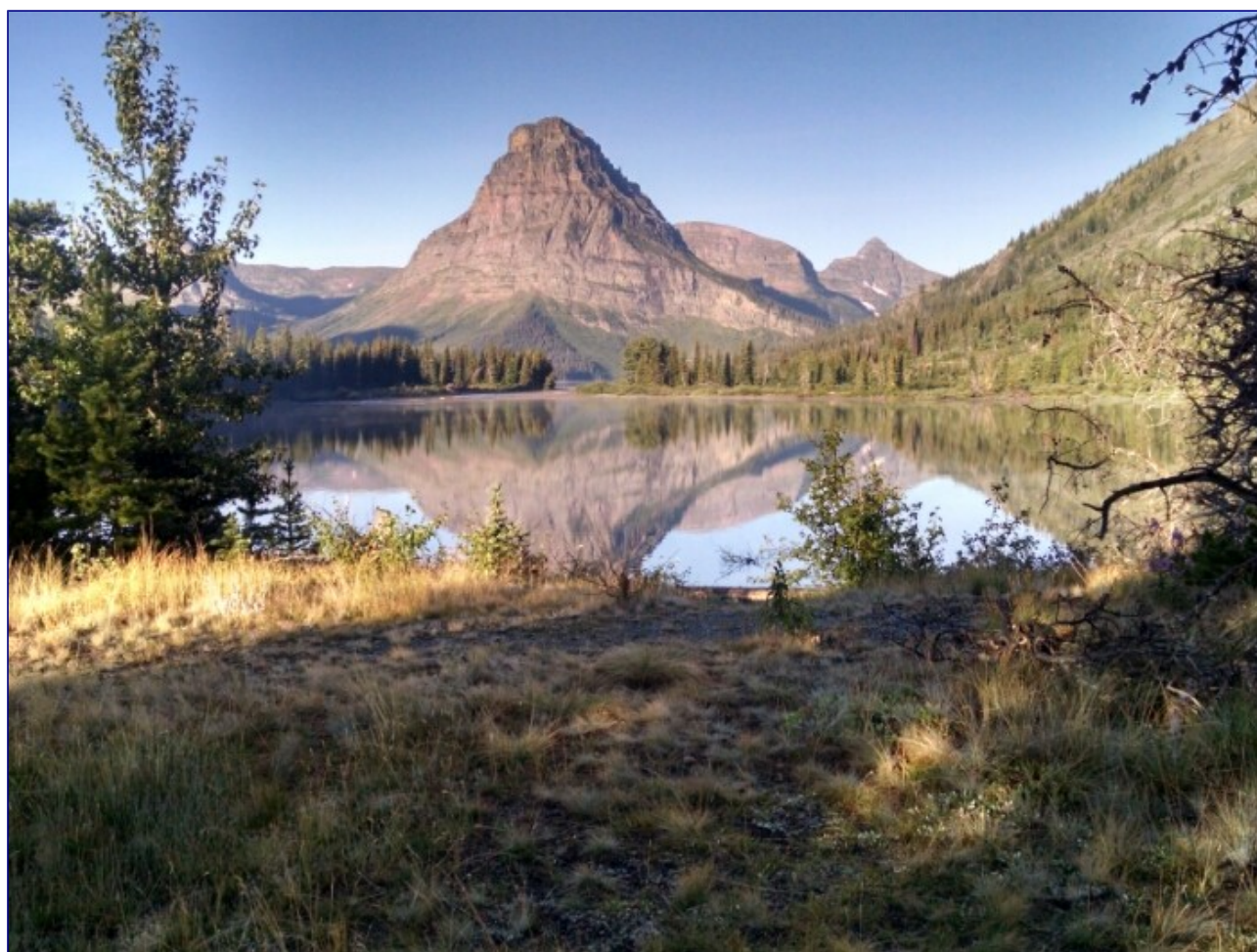
Day 39, August 13, Saturday

Start Two Medicine Campground 27-107TH

Stop Morning Star Lake campsite 28-108CG

Trail miles walked: 12

Morning view of Pray Lake starts today's short hike.



The path climbs among more trees than yesterday.



Pathways are wider than forest service trails, so wet plants from yesterday evening's rain do not soak clothes much.

Flinsch Peak appears in the distance, and will gradually get closer on the climb up towards Pitamakan Pass.



Near the pass is Oldman Lake.



Views near the pass are the best of the day.









Descend down to Morning Star Lake.



The campsite comes into view around 1:30PM, and I have a pretty relaxed day. Several others arrive in camp later, from Chicago, Salt Lake, and Colorado.

