

Koolau Summit 8 Day Thru Hike

3/25/12-04/01/12

Chase W. Norton



KST8D

e Norton

Warning and Disclaimer:

This trip has been put together from years of solo backpacking trips on the summit of the Koolau Mountains. I do not encourage anyone to repeat this hike as the dangers and risk level are very high. I am providing a very detailed account of my trip, but do not take it as a guide. Information on water locations, cabins, weather and trail conditions can all change in the blink of an eye. The gear list provided is what I have learned to work for me in the environment I enjoy backpacking in. As you will read, it has taken me years to learn how to get to a sub 10lb pack while maintain comfort, functionally and safety. This list represents a philosophy and mindset that one must understand in order to best use this gear. Also, most all the gear listed has been modified after purchase or been custom built for my needs. You must have a complete understanding of the hiking environment and conditions for which your gear will be used in. All times and miles are approximate and can vary wildly depending on conditions and skill level.

Chapter 1: The Motivation

It all began in 2009 while in a pub with a discussion I was having with a good friend and hiking buddy, Chappy. I wanted to do more backpacking around Oahu, both for the experience and to make use of all the new gear I had recently purchased from REI. After a couple of beers the talk turned to an argument about hiking the entire Koolau summit in a single trip. I was ignorant, reckless and far too confident in my hiking abilities but was adamant it could be done. Of course, this was before I had ever hiked on Oahu. He rightfully laughed at my desires and let me know that even in sections it could not be completed let alone in a full backpacking trip.

This was the time the seed was planted especially for the section hiking of the Koolau summit. As I was doing some of those northern portions or the saddles the motivation transitioned from proving a friend wrong to my own desire to find and push my limits. From that day forward both consciously and unconsciously I began making the necessary changes in myself to prepare and execute a thru hike of the Koolau summit. I hiked more and started to learn and understand the mountains on Oahu. Through these hikes I would meet other hikers who seemed to share the same opinions as Chappy, which simply furthered my desire to take on the impossible. We all want to make our mark in this world.

From that initial argument, I started with the southern portions from Makapuu to Konahuanui. Actually, it took over a year to hike those sections. Some sections I would repeat until I knew them very well. Still, I am not sure why it took so long and now that I've done it all in one day, it is even more comical. Regardless, it took me a year to section hike it.

After the southern portion, I turned my focus to the saddles. These were the sections most people argued were undoable. For a long time I was working on the Pali Notches but continually failed in my attempts. I went up many times, perhaps six or seven attempts, but always got stuck at the nub and/or chimney. Then I got distracted by the Piliwale ridge and making route on that ridge. Honestly, after some time I had begun to just let the whole dream go. I guess this is where the drive to prove a friend wrong started to diminish and I started to consider the entire section hike undoable. It wasn't until I was camping at a bluegrass festival in the Botanical Gardens in Kaneohe that I started to look at the saddles in profile and the gears started turning in my head.

One fateful day, I called up a good friend, Matthew, to see if he would join me up Lanihuli and descend down the Kalihi saddle. If that didn't look good then we could descend down to the Pali. I don't think he knew what he was getting himself into, but he agreed. The following Sunday we headed up and after some time scouting we agreed to attempt bottom up approach from the Pali as soon as we could get the time.

The following weekend Matt and I decided to first attempt the Notches on Saturday. After all those months of failure, we were able to complete and get past all the obstacles I had previously failed to conquer. Having someone else there to discuss a problem with, share in the fear and the reward, can sometimes change what might

seem impossible. The next day Matt had contacted a friend, Duc, and his hiking friends Rasta and Laredo...people who I have now come to both call friends and highly respect. We asked them to join us for a Pali to Lanihuli attempt. Long story short, we made it up and I got to see what hiking with a solid team was really like much different than most of my solo missions.

With the Pali saddle completed in one weekend, the passion of a full section hike was reignited, but now had become a personal obsession void of any outside influences. I still did not know what the northern sections were like or the two other saddles, but soon I would find out.

One afternoon I received a phone call asking if I wanted to join a Waiahole Uka to Waikane hike. I mention this because this was my first northern section hiking and my first time meeting Pat. This section was completed but not without the ridiculousness that is Pat's memory and summit hiking knowledge. I remember at one point in the hike he stopped us and said, "Wait, right here 10 years ago we put a....yes...yes there is the stake we put down to mark this contour." Now, this was in 7ft high Uluhe ...in what feels like the middle of nowhere. The information he has shared with me is pivotal to my ability making through these mountains. This specific hike opened my eyes to the overgrown and contouring KST proper. If I wasn't already, now I was truly hooked.

As the following months and years went by, it was clear that I had caught the summit fever. I went back up for multiple overnights, traversing sections I had never been on or repeating sections to understand them better. It is my opinion that one can never truly experience the summit of the Koolau Mountains until you have backpacked it. What occurred up there at night taught me more than any day hike I've ever done. The struggle of fighting the night wind, rain, lack of good sleeping spot, isolation, finding water, falling in mud – all taught me respect and humbled me of my fragility when exposed to these elements. For every additional ounce of pain and misery felt, the mental rewards and growth got bigger until it was common for me to be anticipating the horrible night sleep with a smile on my face.

After years of hiking and backpacking, my completion of the Kalihi saddle meant I could consider the entire summit hiked sectionally. Looking back on what I had learned and where I had hiked, I knew a full traverse was in the cards but the planning and preparation for it would not come easy.

Chapter 2: Preparation

My desires to backpack the entire summit of the Koolau Mountains could be manifested in a variety of ways. I decided early on that I did not want stash food and water and attempting to make the entire trip fully self-contained. This would mean collecting water only from natural sources only the trail and carrying 9 days of food from day 1. In order to make this possible I had to: 1) Learn all of my water sources along the trail and my water consumption needs; 2) Learn to reduce my pack weight and bulk to allow for the food; 3) Learn how to make meals that required little water and little bulk that provided enough calories to keep me going.

