

Scout & Rolling Thunder (RT) Start SOBO IAT Maine and AT Thru-Hike on May 27, 2017

Why in the world would two southbound (SOBO) Appalachian Trail (AT) thru-hikers start at the U.S./Canada border crossing in Fort Fairfield, Maine? Well...because both their Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and Continental Divide Trail (CDT) hikes started (and ended) at an international border! Therefore, Barney "Scout" Mann and John "Rolling Thunder" or "RT" Henzell started their AT thru-hike at the northern terminus of the International Appalachian Trail (IAT) in Maine – the border crossing in Fort Fairfield – on May 27, 2017. It was a beautiful, sunny spring day in northern Maine, albeit with the typical complement of black flies in attendance. My husband, Kirk, and I met them and Scout's wife Sandy (trail name "Frodo") for breakfast at Subway in Fort Fairfield to go over maps and offer some advice. We also gave each hiker an IAT hat! (see photos below)



Photo at Left (L-R): RT, Scout, Kirk and Cheryl at Subway in Fort Fairfield.

Photo at Right (L-R): Rolling Thunder (RT), Frodo, and Scout.



After breakfast, we drove to the border crossing and took photos at the monument. To the right Scout is showing off his patriotic gaiters before he kissed the monument goodbye (below left)!



We caught up with them again near the end of Sam Everett Road after we checked out the Fort Fairfield lean-to using our ATV (below right). As you can see, they are happily ticking off the first few miles of their over 2,200 mile thru-hike.



If you would like to follow their hike, they are on [trailjournals.com](http://www.trailjournals.com). Scout's entries can be found at <http://www.trailjournals.com/journal/entries/21828>; RT's are at <http://www.trailjournals.com/journal/entries/20825>. Both are excellent writers with great photos and interesting journal entries.

Some background – when they complete this AT thru-hike, with a planned completion date of October 17th, they both will have completed the "Triple Crown" of long distance hiking – the PCT, CDT, and AT. As they have been told numerous times, "Nobody only hikes two of them!" Both have also done other long distance hiking here and internationally, RT especially, including his recent treks in the Sinai Peninsula and on the Israel Trail. Scout is a retired business and real estate attorney from San Diego and RT is a retired journalist from New Zealand. Frodo completed the PCT with Scout in 2007, then Scout completed the CDT in 2015 at the age of 63 (Frodo "only" did 600 miles of the CDT with him). They host PCT hikers at their home and have had 898 in 2017. RT helped with that and also stayed with Scout and Frodo in 2006 before he hiked the PCT, then completed the CDT in 2010. We wish them both the best of luck with this IAT/AT hike!

