

7/4/84

Dear Jim,

I haven't seen or communicated with you for some time - hope everything is well with you. Perhaps I'll get the chance to talk with you at the upcoming AHS Hike-In in October - I hope to be able to attend this year, provided I am still in the area.

Although it has now been more than 3 years since the participants in HikaNation ceremoniously dipped their feet in the Atlantic waters off Cape Henlopen, Delaware & unofficially (the Washington ceremonies still count as the official completion & I hold many fond memories of them too, such as the "Flashlight" award, which meant a lot to me) ended the hike, HikaNation is still very much on my mind, as you can see by the enclosed material. Although it has taken me some time (typing & researching routes on maps take an inordinate amount of time!) to produce any kind of definitive "route finder" as I said I would do that evening in Harper's Ferry, this is what I've been able to complete so far. It is by no means finished. The more obscure route segments still need to be done & I would like to add other material besides just route description, i.e. - chapters on the natural & human history of the areas the route passes through as well as some background information about the HikaNation concept & the AHS. I still think that if another HikaNation is ever to come off it will need a good route finder to define the route. This doesn't mean that future hikes have to stick to this route

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verbatim. Indeed, most of the route needs further scouting & refinement which future hikes will have to do. More than anything else, <sup>the</sup> Hika Nation route, if it is even to become a viable route or eventually gain national interest (National Scenic Trail status? - that is my dream & one of my goals), will have to have a network of local trail/outdoor clubs across the country which will scout it, ~~and~~ build it, & maintain it. This route guide shows that this trail has a lot of potential - the enclosed list of highlights is testimony to that. ~~is~~

I feel that I know more about the route than any other individual from the hours (200 hours+) I have spent pouring over 7 1/2" topo quads in the Library of Congress Map Division here in Washington, D.C.. Monty Montgomery also knows a lot from his 3 trips out west in the summers 'of 81, 82, & 83' & the initial scouting he did prior to Hika Nation. However, Monty & I do have some differences of opinion on where we think the route should go: my main criteria in deciding where the route should go are the following, not listed in any kind of order:

- ① Generally stay between latitudes 37° & 39° N.
- ② Take trails or primitive roads wherever possible.
- ③ Stay on public lands (national forests, national parks & monuments, national recreation areas, BLM lands, state parks & forests, etc.) wherever possible.

I have made quite a few changes to the original route, all based on ~~meeting~~ <sup>meeting</sup> the above criteria more  
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closely. Here is a rough breakdown of these changes by state:

California - This state is a delicate issue. The Hike State route, scouted originally by Dr. Seaborg & Jeannie Harmon remains the official route. However, I would like to see another route through the Sierra Nevada S of the original route from the town of Kyburz Eastward to the Nevada border. The Hgwy. # 50 corridor is just too developed & too near civilization. This will have to be worked out diplomatically with Dr. Seaborg & Nor Cal.

Nevada - Some changes have been ~~made~~ <sup>proposed</sup>. From Mina to Warm Springs, I would like to see the route take a more northerly & scenic trajectory. A minor change has been proposed for the White River valley / Piche area. Also, I would like to see the hike leave the state further south via Beaver Dam St. Park (as shown on the original map).

Utah - The route is essentially the same, with some changes made near the Nevada border, the Cedar Breaks Nat'l Mon., & Bryce Canyon Nat'l Park areas.

Colorado - Instead of leaving the Continental Divide at Del Norte & crossing the San Luis Valley, the route now follows the divide to New Mexico. <sup>The route reenters</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in the SE corner & heads E to Kansas.</sup>

New Mexico - The NE'ern corner of the state has been added to the route.

Kansas - The route now follows a much more southerly route through this state, then enters NE'ern Oklahoma.

Oklahoma - The route first touches this state in the NW'ernmost corner of the state & goes over the state's highpoint (Black Mesa State Park) before exiting into SE Colorado. It reenters N of Tulsa & connects w/ the Jean Pierre Chateau Trail, then heads E to Arkansas & the Ozark Nat'l Forest.

Arkansas - The route is essentially the same, except I would like to see the route cont. E. along the Buffalo Nat'l River after leaving the Ozark Highlands Trail to the Sylamore Ranger District of Ozark N.F. After swinging through Blanchard Springs, it would head NE to Missouri, entering at Mammoth Spring.

Missouri - route is essentially the same, except the initial segment to Alton (delete West Plains) & the new segments of the Ozark Trail which have since ~~been~~ <sup>been constructed</sup>.

Illinois - route remains the same. - the Mishio Trail.

Kentucky → Virginia

Here I am proposing a major reroute. The route would remain roughly the same across the W'ern  $\frac{2}{3}$  <sup>ds</sup> of the state, still going through Mammoth Cave N.P. However, when we hit the Shelton Trace Trail in Daniel Boone Nat'l Forest, I would like to take it NE all the way to Ohio, cross S'ernmost Ohio in the Wayne Nat'l Forest, then cross West Virginia to the Cranberry Backcountry/Wilderness in the Monongahela Nat'l Forest. From here the route

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would proceed NE'arly through this forest on a network of trails which I just recently scouted on a week-long vacation spent there. Then the route would hit the Virginia state line near the Bryce Mtn. Ski Area, take the Big Blue-Tuscarora Trail across the Shenandoah valley to the AT in Shenandoah N.P., & the rest of the way to the Atlantic would remain the same. This way you would be eliminating most of the AT. Don't get me wrong - I love the Appalachian Trail, having been a member of the ATC off & on in the past, but if the HikaNation route is ever to have its own entity & separate status, it can't coincide with an already existing Nat'l Scenic Trail for such a long distance.

I hope I haven't bored you with this rather long letter. I ~~was~~ hope that you are still as interested in future HikaNation's as I am & are still making every effort to find sponsorship for another one. ~~that~~ If another one does come to fruition, ~~now~~ I would like to participate in some capacity. If I could prove my worth as a group leader, assistant coordinator, & scout, I would like to be sponsored by the AHS (i.e. - paid a nominal salary in effect) to perform much the same services as Monty did on the first hike (i.e. - scouting & route refinement, advance publicity, shuttling services, securing camping sites, paperwork, etc.). I feel with my experience & dedication I could be of great service in organizing & carrying off another HikaNation project.

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I realize you may not be in a position of leadership with the AHS like you were during the hike. Therefore, I am also going to be talking with Butch Henley, & if possible, Eric Seaborg. But I know you & thought you might like to hear my thoughts & receive copies of the route guide in its present form. If you have any suggestions or comments, please drop me a line. Take care.

Yours Truly,

John Mills, Jr.