Conversion of a typical backpacker to an ultra light weight backpacker

When I first began backpacking in 2008, I went out and purchased every bit of conceivable gear one could think of for a trip. Solar powered battery chargers, collapsible sinks, and a stainless steel trowel are just some of the many absurdities. I was going into the wild right? I needed every comfort of home to come with me, right? It did not matter the weight of my pack. What mattered was my comfort at the campsite. Over the course of next 4 years, I would learn just how wrong I was in my assumptions.

There are really two types of backpackers: hikers and campers. I was the 65 lb pack heavy camper type that hated every step on the trail and thought every minute at the site would be heaven. Lucky for me, my friend Chappy subscribed to a strange theory of lightweight packing or minimalist packing. While his pack would be considered heavy by my current standards, it was significantly lighter than anything I could dream up at the time. So, 'small' jokes came here and there from him on my gear and slowly I started to listen to some of the comments. I started to search out ways to lighten everything I was carrying. Fortunately I found the forum Backpacking Light, a community of people that embody the spirit of ultra light backpacking.

First, I dropped the unnecessary items mentioned above. But this was not enough. My pack was still heavy and it seemed all I was dropping was comfort at camp. So I dug more and read more. I allowed it to become an obsession and strived to figure out how these guys go out on multiple night trips with a sub 10 lb pack. I went through 8 different packs, 3 different shelter setups, 4 different sleep systems and many many different small items. I care to not comment on the amount of money wasted, but the knowledge I gained during the process is invaluable. I would focus on one piece of gear, say my shelter. I would research for months over forums for the perfect shelter that would withstand the elements experienced on the summit. Finally, I would pull the trigger, make the purchase, wait by the mail, and then test the item up on the summit until I understood it fully. Often, the item did not meet my needs or did not perform on the summit well. So I would eventually sell the item for discounted price and start again. This process, while tiring, led me to gear that I not only understand completely but I can proudly and loudly state WHY I am using that exact shelter or that exact pack. I can tell you why it works for my conditions and importantly I can rely and trust my gear on a level very few can. This carried the pursuit down to even understanding the fabric used for gear and now I own a sewing machine to make the modifications I need to allow the gear to perform at its best or make my own (MYOG) when there is no gear made which meets my needs.

The transition from a 65 lb pack to 7.8 lb pack carried across the summit had to also occur in my head. It consisted of two main changes. First, I had to learn to embrace the outdoors as much as I embraced being outdoors. To understand that just

because I am muddy and dirty does not mean I need a shower or to clean myself. We are all too coddled as it is with showers, soap and the common desire to wear a new clean set of clothes. I learned to embrace sleeping on the ground and getting as close as possible to nature. When I say sleeping on the ground I mean exactly that, not in a tent separated from nature but a part of it. Waking up with ants on you and your stuff was once unthinkable, but now I just smile and get out of bed. This mental toughening was vital to my transition. Be proud of your stink! Be proud of your muddy clothes! It's ok, and it's not going to hurt you. This is important as I went to a tarp setup, dropped all extra clothes, and left the soap at home.

Second is the acceptance that less is more when at camp. Why do I go into the woods? To bring all the comforts of home? Doubtful, otherwise I would just stay home. I laid all my gear out and looked at each piece asking myself what I could go without. Then I would go out on a trip without the items and see how things went. Guess what? The trip went better than before! I was not dragged down on the trail but also at camp things were orderly, neat and extremely simple. I had to learn to embrace those nights without the electronics and distractions and learn to allow myself to accept silence. Slowly, I started to see this crossing over into my normal life. I began to throw out all unnecessary items in my home until I am now left with 1 plate, 1 glass, 1 towel, 1 of everything that I need and nothing else. This is something I came to be proud of as I am the same person on the trail as I am in normal life.

KST8D ThruHike *Water* Chase Norton

Water is often the heaviest thing in your pack at 2.2 lbs /liter, but it is also one of the most essential items. This created a clear problem for reducing my pack weight. So about three years ago I started to push the limits of dehydration on my body beginning with relatively safe steps. First, I removed that camelback straw! How could I monitor my consumption and control my urges when I have a straw right next to my mouth connected to a water reservoir I could not see! Not to mention the fact that those things are awkward, heavy and hard to clean. Next, I would redo a hike and bring 1L less water. Taking note of exactly how much I drank on each and every trip. When did I feel the urge to chug and when was I just flying through the trail without thoughts of water? What were the differences in conditions between those moments? I learned to identify the effects of dehydration on my body and mind. I slow down, I rest more often, I get out of breathe more easily, I hallucinate, but I learned how to keep hiking under these conditions throughout the years.

I began to look at every day hike as a new time to test myself and discover new limits. After 2 years of pushing myself on day hikes, I began to test these limits on backpacking trips and was able to complete the Pupukea to Waikane section on ~3.5Ls over three days. I learned that often I wake up in the middle of the night dying of thirst but while around the camp at night I was fine. This taught me to limit my water consumption while awake at camp because I would need that water for my nightly chugs. I learned that it is best to allow my breathing to return to normal before I begin to

drink water or else I would drink too much. I had to know how much water would get me a certain distance in specific terrain in order to plan my water consumption on a trip. I had to know how long my body could go without water and how to properly ration so I could continue to hike at a speed that will get me to the end.

