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Title:

Comments: Hello, I realize the comment period for the PNT recently closed, I'm sorry I missed the deadline.

When I was 23 I through-hiked the PNT in the summer of 2012. From what I could gather through various grapevines I was the only person who actually walked it from start to finish that year, and to be fair, I took rides when I could get them and altered the conventional path somewhat by kayaking between La Conner and Port Townsend. The through-hiker golden standard of "continuous steps" rapidly fell by the wayside as I realized if I just made it from Chief Mountain to Cape Alava that would be momentous.

I suppose I write not to recount my story to you so much as speak to its value. Making the trudge across the PNT was undeniably valuable to my development as a person, as cliché as that is. The remote nature of the trail, its demanding and occasionally maddening combination of bushwhacking and road walking, and its small numbers were all aspects that drew me to it. Had I wanted to walk the AT or the PCT with their trail names and relatively accessible amenities and hiker communities I would have. Instead, I traveled as a solo woman through some pretty remote country, taking a journey none of my friends had, and it was scary and lonely and pushed my limits.

While I do believe that the outdoors are for everyone, that equity and diverse representation are hugely important in our current political moment, I would be lying if I didn't admit I liked being alone out there and that I feel fortunate to have made that trip while numbers were still low. Much of the value to me is summed up by how many times I mentioned the PNT and whoever I was talking to just assumed I was talking about the PCT. It would be a beautiful thing to bring this route into a more cohesive trail. I hope that more folks get to walk it and that in making it a more reasonable trek it will show more people the inarguable value of open spaces.

I don't know that this comment is helpful, but I hope this trail does get preserved, as it would be a terrible loss to see it fall into development.