[finished audiobook [The Heavenfield](#), Book 3, by Ian G Hulme]

# Red Eagle

Posted on [August 14, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 40, August 14, Sunday

Start Morning Star Lake campsite 28-108CG

Stop Red Eagle Lake (Foot) campsite 28-255CG

Trail miles walked: 14.7

Start off the morning with a waterfall.



Triple Divide Pass, and Triple Divide Peak, are the vista highlight of the day.

I think the triple refers to Atlantic, Pacific, or Hudson Bay drainage paths.

Note how the rock wall is so green compared to yesterday's pass.





You may not be able to see it in the photo, but mountain goats are on the ridge at the pass.



I would not have been able to notice them, but another hiker at the pass pointed them out.

On the way down from the pass, several waterfalls command attention.







Within miles of the lake, a couple of swinging bridges cross Hudson Bay Creek.



Red Eagle Lake has two campsites, and mine is at the “foot”.



Other campers included a trail-runner couple from Kentuckiana, a former teacher in Whitefish, MT, and a teacher guy from Minnesota.

Loons call across the lake.

Campers traded stories about how hard it was to reserve backcountry sites in advance or as a walk-in.

After a brief powerful thunderstorm I venture to the other end of the lake, where moose are reported to feed at dusk. The couple from Kentuckiana were returning from a successful moose hunt and told me to keep on the trail past the lake. Sure enough...



# Reynolds

Posted on [August 15, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 41, August 15, Monday

Start Red Eagle Lake (Foot) campsite 28-255CG

Stop Reynolds Campsite 28-395XR

Trail miles walked: 14.7

Leaving camp, an even longer suspension bridge awaits.

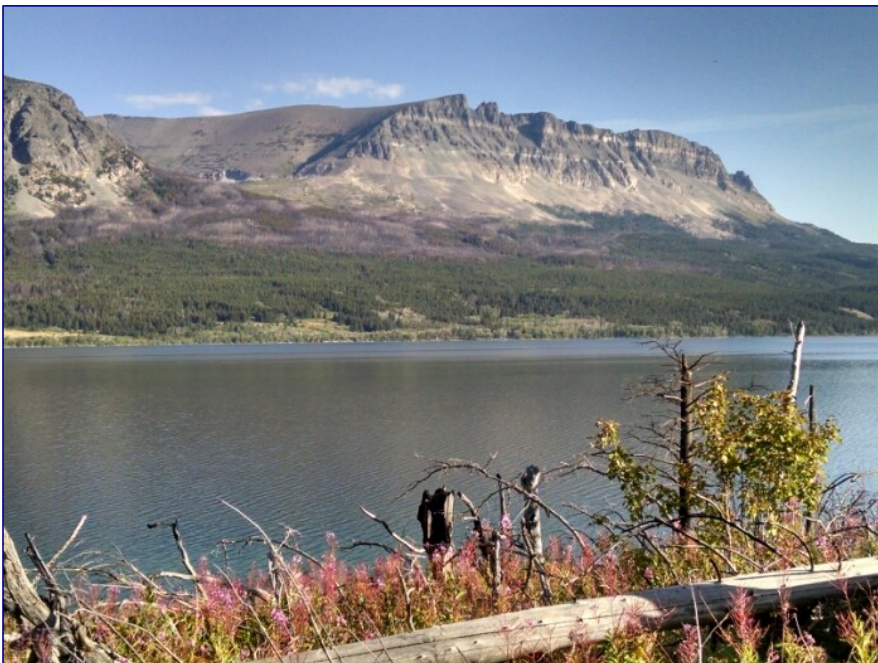


The trail goes along a burn area for some miles.



Talking to a ranger yesterday, a burn area from 2006 showed very little carbon, just standing dead trees white from no bark. So a lot of what I earlier thought was beetle-kill may be old burns.

Here is the first look at Saint Mary Lake, which the path follows much of the day.



Two peaks, Going-to-the-Sun Mountain on the left, and Goat Mountain on the right, serve as background to the lake.



And another angle.



The trail follows the lake edge from fifty feet up to several hundred feet higher, depending on terrain. In this instance we look down at the water from on high.



The camper from Whitefish warned me this trail was less used, thus more likely to be overgrown, and damp summer growth did indeed reach chest high in places.