Meals

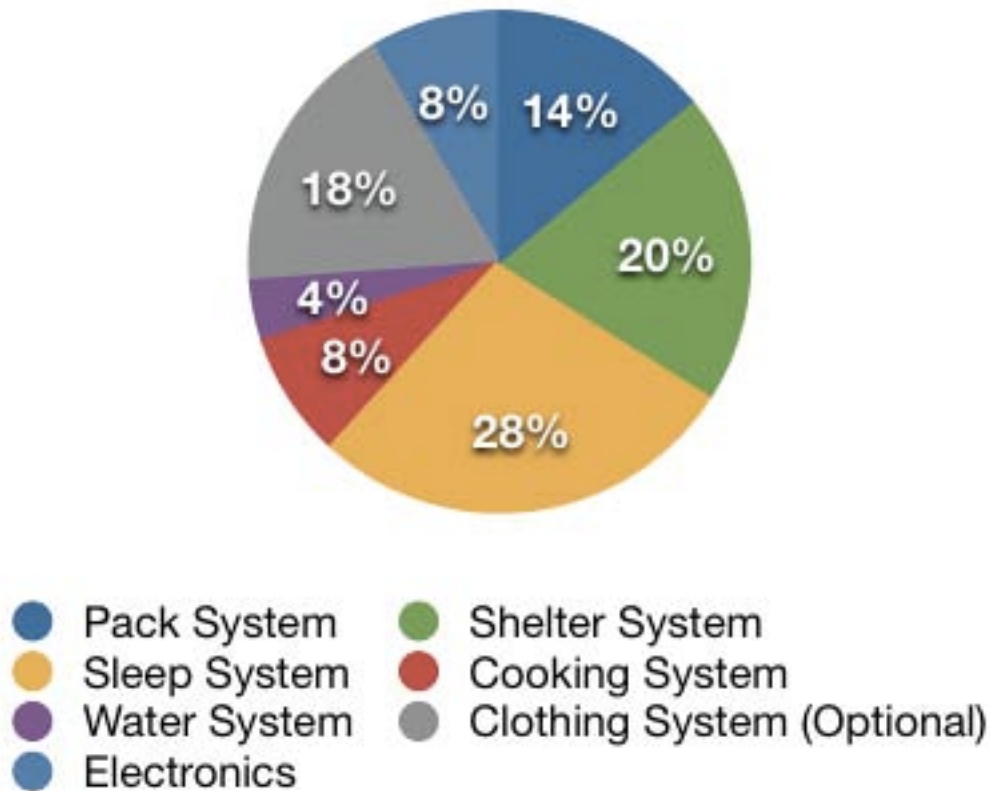
Meals were a hard choice because water must be considered. Often, people think that those freeze-dried, expensive, and over-salted mountain house meals are best. If you ask any long distance backpacker for a list of their foods I promise you there will be zero store bought freeze dried meals. I have an added dislike because of the ridiculous amount of water required for each meal. So I went to the grocery store and just walked around for a couple of hours looking at the calorie to weight ratio with emphasis on simplicity and a requirement for little or no water needed. For my needs, lunch needs to be made in a few minutes or less - and dinner in under 10 minutes. I had to learn that the main function of food is as fuel, not as an enjoyment on the trail. If it can provide enjoyment then that is a plus, but the main concern is to provide my body with the needed fuel to continue moving. I would buy the ingredients for a backpacking meal I'd thought of and go home and test it out with the exact gear I was going to use on the trail. I would repeat this and see how many nights it took till mentally I did not want that meal anymore and make note of it. I began to look at the ingredients of those overpriced mountain houses and realized that with very little effort I could make my own and it would require significantly less water and could be modified for my own tastes. I have learned that without much trouble I can eat the same thing for breakfast, lunch and dinner for up to 12 days without really minding. The secret is to provide very little but intense changes every so often (i.e., a chinese hot mustard packet one day and sweet and sour the next).

Chapter 3: Gear

Base Gear List:	# Items	Weight (oz)
Pack System	3	18.105
Modified Gossamer Gear Gorilla	1	13.505
Trash Compactor Liner	1	2.2000
Zpacks Multi-use front pack	1	2.40
Shelter System	20	26.045
Zpacks Hexamid Solo Tarp	1	4.805
Groundhog Stakes	8	4.415
Linelocs	8	0.225
Suluk46 Padded Ground Cloth	1	3.00
Borah Custom Bivy	1	6.10
BD Distance FL Pole	1	7.50
Sleep System	4	36.23
Kooka Bay Pillow XL	1	2.370
Kooka Bay Mummy Pad	1	14.06
WM Summerlite 6'	1	19.00
Outdoor Research UL Stuff	1	0.80
Cooking System	15	10.50874672
Razor blade	1	0.10
Sleeve	1	0.0591457750
Cone	1	1.480
Gram Cracker Hexamine Stove	1	0.420
Esbit Tab	9	4.500
600 Evernew with lid	1	3.3038869257950
		5
Vargo Ti-Folding Spork	1	0.645
Water System	39	5.06
Aquamira tablets	36	0.81
Nalgene Wide-Mouth 96oz	1	2.25
1L Gatorade bottle	2	2.00
Clothing System (Worn)	10	46.43978844
Patagonia Men's Rock Guide Pants	1	10.50

Base Gear List:	# Items	Weight (oz)
Patagonia Capilene 1 Silkweight Stretch T-Shirt	1	5.40
Patagonia Capilene 1 Silkweight Stretch Crew	1	7.00
Gardening gloves	1	3.3
Socks	1	1.6
Dirty Girl Gaiters	1	0.975
Innov8 X-Talon 212	1	7.4647887327
Columbia wide brim hat	1	4.925
Cut Bandana	1	0.8
UA Boxers	1	4.475
Clothing System (Optional)	5	23.07
Patagonia Torrentshell	1	8.875
Patagonia UL Down jacket	1	7.84
Patagonia R1 Balaclava	1	2.00
BPL Merino Wool Bottoms	1	3.610
Pro-tec Knee Tendon Strap	1	0.745
Toiletries	8	6.325
Toothpaste	1	0.8
Toothbrush	1	1.1
Hand sanitizer	1	1.4
Ear plugs	2	0.025
Toilet Paper	3	3
Electronics	4	11.025
Petzl e+LITE	1	0.750
iPhone 4 cable	1	0.75
iPhone 4	1	4.925
Imax Power 5000mAh	1	4.60
Kindle 6"	1	5.87
Total Items	108	
Total Weight (oz)/(lbs)	182.808534819	11.426
Total Base Weight (oz)/(lbs)	136.368746085	8.5230

Base Weight Breakdown



1

Modified Gossamer Gear Gorilla

Pack fabric is 210D double wall ripstop nylon. I've found this to be just satisfactory for the summit conditions. Small holes were in it by the end. Pocket for a pad that provides frame support and removable frame stays. Removed all outside mesh pockets. No form of mesh pockets can last on the summit and by the end of the trip I always had lost some gear from holes. Removed all straps and the upper tie cord and replaced with lighter weight versions. Removed the pad pocket on the inside and all compression straps. Removed the tags. Added a hip pocket for day snacks.

