Welcome to the Griswold Campus Backpack Challenge

The objective of this challenge is to hike as many miles as you can on our 3.6 mile loop trail located at the trail sign near the softball field behind the Griswold Middle School with a backpack on your back. The trail is open for this event Saturday and Sunday from sunrise to sunset during the month of October. No camping is allowed on this campus, there is a hotel down the street if you live a distance away and would like to get on the trail to start at sunrise.

There are many ways that you can do this challenge. You can start the trail at any time of the day and hike for as many hours that you want to do it. You can start at sunset and push out as many mile as you can until you cannot do anymore. You can start at sunrise and challenge yourself to hike as many miles as you can until sunset. You can walk the trail or you can run the trail. The challenge is what you want it to be. Hike your own hike.

The Pack. You must carry a pack for this challenge. Find a pack that will meet your challenge.

Hiker Fanny Pack: This pack is great if you are planning a short day hike. You do not have to hike all day, you can plan a short hike, and this 3.6 mile loop trail is a great hike to do as many mile as you want without the worry about time. Carry water and a snack inside the pack, if you do a longer walk you may want to bring a lunch with you. Do as many loops as you can and stop when you feel that you have done enough.

Hydration Backpack: This pack is designed for runners. On long distants trails, such as the Appalachian Trail, a backpacking trail that runs along the Appalachian Mountain Range from Georgia to Maine, hikers will run the entire trail using suport vehicles for resupply and to take them to hotels for the night or use a camper and camp in the A T parking lot instead of the woods. They mostly do this as a competition to do the entire trail in the least amount of days. There is a waterbag inside the pack that they refill and use a tube to drink from so that they do not have to stop. You can also put snacks and lunch inside the pack.

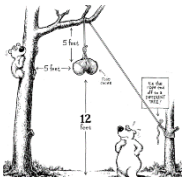
Hiker Day Pack: This pack is great if you are planning a longer day hike. This pack is also used by weekend backpackers who would do a two night three day backpacking trip. Carry everything that you would carry in the fanny pack plus camping supplies, a tent, sleeping bag and cooking supplies. You will also need to pack a back woods water filter and food for dinner that you would cook on your backwoods cooking stove, you may also want breakfast and a lunch for the next day.

Backpacker Pack: Now we get into the long distance hiker. This group is out for up to six months in the woods. Again the most popular hiking trail for this is the Appalachian Trail. Hikers need enough supplies to be in the woods for a whole week at a time. They would stop in towns to re-supply and some time stay in hotels or hostiles to take a shower and relax before getting back to the trail. The 100 mile wilderness in Maine is generally considered the most remote section of the Appalachian Trail and the hikers are warned at the start of this section to have a least 10 days of supply.

The Challenge: The average hiking distance per day on the Appalachian Trail for thru-hikers is generally between 14 and 20 miles. Some hikers, particularly those who are fast, may average 25-30 miles a day. The fastest known time running the Appalachian Trail is 40 days, 18 hours, and 5 minutes, achieved by Tara Dower in 2024. How many miles can you do?

The trail: Start from the parking lot behind the Middle school near the softball field at the trail head sign. There is a box attached to the sign that has this PDF file inside it. When you have finished your hike fill out the registration form and leave it in the box with the opening in it. You can use any name that you want for this. The registration is picked up after each weekend and we will post it on our website, this is for other hikers to see how much other hikers our doing, this is important if you are competing to see how you are doing against other hikers. You will start at the sign at an elevation of 140ft on a blue blazed trail, look for the hiker symbol (the black and white one) that you will see along the trail. He will have an arrow that will direct you which way to go on the trail. The trail here runs along the outside of the softball field and then turns left alongside the baseball field to the power lines. Here you will descend and follow the power lines until you see a red and blue blaze on a power line pole. Turn right here and follow the trail until you reach the Quinebaug River at an elevation of 80ft. As you continue along the river you will reach other trail junctions where the trails join up. You will now see new blazes added onto the trees, orange and white, keep following the river until you reach the underpass of I395. From here you will climb up to 190ft over a rough section of the trail, use caution over the eroded dirt road that is used by the state to work on the bridge. When you reach William Drive, turn around here and head back down to the river. Follow the trail to a trail junction with white and blue blazes on the trees. You will see the hiker symbol here with an arrow pointing to the trail to your right. Here you reach another split in the trail, turn right and start another climb following the white and blue blazes to 200ft. The trail will stay at this elevation as you reach a split in the trail where you will see an exit onto the campus road, you will see the hiker symbol here with an arrow pointing to the trail to your left. The trail reaches a rest area with a sign.

The Practice Area: Here you can take a break. There some areas that have been cleared with a log to sit on. If you are practicing to do a backpacking trip sometime in the future, you can practice here setting up camp. Test your gear to see if it is comfortable to spend a night in. Try out your cooking stove and meal, there are many kinds of dehydrated hiker meals available in most stores, or you can dehydrate your own homemade meal. No open fires are allowed on school property so you must only use backpacking cooking stoves here. A porta-potty, known as a “Privy” on backpacking trails is within walking distance from the rest area, a sign will point you in the direction of it.