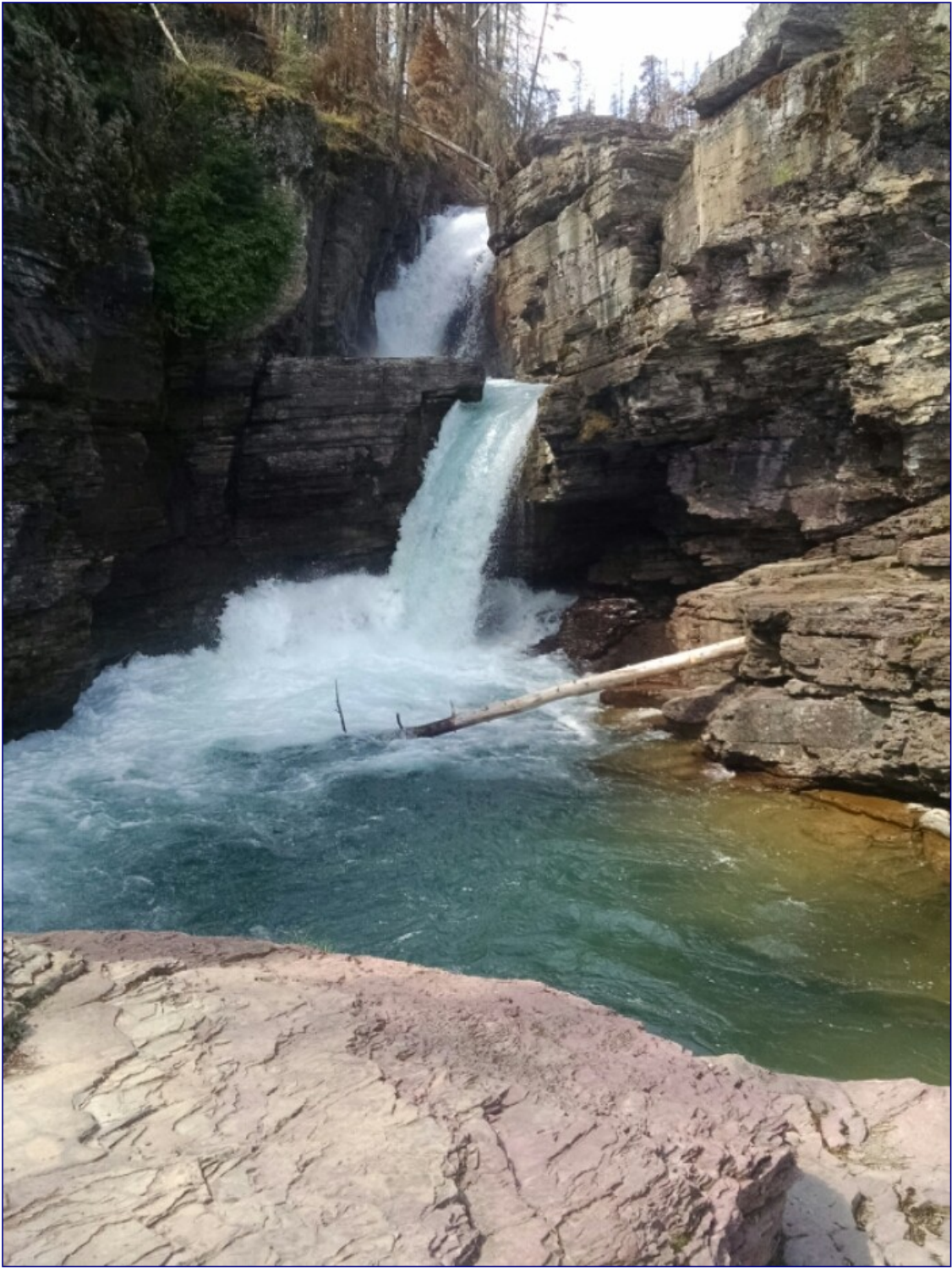


Nearly past the lake, the trail passes a series of falls.









Close to parking, the falls are popular with day hikers.



Reynolds is typically used by long distance hikers, since others have a closer access point by car. Often CDT hiker will be routed here, especially north-bounders.

Here is a map of the campsite, which is typical for Glacier Park.



The pit toilet is bare-bones. Toilets at some campsites have outhouse-like privacy.



