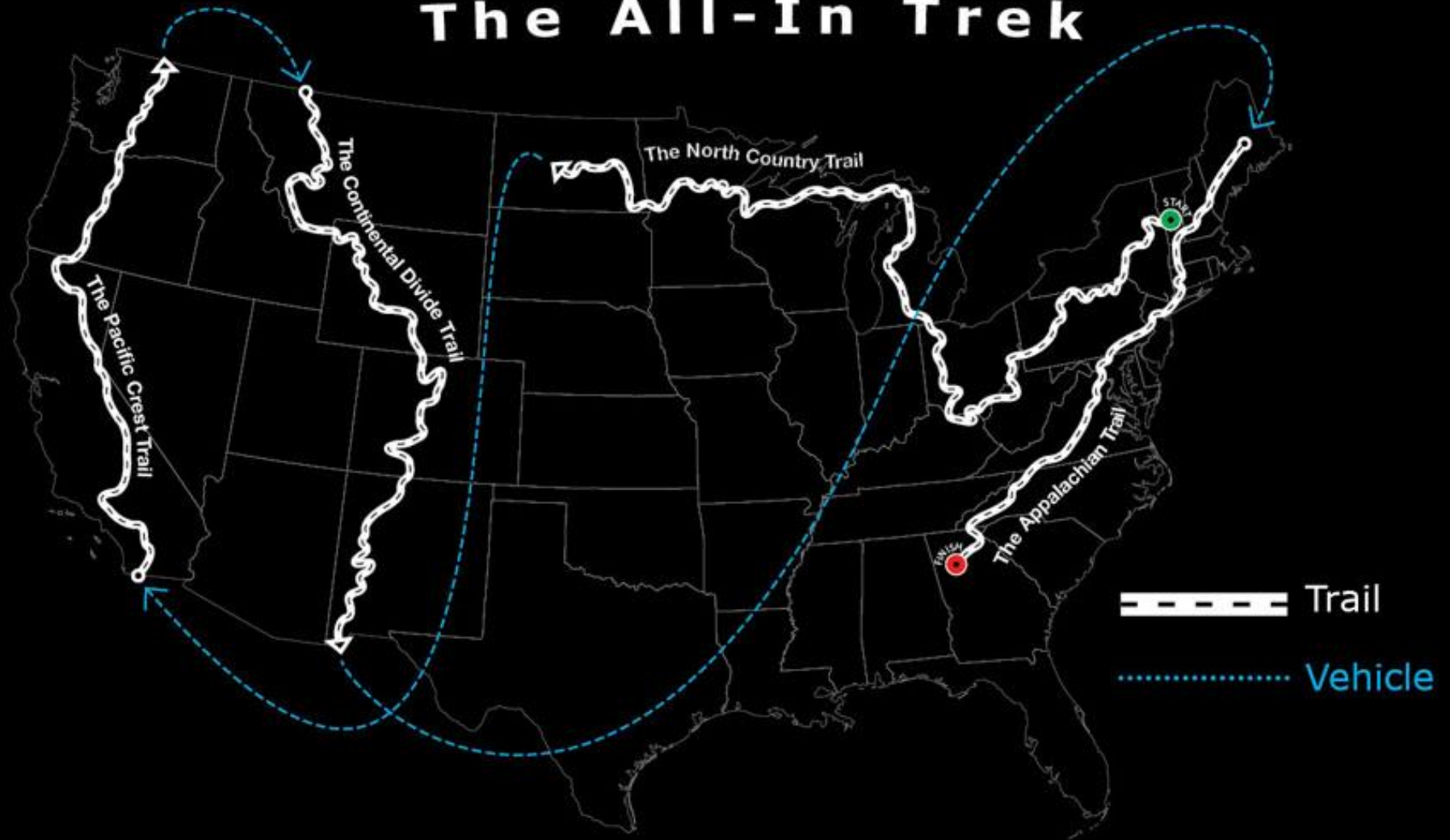


The All-In Trek



North Country Trail.....4600 miles
Pacific Crest Trail.....2650 miles
Continental Divide Trail3100 miles
Appalachian Trail.....2178 miles

Total miles traveled on foot

12,500+

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The Challenge

On January 1st of 2011, I will set out on a 12,500+ mile “All-In Trek” to establish a new record of unassisted ultra-light long-distance backpacking. It will be the first-ever attempt of the “All-In Trek”. This involves completing the four longest hiking trails in the United States, end-to-end and back-to-back. It is my goal to complete this trek in one year.