Trash Compactor Liner

Bought at most any locations. A pack cover will never keep out all the rain and if relied on solely could have very bad outcomes. Also, the summit will rip and grab at your pack cover continuously. I still do not know why people use these. In addition, they are often extremely heavy at 4-8ozs. A 2mil trash compactor liner at 2.2oz is the standard method for any UL long distance backpacker and will keep all your gear inside dry no matter the intensity of the rain or overgrowth. Most all are long enough

to tie it off at the top and tuck it into your pack for added waterproofing. Try to go with the unscented versions but are hard to find.

Zpacks Multi-use front pack

With the removal of all outside pockets I had a concern of water bottle locations. This was solved by a front chest pack made by Zpacks that incorporates the idea of proper weight distribution/balance with the ease of access to essential day items. This fits 2 1L Gatorade bottles and 1 other small item. That would put ~4.4lbs of weight on my chest to balance out the weight on my back. This is a beloved item. It detaches from my pack and becomes a waist pack that allows me to drop down and collect water without the weight of my heavier pack. It resisted damage from extreme overgrowth abuse and only showed small holes by the end.

Zpacks Hexamid Solo Tarp

I have gone through many different shelter setups and this one has taken the most to learn how to use correctly. However, now that I understand its proper use it has become my absolute favorite shelter setup and I can rely on it to withstand the extreme winds and rains of the summit. At 4.805oz, it is made from a fabric new to the backpacking community called cuben fiber. I love that it does not sag when wet like silnylon.

MSR Groundhog Stakes

Man oh man have stakes been the bane of my existence. I went through a 6-month period of testing different stakes and many nights of waking up to my shelter flying around in the wind. The soil up on the summit is soft and typical stakes will not hold. Period. To worsen the issue, the wind will put extreme pressure on stakes and if not built well or with good material will bend or break. It would be ideal to just tie the guy lines off to rocks or trees, but such luxuries are not in abundance on the summit. After all the tests, these stakes were the best for the weight. I found snow stakes worked well but were way too heavy to be justified. In the time I've used the groundhogs I've never had one be pulled out or bent. These allowed me to get a good night of sleep without having to worry about waking up to restake a tarp/tent flapping around in the wind.

Linelocs

When working with tarps/tents and high winds, I like my guylines to be as taut as possible. This involves either repositioning my stakes after the initial placement or to use linelocs and adjust the tautness as needed. I opted for the linelocs because often space is limited on the summit and I did not have the option of placing the stakes in the best location for tautness. It took me a while to learn how to properly use them but now I would not leave home without 'em.

Tyvek Groundsheet

This is a material I swear by for my groundsheet. Lightweight but importantly it is durable and stiff enough to create "the bathtub effect" to keep rain spray off my gear.

Borah Custom Bivy

I love tarps now and often on short backpacking trips would not bring a bivy. However, due to the length of the trip I opted for it. It was custom made for my sleeping pad and body. The bottom is silnylon and the top is M50 with a 0.7 face cover and side zip. I added a pocket on the inside for my iPhone and tie outs on key location. I think I will change the bottom to cuben fiber in the future and add reinforcements to the tie outs.

Black Diamond Distance FL Pole

A trekking pole holds up my tarp so one is required. I played around with many different options and finally decided on this one. Trekking poles have to have the flip lock mechanism. The twist lock types do not hold and have always resulted with me waking up to a tarp on my face. The ability to fold into three pieces and fit in my pack is also huge. I loved using it from Pupukea to Red Hill, but over the saddles I like to have both hands to climb and do not want the pole in the way. There were some options 3-4oz lighter, but did not fold and were not adjustable in height.

Kooka Bay Pillow XL

This cottage company has since gone out of business, but only because the owner got burned out. The products were top notch and unrivaled by competitors in terms of weight and durability. A pillow is a luxury right? An ULer would argue it is one. I would too. So call this a luxury item at 2.370oz, but I have found that I sleep better with it then on the nights I packed my rain gear up on my shoes and slept on that. On small trips, I would leave it at home, but over 8 days I knew I would need good sleep. To make it feel even better I would put it in my sleep system stuff sack before blowing it up. I suggest trying the shoe/rain gear method first though as many find it satisfactory.

Kooka Bay Mummy Pad

A great pad perfect for my needs. Thermarest has since come out with a xlite that I would opt for when this pad begins to fail as the xlite is only 8oz and has horizontal baffles. For my environment it works, but the KB pad has a very small R value so anywhere with a cold ground should reconsider.

Western Mountaineering 6' Summerlite

This is the only item in my entire pack that I made right on my first purchase and man am I glad (these cost in the mid 300s and up). At 19oz, 3in of loft and 14oz of down I am kept warm no matter what the summit weather is like. I have the left zip to allow me to open it when the conditions are warmer than expected. It is the mummy bag for those colder conditions. The versatility of this item has allowed me to take it from summit of Mauna Loa to the beaches of Malaekahana. Love this bag. If you know how to treat gear, I would always suggest down bags.

Razor blade

But you HAVE to have a knife on a backpacking trip right? Why? Ask yourself what are you cutting? Honestly, a razor blade is not even needed because there is nothing I am cutting. I bring one for that random sauce packet that might need cutting but mainly for first aid.

Sleeve

Don't want your razor blade cutting your other gear

Caldera Ti-Tri Cone

The holy grail of cooking setups. Can use wood, alcohol or esbit! A cottage company that builds a piece of Ti into the windscreen that also supports your pot makes it. The design and execution of the product is spot on. Each cone is designed for a specific pot so you have to specify at the time of ordering.

Hexamine Stove

Come with the Ti-Tri and is the simplest stove imaginable. Three small pieces of Ti that connect to form a platform for the tablet.