[finished audiobook, [The Heavenfield](#), Book 4, by Ian G Hulme]

# Many Glacier

Posted on [August 16, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

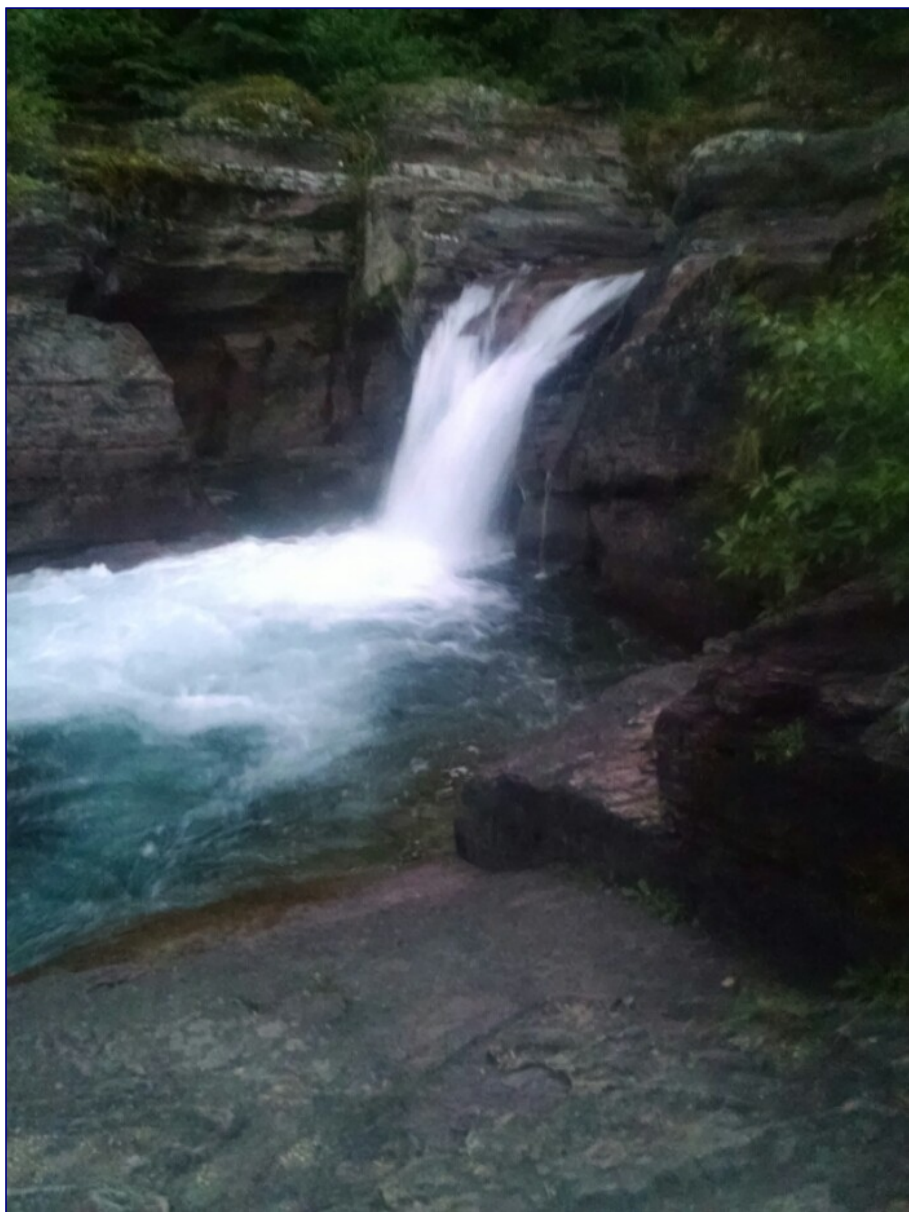
Day 42, August 16, Tuesday

Start Reynolds Campsite 28-395XR

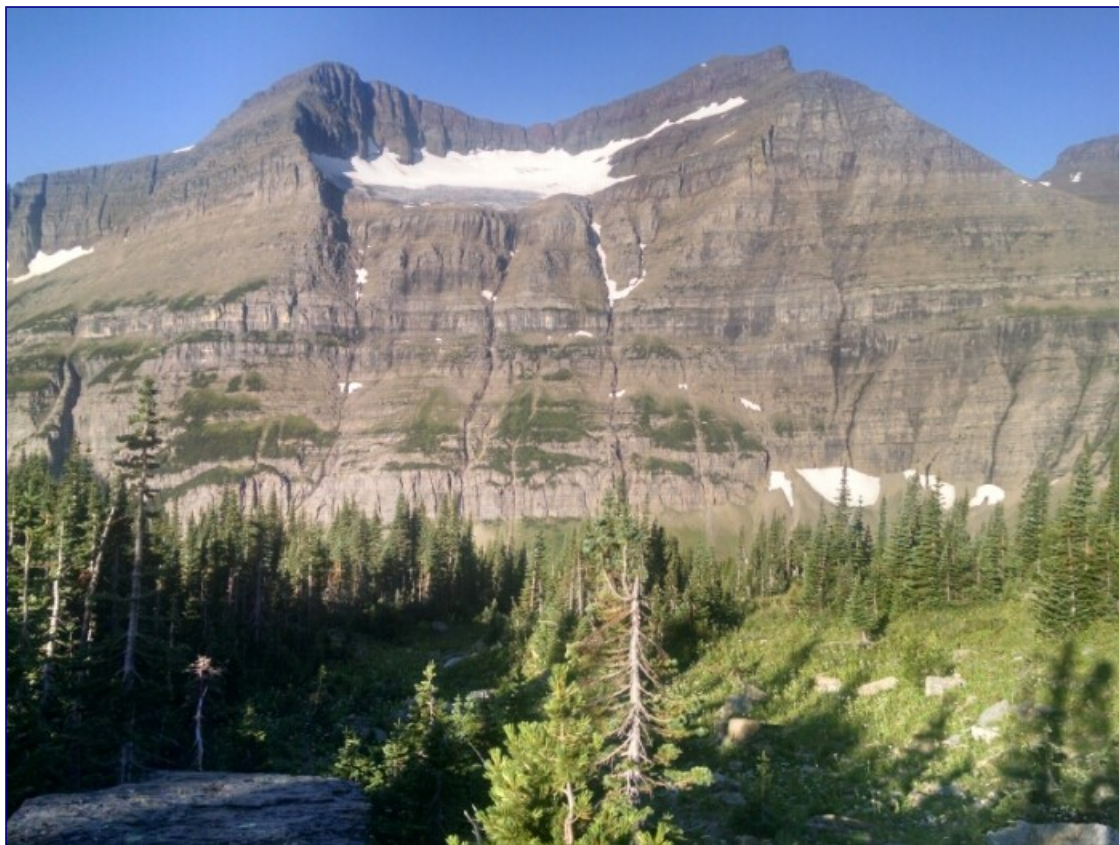
Stop Many Glacier Campground 30-009WT

Trail miles walked: 15.3

A waterfall and promising swimming hole were near the tent site, and I never even knew.



Climbing to today's pass, mountains with named glaciers come into view.