The four trails are the North Country Trail, Appalachian Trail, Continental Divide Trail and Pacific Crest Trail.

The journey will begin on the North Country Trail (NCT), hiking west from New York to North Dakota along the northern US border. This will be the second time in the history of the NCT to through-hike the trail during winter months. The Pacific Crest Trail is second. I will start at the Mexican border in California and hike north to the Canadian border in Washington. The Continental Divide Trail is the third trail. I will hike from the Canadian border, south through the Rockies to New Mexico. The Appalachian Trail is the final trail. I will hike from Maine, south through the Appalachians into Georgia.

The hiking direction and sequence of each trail is based on elevation, weather and location variables. These variables have been assessed to minimize time spent in large amounts of snow at high elevation.

For transportation between the four trails, I will use any vehicle means necessary to get from one to the next. Pre-prepped food boxes will be shipped and “mail-dropped” from home base to U.S. Postal offices as needed.

Biography

Born into a working class family in the mid eighties, Samuel H. Gardner started life facing a considerable physical challenge. In his first year, he was forced to wear leg braces to correct the misalignment of his feet from birth. At 3 years old, his parents moved the family north, from Milwaukee to the woods and snow of Tapiola, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. There Samuel's love of the outdoors began to blossom into an obsession. A winter backpacking trip with his father at the age of 9, tipped the scales and Samuel would never settle for an indoor life.



A home-schooled education armed Samuel with an unconventionally positive outlook and gave him a flexible structure and the freedom to explore. This allowed him to become involved with a wide array of activities and organizations. From soccer to the Boy Scouts, wolf tracking to competitive pistol shooting he was able to fully commit to each activity and quickly rose to the upper echelons of each; reaching the level of Eagle Scout, guiding groups in wolf research through the Earthwatch Institute and member of the two year champion Junior Pistol Team at U.S. Nationals.

By the age of 18, Samuel had gone deaf in his right ear and lost a significant portion of the hearing in his left. Doctors have stated that it is most likely due to the multiple concussions sustained during his teen years. Although the hearing loss has stabilized, doctors have stated that his inner ear condition may worsen at any time resulting in loss of balance or hearing. The potential of losing his ability to enjoy the outdoors brought Samuel to a realization. If he could lose his hearing at any point he better take advantage of every opportunity. He committed himself to throwing all of his energy into whatever he was doing and never accepting complacency.

Upon entering college at Michigan Technological University, Samuel started to settle into the fact that his was not to be an ordinary life. In the five years spent earning a B.Sc. in forestry and working toward B.Sc. in Mining Engineering he not only spent his time on his studies but threw his life into outdoor pursuits. He committed to testing his personal limits. A 100-kilometer day hike in the Porcupine Mountains expanded his view of his personal capabilities. Six months spent living outdoors in a snow cave during Northern Michigan's legendary, brutal winters gave him a glimpse into just how tough he could be. New hobbies sprung up like weeds. Climbing the local rock and ice, surfing the frigid winter waves of Lake Superior and collecting rare mineral specimens all furthered his love of the outdoors and provided new avenues to try bigger and more challenging adventures.

Leaving his beloved home in the Copper Country, Samuel moved west after graduation. Arriving in Boulder, Co, he began work doing land reclamation work in the western states. He was in his element: working outdoors all day at job he could give his all to. His income left him with no real material needs and yet something was missing from his life. He began thinking about some of the great adventures he had planned and never taken. The purpose of his life began to take shape. Seeing a few individuals around him, slaving over simple dollars and letting their dreams fall by the wayside pained him. In a moment of enlightenment Samuel quit his job and returned to the Keweenaw to pursue his dreams and go All-In.

Prepped for Success

Logistics:

Long distance backpacking has been progressing rapidly for the past decade. In 2001, “Flyin” Brian Robinson was the first to hike the P.C.T., C.D.T, and A.T. to create the Calendar Year Triple Crown (7,321 miles in 300 days). In 2005 “Squeaky” Matt Hazley, was the first to hike all three trails of Triple Crown end-to end and back to back (7525 miles in 239 days). In 2006 “Trauma” Justin Lichter and his dog Yoni, repeated Triple Crown as well as add 2800 of trail extensions on the A.T. for a total of 10,000 miles in 356 days. The opportunity to push the sport further than ever before is here. Equipment and trail improvements have only improved the odds for success. The records of these three hikers prove that the human body can not only endure long distance backpacking but excel at it.