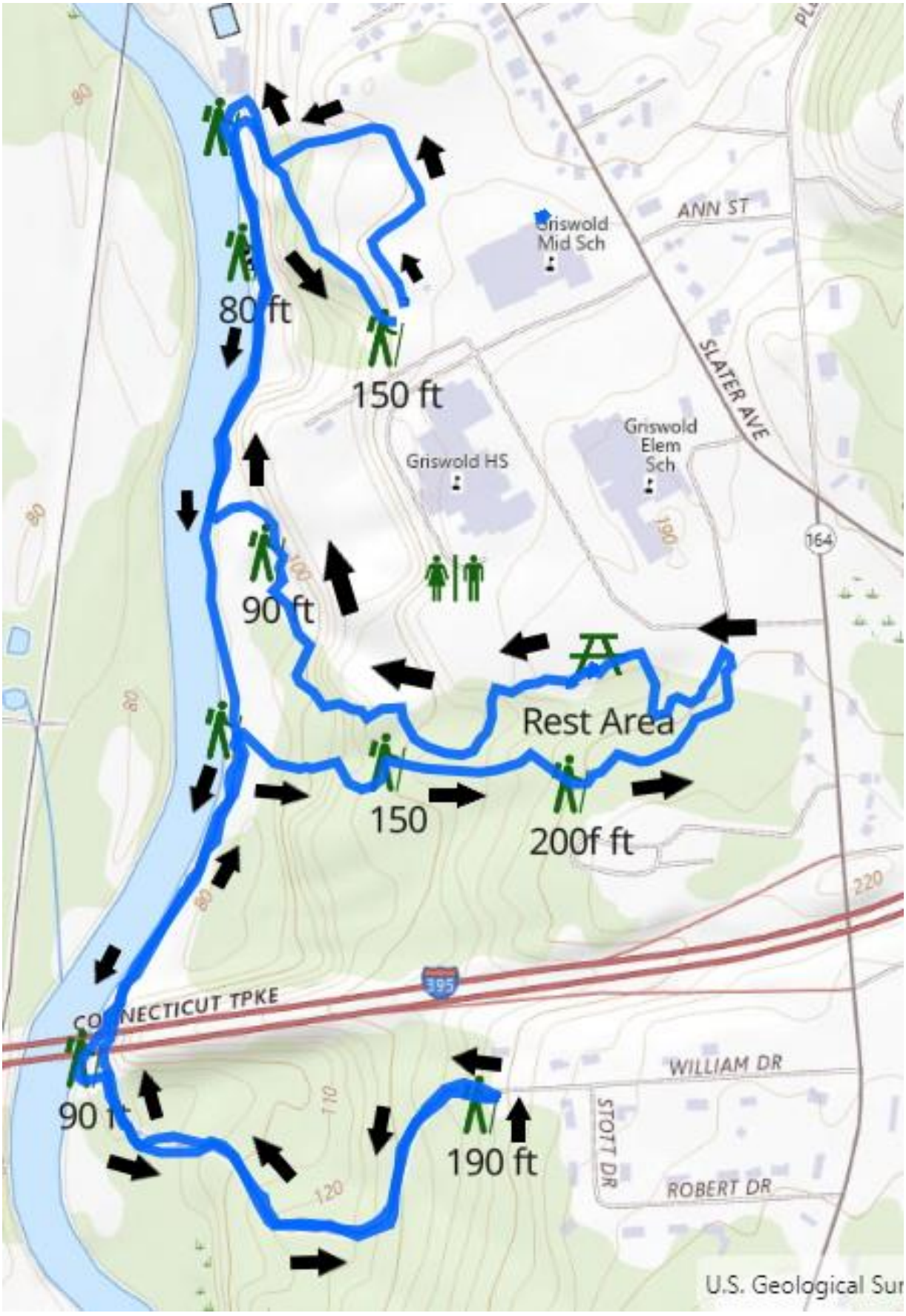


Food Bag: You can practice hanging a food bag here if you have a food bag with you. You need to find a tree to keep the bag out of the reach of bears or other night time visitors who may get into your food supply. NEVER EVER KEEP FOOD IN YOUR TENT. You do not want unexpected visitors inside your tent.

The trail: Let's get back onto the trail. From here you will start your descent. Just pass the rest area you will reach a stream. You will see a sign for filtering water. If you have a water filter you can practice using it here, or you can treat the water, the sign will provide information on this. Giardia infection is an intestinal infection marked by stomach cramps, bloating, nausea and bouts of watery diarrhea. Giardia infection is caused by a microscopic parasite that is found worldwide, especially in areas with poor sanitation and unsafe water. NEVER DRINK WATER FROM ANY STREAM OR SPRING WITHOUT TREATING OR FILTERING IT FIRST!

You will descend a little more and reach a split in the trail, the blue trail will turn to your left, keep straight here as you descend only on the white blaze trail, a hiker symbol will show you the right way, by the way, the Appalachian Trail is blazed white. From here you descend very steeply, use caution going down, the trail will level off and you will wind through a nice pine forest. At a split in the trail turn left and back to the river. You will now follow the river back toward the parking lot. When the trail climbs up do not turn left at the power line, you will see the hiker symbol, go straight, this will take you back to the parking lot

The end: When you get back to the sign that you started at, you can end your hike or start again to get more mileage. Use your car as a resupply, refill your water bottles and food supplies.


80 ft
150 ft
90 ft
Rest Area
150
200f ft
90 ft
190 ft
ANN ST
Griswold Mid Sch
SLATER AVE
Griswold HS
Griswold Elem Sch
164
CONNECTICUT TPKE
395
WILLIAM DR
STOTT DR
ROBERT DR
220
U.S. Geological Sur

Registration Form

Your Name			What town do you live in		What State
Time that you started			Time that you finished		
Hiker or a Runner?			How many miles did you do?		
Type of Pack:					
Did you set up camp at the practice area? How did you do?					