Esbit Tab

Oh the esbit. On my first attempt I used HEET and wood as fuel in my Ti-Tri. I found I could never get the exact amount of HEET down for each meal and wood was frustratingly wet. I read about guys who swear by hexamine/esbit because one tablet is 0.5oz and can give an entire's day of cooking. I went with 9 (9 days) tablets this trip and honestly it was the best experience I've ever had with cooking on the summit. If you are going solo this is great. Do some testing if you are going with more than one person.

600 Evernew

The solo backpacker needs nothing more than 550ml pot so 600ml is overkill right? I have two 600ml set ups. One is a wide short pot (the evernew) and one is a skinny tall pot (Snowpeak). I found I enjoy cooking on a wider pot as it distributes the heat better. Personal preference as many swear by the 600ml Snowpeak mug as their pot. The beauty of the evernew is my entire cooking system fits into it including fuel. Simplicity at its best.

Vargo Ti-Folding Spork

Really a spork is unneeded because rarely do backpackers need the fork aspect but it is what I bought. I went through a couple of sporks until I realized this point. Decided on this item because it folds into my pot making everything neat and simple. It does have the tendency to unfold when in use so that is a negative.

Aquamira tablets

I love the ability to purify 36L of water with items weighing only 0.81oz. With each tablet cleaning 1L of water, it allowed me to plan out my water needs very precisely. I liked that a lot. The 4 hour waiting period was annoying and at times dangerous. I have a Steripen but wanted to save the extra 3oz to allow for another item. Now, I would go with the Steripen/tablet backup. It would have been very nice to drop down to a water source, fill up my 1L bottle, Steripen it, chug, repeat until super hydrated, and then fill up and use the tablet. This would have eliminated many of my least enjoyed moments. Lived and learned. With all that said I drank from a variety of odd places using the tablets and never had any real stomach problems so the tabs were doing their job well.

Nalgene Wide-Mouth 96oz

My long term water storage. It is how I could go multiple days without a water source. It meant adding ~6.6lbs when full but you do what you gotta do.

1L Gatorade Bottles

Simple, lightweight, widemouth and fit neatly into my front pack.

Patagonia Rock Guide Pants

I have to say these pants went through two attempts at the full traverse and performed amazingly. I lived in these pants and would never buy anything else. The material is tough and even when torn does not just fall apart. Hands down a favorite item

Patagonia Capilene 1 Silkweight Stretch Crew

A great lightweight item that kept my arms from getting torn up by the overgrowth. The downside is it holds odors and can get very smelly compared to merino wool. Also, when the sun is baking you but the overgrowth is bad it makes for very hot periods of time.

Gardening Gloves

Gloves are a must for most trails here. I loved the day I realized this and soon I was not fighting the veg but using it to my advantage.

Injinji socks

Forget those Smartwool heavy and horribly made socks. They normally fall apart after 500 miles of use and are the reason for blisters and fungus foot. Injinji socks became popular from the craze of five fingers but I enjoy them for their toe separation and lightweight aspects. 1 pair got me through the worst the summit can offer and gave zero blisters or hot spots. Also quick drying and easy to air out.

Dirty Girl Gaiters

Do not work on the summit. These are praised by ULers everywhere with a cult following. Everything about these failed for me on the summit and will not be using again.

Innov8 X-Talon 212

Innov8 is an interesting shoe company. They started appearing within my circle about 3 years ago though have been around for much longer. They focus on extremely lightweight outdoor shoes for high performance. The X-Talon 212 (212 grams) are a hybrid of cleats and hiking shoe. They are used by ULers around the world with many swearing 1000+miles on them. I hate Microspikes. hate hate hate them. They destroy our islands vegetation, make you rely on a piece of gear in a situation it is not designed for, often break and are ridiculously heavy. What people should be doing is searching for proper footwear. The X-Talons are my answer to a Microspikeless trip. The secret to them is removing the included liner and replacing with a sport hiking insole and comfort will be had for the entire trip.

Columbia Wide Brim Hat

I can not say enough good things about this piece of clothing and comes with me even on car camping trips. The wide brim hat provides protection from the sun, wind and most importantly during heavy rain I can still hike without any problem. Also, I find during windy rainy conditions, a bandana on my head and then the hat on top keeps a significant amount of warmth in.

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Cut Bandana

Cut the weight and reduce the bandana down to only what you need. This is multi-use item. Keeps warmth on my head. Reduces sweat in my eyes. I filter the big floaties out of my water through it. It is my camp rag. I wipe condensation down from the tarp with it. Truly a beloved simple item.

UA Boxers

Let's face, who wants to admit to wearing the same boxers for 8 days straight. I went through a long period of searching for the perfect boxer to handle this task. Briefs, boxer, boxer briefs, commando in the ultimate goal of reducing chaffing. These were praised by other backpackers and so I gave them a try. Hands down, the most amazing piece of under garment I have and probably will ever own. A morning and evening liberal dose of gold bond and no chaffing was had for either of the attempts.

Petzl E lite

An amazing device. I removed the strap and just attached it to my wide brim hat for even less weight. Too often these days' people are bringing headlamps designed for long night hikes when they are really just using the light for the 30 minutes or so of

darkness before bed. Why? I know after this trip that given my conditions I could have gone without the petzl. Ask yourself why you need light and plan accordingly.

Kindle and iPhone

Both devices are around the 4–5oz mark and are definitely my ultra luxury items. These items are never brought on short trips. On longer trips, I find it nice to communicate with a ground/support crew and get some good reading in during the dusk hours.

Chapter 4: The Trip

Day 1 (03/25/12)

Pupukea-Kawailoa

8 miles

7.5 hr

Total Pack Weight: 34.6125lb

It took me 7hrs from 9am-4pm the first time, 8 1/2 hrs the second time, and 7 the third time. Water is located at the falls windward of the camping area, but needs to be filtered because of the crap it is flows through (rusty metal and such). Be prepared for mud up to your knees when going down to the water hole. When it is raining, various small flows could allow collection of water instead of descending to the water hole. The cabin is still there, just try to get there before nightfall for the sunset. Remember the camp at Laie if ever needed.