I will start the All-In Trek in January by hiking the North Country Trail in the coldest, snowiest months because it is the lowest in elevation of all the trails. The low elevation eliminates the risk of avalanches and maximizes hiking speed given the time of year. It is my goal to complete the N.C.T. by early May so that I can start the P.C.T. northbound in early spring which is the most popular time to start a P.C.T thru-hike. Next, I will hike the C.D.T southbound starting in August. The final thru-hike will be the A.T. southbound in starting in October to finish in December. This trek is similar to Matt Hazley’s Triple Crown. He started his trek in April, northbound on the P.C.T. This allows for a 4 to 5 month window to hike the N.C.T before starting the traditional “Triple Crown”.

Support:

Support is everywhere I look. Family. Friends. Professors. Bosses. Colleagues. Coworkers. These people have always been there for me and continue to offer their support in a variety of ways. My Mother has taught me to think in terms of community and helping others. My Father has taught me to achieve at my highest level. My professors have an open door policy. A Tai-Chi master has gifted me with teachings on immune system acupuncture. My brother has offered to provide media support. My Aunt is my mentor in this process. There are people to make sure I have the proper nutrition, gear and beta shipped to me if needed.

Mindset:

Mindset is the key factor in every one of my accomplishments. I was home-schooled for my k-12 education. I tracked wolves on Isle Royale for the world’s longest running predator-prey research project for three years. I earned a B.S. degree in Forestry from Michigan Technological University. I became a carpenter. For six months I lived in a snow-cave in northern Michigan. I was on a U.S. International Pistol Team for 2 years. I earned the rank of Eagle Scout. I hiked 100 km in 18 hours. I raced down-hill mountain bikes at a national level. I have ran white water rivers in an open canoe. I collect rare mineral specimens. I operated heavy equipment for a land reclamation company in the western states. I surf Lake Superior throughout the winter. My comfort zone and skill set have grown with every new challenge I set for myself.

Endurance:

Endurance training will require a combination of nutrition, gear use, workout routines and hiking. In 2010, I will be fine tuning my nutritional needs to perform at the endurance level required for this trek. The ratio of gear weight and durability is an issue. Only the optimum gear will be used. Exercise routines include a wide range of activities from gym workouts, swimming, running, snowshoeing, biking, and landscaping work.

Purpose

Mission:

To Initiate The Drive Within.

To be an example of Creativity, Motivation, Progression, and Community.

Vision:

Initiate the drive within people's hearts to seek fulfillment in their lives through sharing my life journey of identifying, preparing for, and achieving extraordinary goals. Provide the necessary tools, examples and inspiration to take the initiative and achieve one's own goals.

The Rationale:

The Initiative is a motivational project that's sole purpose is to give hope, inspiration and tools to pursue personal goals. Through this project, I will share my life's journey of the pursuit and achievement of seemingly unattainable goals. The stories of those I meet along the way will also be held up as examples of inspiration. The collective journey will be presented on this website and through speaking engagements at K-12 schools, universities and organizations.

The reason for "The Initiative Project" is to prove a simple but important point: Life is what we make it. We all have choices. We can choose to change or not. We can be content with who we are or we have the option to work towards the person we want to be. No matter the outcome of our decisions, we must not sit idle; we must be actively enjoying life or be actively making a change. These life-choices apply to each and every one of us despite different life-challenges and set backs of varying degrees. The greater the hardship overcome; the greater the joy, fulfillment and self-respect.

I am doing this for me. I am doing this for the people who wish they could but physically cannot. I am doing this for the people who are alone and unsupported. I am doing this for those who dream. I am doing this for those who have forgotten their dreams. I am doing this for those who have sacrificed dreams to support others. I am doing this to share with the ones who cannot be there. I am doing this for the story. I am doing this for the adventure. I am doing this to show what is possible.