Piegan Pass has inspirational views, the high point of the day.



Love those rock walls. Mountain goats were visible near the pass, and a larger group further down.



Note how the rock wall gets greener as we go further down.



Find the waterfall at the bottom of the photo, and notice lichen on the rocks at the very top. Can mountain goats nibble on this?



Behold waterfall pictures on the descent.

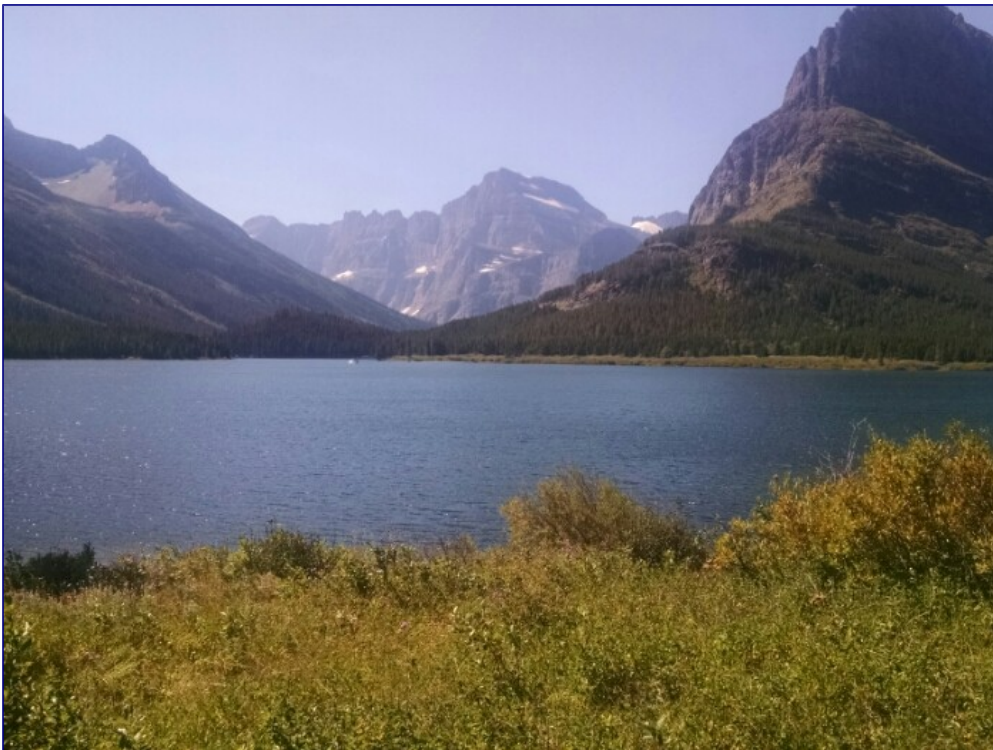




Further down, we pass the Many Glacier Hotel along Swiftcurrent Lake.