- Pupukea-Malaekahana 5-6hrs
- Malaekahana-Laie 30-1 hr
- Laie-Kawailoa 30min-1hr

Camp at the leeward Kawailoa campground or in cabin.

Bail Malakahana, Laie.

I woke up around five in the morning too excited to sleep any longer and began working on the last couple of preparations. Took my last shower, ate my last big breakfast and drank my last latte for the next 8 days. As seems to happen with big events, my ride to the trailhead had troubles and thankfully Rasta was able to drive. He

would park at the Laie ball field parking lot for his descent later in the day. I called a taxi to take us to the trailhead.

Everything went smoothly and we arrived at the trailhead around 9:00am ready to begin my second attempt at backpacking the entire summit of the Koolau mountains. The road walking went by quickly as Rasta and I caught up on each other's lives and discussed plans for that day. Last time, we moved fairly slowly as Rasta did some much needed bushwhacking ahead of me. It had put me in Kawailoa around 5:30pm and him descending Laie trail well into the dark. We decided no bushwhacking this time and to make a point of moving fast. We hit the summit trail sign around 11am where pictures were had and pushed off for the club turnaround. After the turnaround the real hiking begins as the trail becomes significantly more overgrown.

Around this section an amazing feeling begins flooding my body when I mentally accept I will be backpacking in solitude for 8-9 days. It was a huge release of every worry and trouble back in my other non-hiking life and something that will keep me coming back.

I was really happy to see us reach the Malaekahana shortcut sign around 2:30 pm because I knew that Laie was only 2 hours away. I really wanted to make it to Kawailoa before sunset. It is just breathtaking up there. We put the hike speed into high gear and got to Laie around 4:15 pm with enough time to relax up in the foxhole and do some last minute chatting. Around 4:40 pm, Rasta wisely decided he needed to start descending and we said our farewells, "See you at Makapuu!" I yelled to him as he disappeared down the trail.

I am very grateful to him for driving and for his company while hiking. It is an amazing boost of morale and energy having a friend on trail to start this journey and I thank him for it. Watching him depart signified the true beginning of my trip as now I sat alone with nothing but the summit. I descended the foxhole and crossed over to Kawailoa in 20 minutes reaching the helipad and cabin by 5pm.

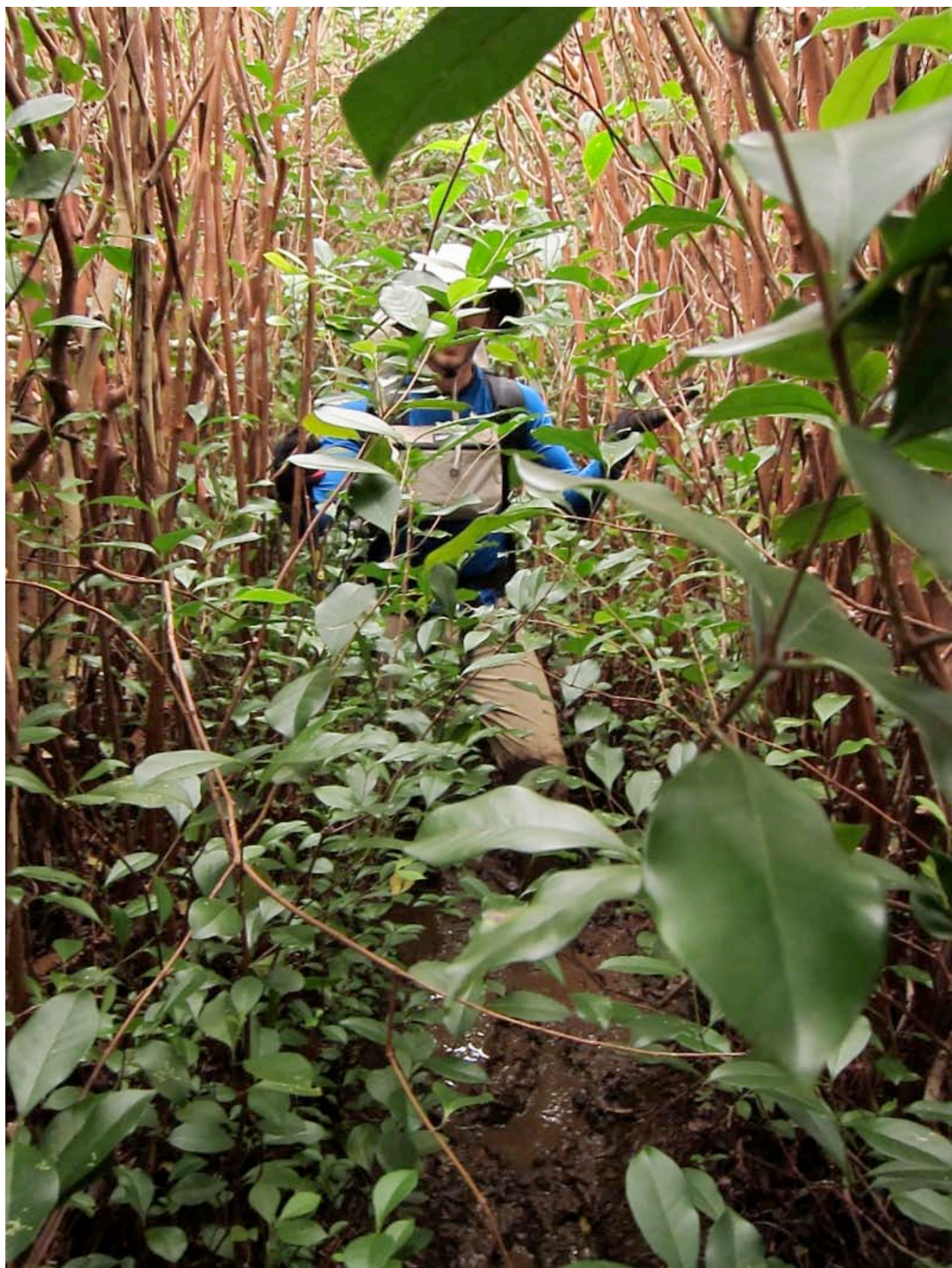
It really is an indescribable place when alone. Dropped all my gear in the cabin, put on my warmer clothes and grabbed my Kindle. The next 2 hours were spent sitting on the helipad overlooking the rolling ridges and convoluted terrain of the northern Koolau mountains and settling in for some reading while the sun moved slowly – then quickly - to set behind the Waianae mountains. Absolute peace.