-Samuel H. Gardner

Budget

Food	Cost per day	\$ 20.00	for	365	day(s)	\$ 7,300.00
Gear	Initial Cost	\$ 3,500.00	for	1	Year	\$ 3,500.00
Health Insurance	Cost per month	\$ 200.00	for	12	month(s)	\$ 2,400.00
Shoes	cost per pair	\$ 105.00	for	20	Pairs	\$ 2,100.00
Phone	Cost per month	\$ 111.00	for	12	month(s)	\$ 1,332.00
Transportation	MI TO NY	\$ 800.00	for	1	Ticket	\$ 800.00
Transportation	ND TO CA	\$ 800.00	for	1	Ticket	\$ 800.00
Transportation	WA TO MT	\$ 800.00	for	1	Ticket	\$ 800.00
Transportation	NM TO MA	\$ 800.00	for	1	Ticket	\$ 800.00
Transportation	GA TO MI	\$ 800.00	for	1	Ticket	\$ 800.00
Website	Cost per month	\$ 30.00	for	12	month(s)	\$ 360.00
Slide Show Tour Post Trek		\$ 5,000.00				\$ 5,000.00
Total						\$ 25,992.00

Food: Nutrition is both the most expensive and important component of the trek due to the fact that I will be burning approximately 8,000 to 9,000 calories per a day. The \$20.00 per a day will fund my nutritional needs.

Gear: The \$3,500 pays for my initial gear purchases for the trek and maintenance on the trail.

Health Insurance: Due to the potential hazards of becoming sick or twisting an ankle, health coverage increases the chances a quick recovering if I do become sick.

Shoes: Shoes have mileage limits that if over used can cause crippling injuries to feet and legs. In order to eliminate this danger, I will be using a 4 pairs of light hiking boots for winter travel and 16 pairs of running shoes for summer travel. All shoes will be properly broken in during training phase before hike.

Transportation: The four trails are not connected at any point so transportation between is needed. Any vehicle means necessary will be used. For example rental car, plane, motorcycle, or trains are all possibilities.

Phone: I purchased an iphone for this trek so that I am able to post updates on the website while on the trail.

Website: Website hosting, domain name and MobileMe (data-backup) cost approximately 40 dollars a month. These services are necessary because they allow people from around the world to participate in the project on any given day.

Slide Show Tour: The \$5,000 is budgeted to help cover travel expenses to K-12 schools, universities and organizations.

Funding: All funding and in-kind sponsorship will be used through The Initiative Inc. for the "All-In Trek". I stand as the owner and President of The Initiative Inc. The sole purpose of this company is to support the "All-In Trek" and to be professional as possible while doing so. The company will allow for proper money use organization and will not be used for personal gain. All monetary records of company bank accounts are available to sponsors upon request.

Sponsorship Opportunities

While I am working more than full time doing land reclamation and landscaping work to support as much of the trek myself; I am in need of outside support to make this project succeed. All-In Trek sponsorship will not be used for personal gain outside of the All-In Trek. Any funds left post trek will be used to fund speaking engagements about the All-In Trek at K-12 schools, universities and organizations.

In-kind equipment and nutrition sponsorship is tiered on full retail value.

Tier 1. Premier Sponsor - \$5000+

Benefit:

- Most prominent logo/link on key pages of website (Present-2012)
- Largest logo on front of t-shirt during trek (2011)
- In house presentation of “All-In Trek” to employees or other select audience.
- Promoted as “Premier Sponsor” during presentation 2012 tour.
- Notification of status updates and media coverage.
- Logo will continue to be represented with all media related to “All-In Trek” post completion.

Tier 2. - \$1000-\$2499

Benefit:

- Logo/link on key pages of website (Present-2012)
- Logo (1/4 size of Premier Sponsor) on shirt during trek (2011)
- Promoted as supporting sponsor during presentation 2012 tour.
- Notification of status updates and media coverage.
- Logo will continue to be represented with all media related to “All-In Trek” post completion.

Tier 3. - \$500-\$999

Benefit:

- Logo/link featured on sponsorship page (Present-2012)
- Logo (1/6 size of Premier Sponsor) on shirt during trek (2011)
- Promoted as supporting sponsor during presentation 2012 tour.
- Notification of status updates and media coverage.
- Logo will continue to be represented with all media related to “All-In Trek” post completion.