Many great vistas are near Many Glacier Campgrounds.



The camp store offers laundry, shower, sluggish wifi, and refreshments.



Hours were invested relaxing on the store porch, uploading photos over slow internet (each blog post taking about an hour to send out to the world) and chatting with strangers to an extent you would not believe.

The camp host warns that the next several days have a high chance of rain. I had planned to start late tomorrow, but will change and start earlier to avoid possible thunderstorms.

# Granite

Posted on [August 17, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 43, August 17, Wednesday

Start Many Glacier Campground 30-009WT

Stop Granite Campsite 30-091XR

Trail miles walked: 8.1

The peaks around the public campgrounds are almost unreasonably picturesque.





Starting the trail out of Many Glacier we get a lake view.



Soon the way up into the heights starts to appear up a slanting ridge.



A day-hiker from Los Angeles was so sunny and exuberant and asked so many questions about my trip that she earned a photo.



The path starts climbing with views of several cascading waterfalls.



The trail swings close for a better look.



Looking back, we can see a chain of lakes, with Swiftcurrent Lake at Many Glacier the furthest.



After a few brief miles, I detour near my campsite to see Granite Chalet, where the fancy people stay, with all meals provided.



Later a camper said that he checked, and all rooms were booked.

Vistas along Highline Trail reward the walk.





A ranger patrol cabin is near the campsite.



Looking towards the campsite and chalet, the granite in the name becomes apparent, all that gray rock on the ground.



A ranger is at our campsite doing an evaluation of the site, then checks permits, then leaves on horseback. The camp gradually fills to capacity.

Clouds gather in the afternoon. Thunder is ominous, but no rain falls, as temperatures drop quickly and deeply.

# Fifty Mountain

Posted on [August 18, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

Day 44, August 18, Thursday

Start Granite Campsite 30-091XR

Stop Fifty Mountain Campsite 30-207CG

Trail miles walked: 11.6

The day start dark, cloudy, and cold... and stays that way.



All photos of views on the Highline Trail will be dark and almost colorless.





Along the Highline you can make out the path in the distance.



A trail crew is working on a rock wall supporting the path, and I thank them profoundly for their efforts and the condition of trail.



Down from the heights the campsite comes near.



The hike started early today to beat any rain. Soon after setting up camp, showers started and continued all afternoon until sunset. After hiding in the tent listening to audiobooks and resting for half the day, I emerged to discover that my gear was wet– the tent needed adjusting and had gone unnoticed.

After the rain stopped, new snow appears on the rocks above.



Just a few hundred feet make a difference between rain and snow.

[finished audiobook [Brood of Bones](#), by A.E. Marling , narrated by Henrietta Meire (Darkfire)]

# O Canada

Posted on [August 19, 2016](#)

CDT Montana 2016

[For the beginning of my Montana CDT trip, start [here](#).]

Day 45, August 19, Friday

Start Fifty Mountain Campsite 30-207CG

Stop Waterton Park, CANADA 30C-043TH

Trail miles walked: 18.9

Most of the morning is on the northern segment of Highline Trail, halfway up a high ridge.



Snow-covered peaks are in the distance across a lower ridge. Several intriguing glaciers and lakes are above me on top of mountains that I am walking along, not visible from the trail itself.

The trail starts to descend, with wet overgrown vegetation at lower elevation.



Can you make out the path?

Along a particularly steep slope horses and mules were tied up on the trail, blocking the way.



The horse would let me slip by on the trail, but the mules balked and would not let me past. I tried bushwacking the precipitous wet slope below the trail, but thought better of it after a fall and sliding.

Josh, a park employee who hauled supplies in backcountry came back to the animals.



He had a mule come off the trail, stuck in a ravine down below, and grabbed a chainsaw to clear a path back. He showed me how to bushwack around by holding onto the wet brush like ropes.

Finally Goat Haunt Ranger Station appears.



This is a border entry point on the US side for Canadians hiking in or taking the ferry. Several day hikers were on the trail, so the ferry might have recently arrived. I chatted with a couple of border patrol agents.