As darkness began to set in I started dinner which involved heating spam to add to a split pea soup plus chocolate for dessert. I sat for a while in the metal box of a cabin listening to the sounds of the wind howling outside. A nightly chore involves laying out all my gear, packing what I can that night and planning the packing of the rest of the gear for the morning. This chore will become especially important as I moved into the nights without a cabin. Another chore was filling the next day's drinking water containers from my 96oz Nalgene. I soon learned the importance of doing all preparation for the next day that night as it makes the morning go by stress and worry free. These chores would become routine and soon performed without really any thought as they had to occur. I formed a mental checklist of the tasks needed to be done before I felt that "Ah, lets read from my Kindle" feeling. With my sleep system set up I climbed into bed and turned on my iPhone for my nightly update to my ground

crew. Within minutes of finishing the email I was fast asleep with dreams of the next day knee deep in mud.

KST8D ThruHike Chase Norton

















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## Day 2 (03/26/12)

*Kawailoa-Poamoho Cabin*

*6 miles*

*6.5 hr*

Total Pack Weight: 28.2125lb

This is the section with the Poamoho Cabin! Water will be located at the stream near the Cabin and the catchment. The day begins almost immediately following an army made fence for ~15 minutes. There are often 6ft wide clear swaths. The ground is rocky and slippery care is required. The fence will end and the KST nature will return for another 20-30 minutes until coming upon the Kahuku/Koloa Cabin now being rebuilt. You will see the wood structure and supplies all over the site. Continue around it and then turn right to contour correctly. Remember the pig trail. The KST will continue as it does until you reach the Castle trail marked with a metal pole. Got here by 11:30am last time and had lunch. You will reach the cabin fairly early so an early lunch is a good idea. After Castle you will reach the fenced bog, KST signs and army built fences (do not take the steps over the fences unless an obvious path is on the other side or at the wide open windswept area you have to walk across.) When you reach the neon trail marker on the road you are within an hour of the Poamoho cabin. Reaching the metal sheet fence (Snail Jail), you can climb the small hill to look down on the cabin and Cline memorial. Off to the right you will see the two ponds and a waterfall in the back left of one. Climb back down and head to the Cline memorial. I always give it a big hug and head to the cabin. Once you arrive, open up all windows and doors to air the place out while sweeping up the rat poop. Remember the rat poop. Remember the valve at the water catchment near the tank itself needs to also be opened. Do not leave any food laying out especially after nightfall. Remember the trail down to the ponds past the first trail on the left.

- Kawailoa-Kahuku Cabin 1hr 20min
- Kahuku Cabin-Castle Trail 1hr 45min-2hr
- Castle Trail-Peahinaia Trail 1hr 30min-2hr
- Peahinaia Trail-Castle 1hr

Sleep in cabin unless taken then go to stream camp

Bail Castle, Poamoho

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7:30am!!!!WAKE UP!!! YOUVE OVERSLEPT!!!!!! Somehow, with all comforts provided by the cabin I had over slept by 45 minutes and was very grateful that I had done all the preparations the night before. Even with the late start I told myself to not

stress and knew I could get to the Poamoho cabin way before sunset if I left by 8:30 am. Made myself coffee and enjoyed a quick breakfast before packing up and heading out. The morning was overcast and slightly chilly, but I had read the night before that weather should be good today so I expected things to improve. Up to and along the first fence it is wide open. It lasts only about 20 minutes and then shortly afterward the old Kahuku cabin was reached. Almost immediately, I started to hear the sound of a helicopter overhead. I looked to find the helicopter dropping people off at the Kawaihoa cabin and proceeded to fly around for the next hour or so. Needless to say, I was glad to have gotten out of the cabin before anyone showed up. At the old Kahuku cabin there was really no work done on it since my last attempt, which I was sad to see. For some reason, I was hoping to see a fully built cabin but knew better.

During a 3 night trip including this section I became horribly lost at this location. The reason being that as I walked around the cabin area I should have contoured right but instead continued straight ahead following a pig trail. This pig trail then led to an area the army has set up blue trail markers and rat poison. I mistook the blue trail markers as KST markers and searched for over an hour and a half until I finally discovered my mistake. Knowing the correct route now I contoured right and continued on my way. I reached castle by 11:45 am, which was only 15 minutes past my last attempt so I knew I was doing well on time.

At castle I enjoyed a spam wrap, veggie chips and some candy and was moving again by noon. Knowing the bog was coming up and then the fence I was getting excited. The bog came up quickly and I dropped down to the stream, which was flowing faster than I'd ever seen. The second fence appeared in the distance and knew there was easy going for the next hour or two. I really love certain areas of the fence section. From the notch you descend to walk out on top of a waterfall. It is just incredible and the views from the edge are unrivaled. The views of Kahana valley as you finally begin to turn right onto the rim are a must see for anyone. It is during this section that I finally get that glimpse of what is in store for the next 7 days. The entire mountain range is laid out in front of me. Importantly, this is finally when the convoluted terrain disappears and rim walking begins.

At the windswept area there is now a boot on the KST sign making it easier to see the cross for first timers - as long as the weather is good. In this case it was incredible 100% visibility weather. I will just say it now, the weather on this trip was unlike anything I have ever experienced up there. It felt like for the first time the summit welcomed my presence and allowed me to see its true beauty. The mud seemed worse this trip but it is always horrible so not really a huge difference.

