

July 17, 2004, Skyline-to-the-Sea: Saratoga Gap to Waddell Beach, 28 miles.

Ok, hikers, are you ready?? Here are some last minute details.

Starting time is 7am! That means be at the Saratoga Gap parking lot at the intersection of Highway 9 and Highway 35 at 6:45am. That will give you time to put on your hiking boots and get your pack ready. We hit the trail at 7 sharp!

What to Pack: Ideally you took my advice and got a camelback water pack. Bring a minimum of two liters of **water**; I am bringing three. Some folks think that mixing 2 parts water to one Gatorade is a good idea. **Food**, bring lunch and lots of snacks you can eat while walking. Placing a baggie of trail mix in a pant pocket is a good idea. Also bring **money** for the store at Big Basin. Wear loose fitting shorts or light-weight long pants. Wear short sleeve shirt/t-shirt. Wear a **hat** and put on **sun screen** before you dress in the morning for the hike. That way you won't need to worry about putting more sun screen on until later in the day.

Bring one **long-sleeve shirt**. This shirt, plus one pair of **extra socks** should be the only clothes you carry in your pack. If cool weather doesn't bother you leave the shirt in the car. Bring your small personal **first aid kit** with mainly blister stuff. I will have a big one for emergencies. We will be providing everyone with a map of the trail so no need to bring one.

Some wilderness folks think you should always be prepared for emergencies. One item that can be helpful is a **whistle** –if you have one bring it. If not, don't worry about it. Remember we will have walkie-talkies and hopefully will stay together. Other items I have in my pack that I always have are a space blanket, headlamp, and matches. You don't need any of these for Saturday but I tell you this for your own safety on future hikes.

Hiking pace and timeline: At the start of the hike I will be leading and we will be hiking a brisk pace. We will take time for folks to adjust their shoes, take off shirts, etc. at the beginning so that we are all comfortable and not hiking in ill-fitting shoes. It is important for shoes, packs, and clothes to be comfortable. So, if your laces need tying, let me know! Once we get every thing adjusted I won't be stopping much. However, we will wait at trail intersections for everyone to catch up so no one gets lost. (people can also take bathroom breaks at these points.) My goal is to be at Big Basin (16 miles) between 11:30 and noon. Last year we got there at 12:45 so you see I have higher expectations for this year's hikers! We will meet Lorraine at the store and eat lunch. We have 30 minutes to rest, fix blisters, and eat. I anticipate that we will finish the last leg of the hike from Big Basin to Waddell Beach in 4 hours. Our goal is to be at the Beach by 4:30pm. The horses have to take a different route so we will be meeting up with Lorraine about 5 miles from the ocean.

Hiking in comfort: There are some things you can do to help make it through 28 miles. First, take Advil. I take it in the morning and throughout the day. It helps keep the soreness at bay. Second, stretch when we are standing around, or, even better, sit down when you have the chance. Eat and drink constantly.

Watch where you are hiking! When you are hiking fast and long-distance you can get into automatic pilot. Don't forget to look at the trail and pick up your feet. Tripping on a tree root or stumbling over rocks is easy to do. Bring a hiking stick if it helps you. Make sure your shoelaces are tied correctly. Your feet should not be sliding around or feel pinched. Remember your feet will start swelling as the day goes on. Keep the little rocks and dirt out of your shoes. If you have hiking gators wear them.

Bug Check: There are ticks in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Periodically check for ticks especially after sitting on logs. Recent studies show people turn up with ticks more often after sitting on logs versus the ground. Also, there are mosquitos and sometimes little flies that can be annoying. Bring bug spray if a few bug bites freak you out.

Party at End! This year we will be having a party so be prepared to eat, drink and relax. Friends will be barbecuing for us! We will not be going back to the starting parking lot to get our cars for a while. Make sure to put a change of clothes, warm jacket, sandals, and anything else you may want to have after the hike. We will have chairs to sit on and food and drinks.