A ranger checked my backcountry permit when I mentioned the CDT. He said he has been writing citations right and left, as a large number of CDT hikers are going without proper backcountry permits, frustrated by full campsites and wanting longer hiking days than the rangers allow. This news surprises me.

Next to the ranger station is a first look at Waterton Lake.



Several miles of lake and mountain vistas on rolling trail make good walking.







At the international border, a US and Canadian ranger are giving a talk to a group of day hikers about the Peace Park at the border.



We enact the ceremony of Hands Across the Border by lining up on each side and shaking hands.

Turns out it is hard to hold a smart phone camera and take photos while simultaneously shaking someone's hand.

I d not do many selfies, but being on the border next to an obelisk engraved with "Canada" must be an exception.

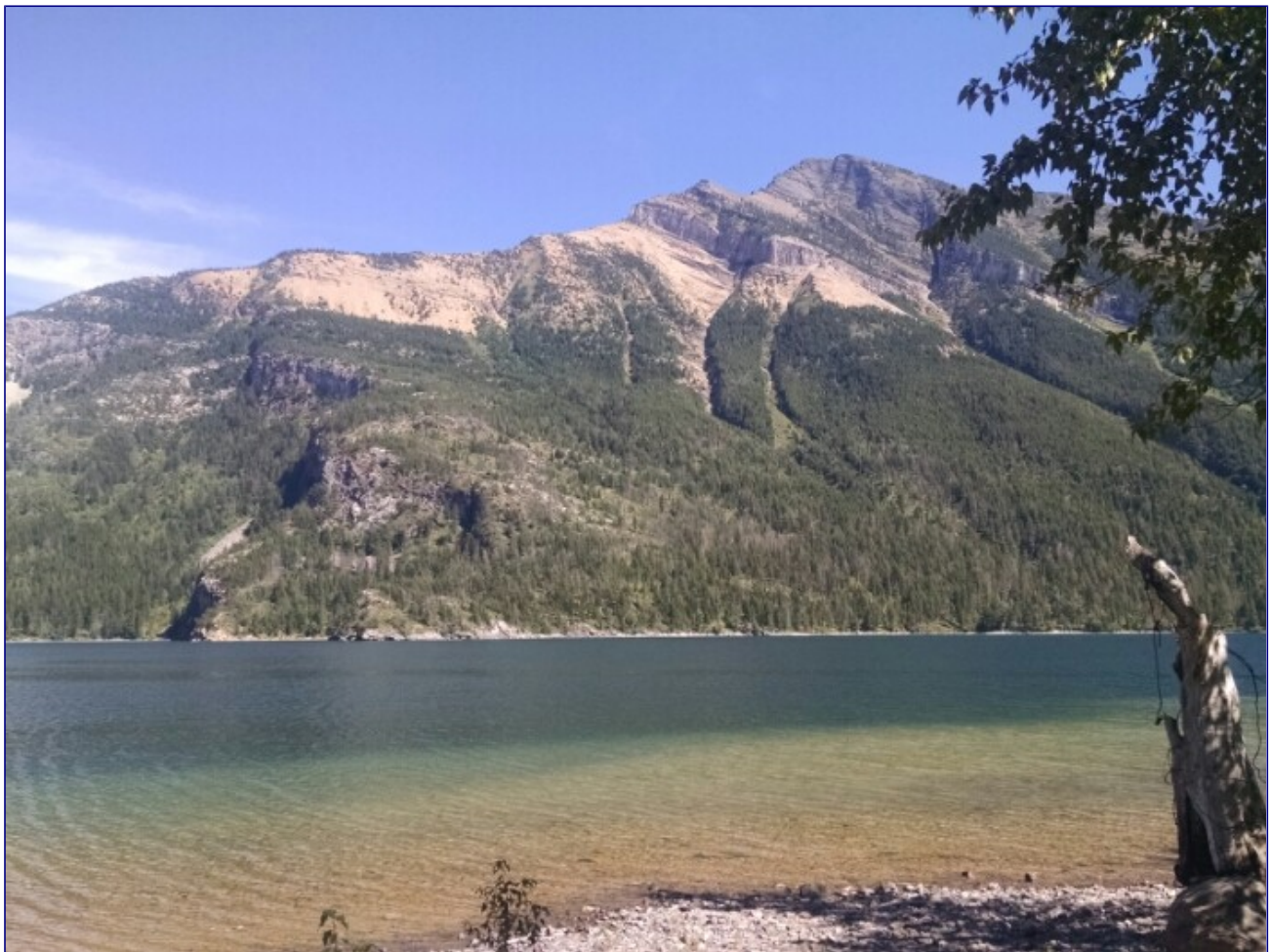


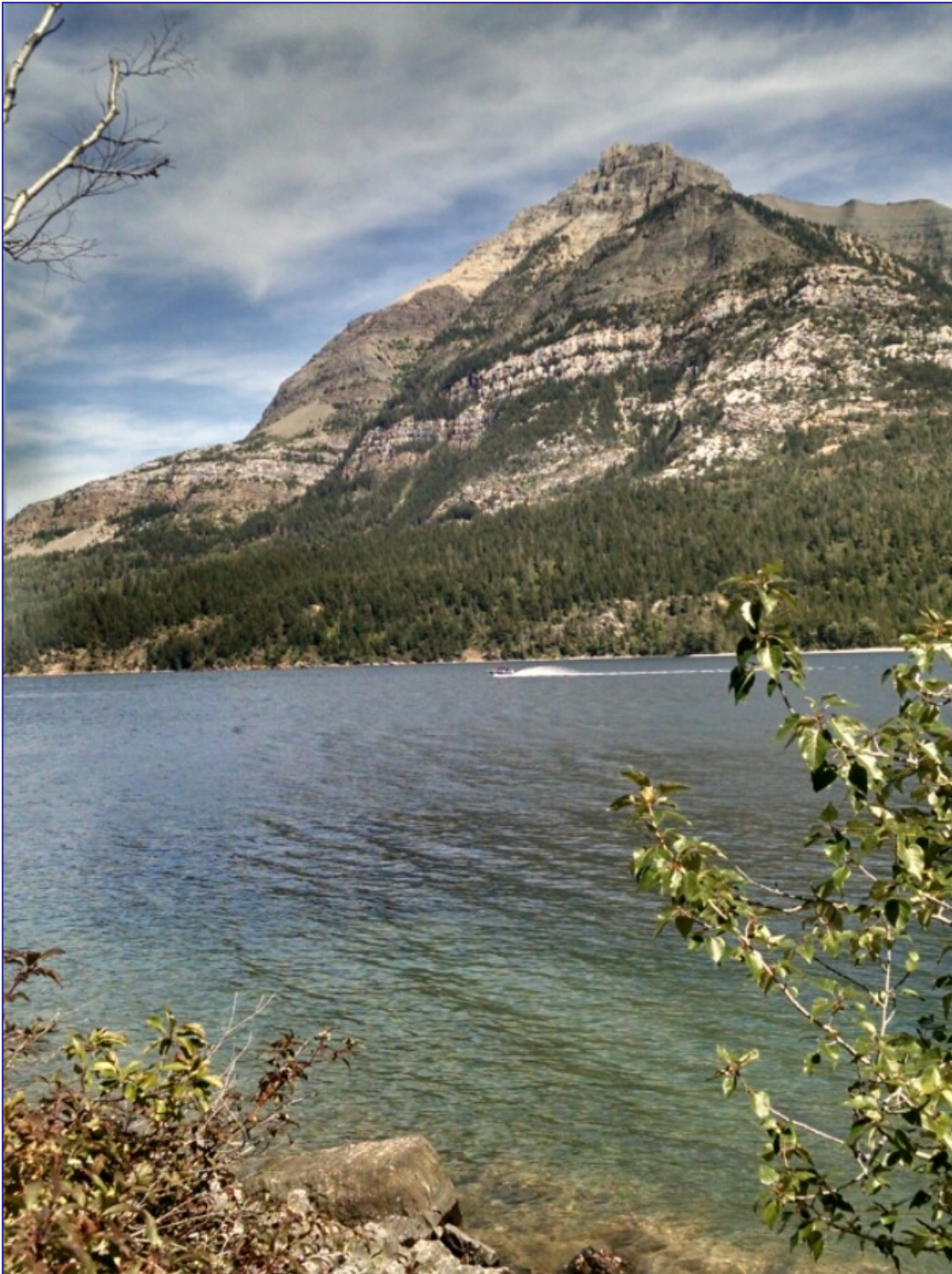
Sign without comment.



On two separate locations on the trail past the border I see black bears, each retreating quickly. How strange to not see any bears in Montana in 45 days of hiking, and then see two my first hours into Canada.

Let us enjoy a few final lake views on the walk into town.





Waterton RV park is all full, even for tent sites, so I am forced to find a motel, and feel lucky to get a room in such a bustling tourist town late on a Friday.

My CDT trek, started in 2013, doing one state each year in order northbound, is now complete.

HUZZAH!!!

What an adventure to remember!