Tier 4. \$1-\$499

Benefit:

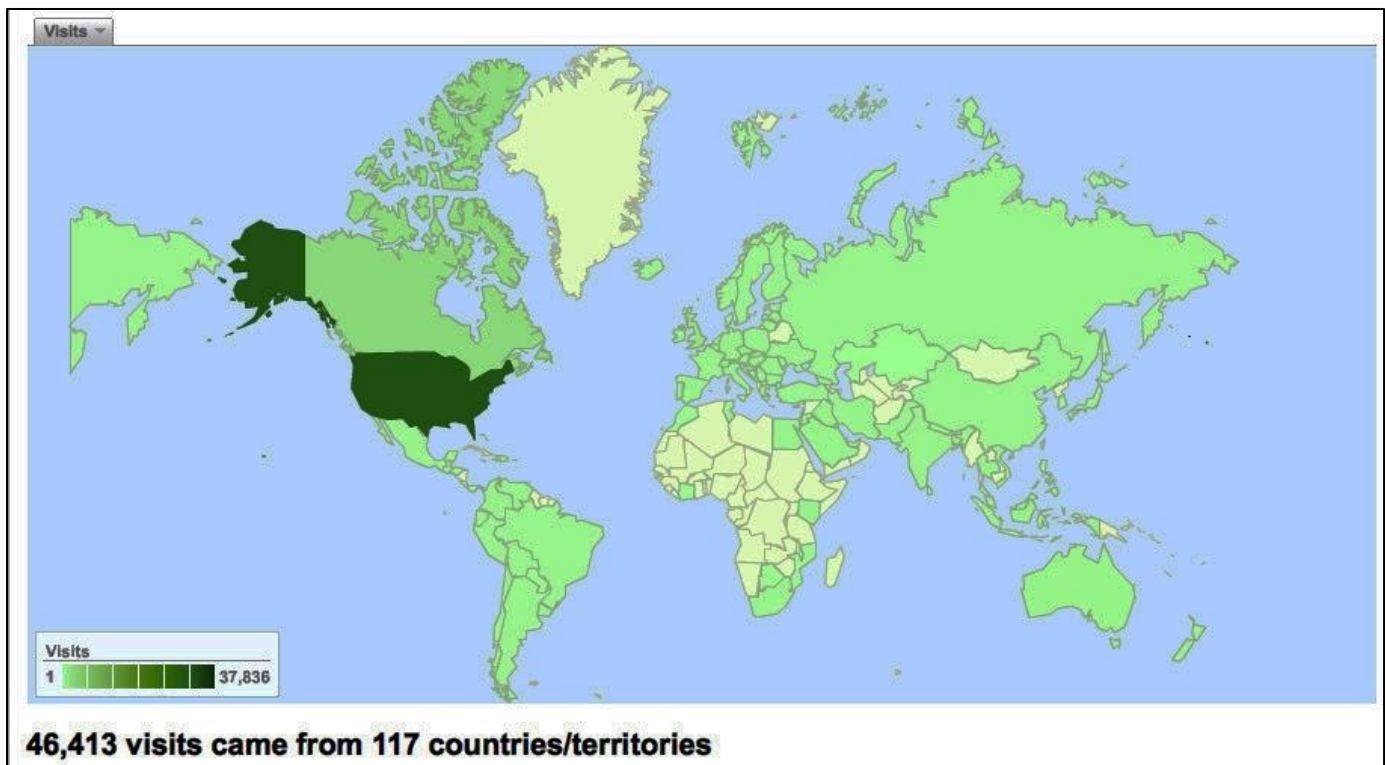
- Logo/Link featured on sponsorship page (Present-2012)
- Promoted as supporting sponsor during presentation 2012 tour.
- Notification of status updates and media coverage.
- Logo will continue to be represented with all media related to “All-In Trek” post completion.

Website Visitation

Website Age	# Unique Visitors	# Page Views	Avg. Page Views/day	# Countries
108 days	46,129	80,333	744	117

There were over 46,000 unique visitors with over 80,000 page views in the first 108 days of the website. The project was not announced prior to website launch date. The website content is not complete due the fact that the project is still in the preparation stage. I will be doing regular updates on my computer and iphone throughout the preparation phase and trek.

I believe that the number of visitors will grow to a whole new level once the All-In Trek starts on January 1st of 2011. This visitation data shows how quickly the word has spread around the world to over 117 different countries in a very short time period. Every week the community grows stronger and larger.



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