By 3 pm I was coming upon the snail jail, which was now completely annihilated by the summit elements with sheets of metal laying everywhere. I found it somewhat satisfying to see the fragility of man-made structures against nature's force. Last time, I ascended the small hill next to the jail and got an incredible view of the ponds, cabin and memorial. Wanting to get to the cabin and take care of chores I pressed on and reached the cabin by 3:30 pm to discover that a group of hunters had occupied it the night before – Meaning? Clean floors!

I dropped all my gear and proceeded to do small cleaning of the cabin and aired it out. Checked on the water level of the catchment and it was practically full so I filled up my containers. Took off all my clothes and hung up everything with the hopes of drying it out. Normally, I wouldn't bother but with clear skies I gave it a chance and turned out to work well. After Poamoho, the mud situation becomes significantly better and I wanted to try and go into it with dry gear. Also, I washed out my shoes and socks. I have learned from previous trips that the Kawailoa to Poamoho section is the worst at putting little objects in your shoes - which lead to blisters later on if untreated. Behind the cabin is a really nice spot that I enjoy meditating and relaxing at so I grabbed my Kindle and headed up there for the next couple of hours. It is cold up there as the hours get closer to nightfall, but it was much warmer this trip then the one in November. I was very grateful for that. Sitting there in the peaceful quiet I realized how much I want a home tucked away deep in the Koolau away from everything. For now, at least I have this amazing place.

As night set in, I went down and made dinner similar to the night before and climbed into bed with a full belly and sent out the nightly email. Throughout the night, I was woken by the little critters playing in the walls but for some reason I never mind them. As the winds and rain picked up I was grateful for the four walls and a roof I had over me.

KST8D ThruHike Chase Norton











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### Day 3 (03/27/12)

*Poamoho-Kipapa Sugi Pines*

*5 miles*

*5 hr*

Total Pack Weight: 30.6125 lb.

Enjoy today! This is one of the quicker days so I would suggest the trip's only warm breakfast. Enjoy yourself and make sure you refill all water containers. Leave by 9 a.m. after cleaning up, signing the log, and boarding the place up. I did not find any water after the cabin to Kipapa. If you find it, take it. You will arrive at the Pauao terminus within 30 minutes of leaving the cabin. Enjoy the beauty around you! This is the most enjoyable section of the KST. Around you is Kahana Valley. The S/W junction comes too soon as you know a long leeward stretch is coming up from Waikane to Waiahole Uka. Don't forget to look for the pink ribbon rusty pole on the right. If you ever look up and see a contour, turn around and find the junction. Remember the set up on the side ridge to the right. Reach sugi pines and decide if want to continue 20 minutes up the landslide to reach true Kipapa terminus. Ascend landslide and look below you on the right for the contour. Supposedly, one can turn down Kipapa trail and campsite ~45min down near a possible waterfall. I tried this and found the overgrowth on Kipapa to be too much of a deterrent. I see this as a waste of 1hr 30min. Remember last camp spot sucked but the new one is amazing – it is located about 5 minutes before the summit right off the trail on the right.

- Poamoho-S/W 2hr 1/2min-3hr
- S/W-Waikane junction 30min
- Waikane - Ka'aumakua 30min
- Kaaumakua-Waiahole Uka 2hr 15min-3 hr
- Waiahole Uka-Sugi Pines 15min
- Sugi Pines to Kipapa Trail Terminus 20min

Camp near wind protected Sugi Pines, at old cabin structure or off Kipapa trail.

Bail S/W, Waikane, Waiahole Uka

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Woke up early today around 6 am to the sound of rain tapping away on the roof of the cabin. I rolled off the top bunk with an enthusiasm for the start of a great day. This day is hands down my favorite section of the entire trip with the long stretches of windward contouring. On one side is a tall carved out wall in the mountain and on the other is the vast expanse of the hiker playground known as Kahana valley. I was eager to get on the trail but knew that I did not want to arrive at Kipapa too early. So a warm breakfast and cup of coffee were enjoyed watching the rising sun. A very soothing

morning as the rain began to settle down, the birds came out chirping and the sun began to show itself above the horizon. This place is and hopefully will always be a place I enjoy to come and find the peace and calm lacking in other areas of my life. It is amazing to live in a cabin with no electricity and disconnected from society as every problem fades and activities are planned around the rising and setting of the sun. I question if we really are progressing as society and the praises of certain innovations. With my soul in check, I packed and cleaned up, signed the log and said my good byes as I hit the trail by 8:30am.

The trail seemed almost magical as clouds were covering most of the sun and the smell of wet tropical plant life was all around me. Pauao came up quickly and I took notice of the well cleared trail that wasn't there a little over a year ago. It is amazing what some of these hiking groups can create. Along the Pauao to Waikane section, little tiny waterfalls were flowing down the wall making perfect natural water fountains and keeping me well hydrated not to mention smiling. Looking down into the valleys every stream bed was full and it seemed as though water was in plenty. It was not raining during my hiking hours but I questioned how long that luck would last. Some of these sections of carved out windward trail really are just breath taking and make for quick and easy going. At times I would just sit down; legs hanging over the edge, lay back and take in my surroundings knowing where I can find true happiness.

In the far distance I can see the Waikane trail contour and as I get closer I begin to do random checks by looking up for any trail. It is easy to bypass the rusty ribboned pole to mistakenly continue down the Waikane trail. I've had to learn from my own errors that if I look up and see another trail, backtracking is needed until the pole is found. Thankfully, this trip I was cautious enough to find the pole and made the turn to contour high and continue along the KST to the lookout about 5 minutes up trail.

The trail at this point changes dramatically to leeward overgrown contouring and wraps up the final segment of the KST. Most hikers go between S/W and Poamoho, but few venture on to Kipapa. Over the years this has resulted in this section being lost to the vegetation. I joined a group that opened up a good portion of it during our Waiahole uka to Waikane hike, but many sections were left overgrown. Pat and Rainbow man had come through and opened up the remaining sections a few months after our trip which allowed for the entire Waikane to Kipapa segment to be done with a backpack. Hiking through it now is somewhat of a grind, but much more enjoyable than in the past. As I stated in my email to folks that night, "Waikane to Kipapa is good initially then gets bad then gets worse then gets ok." The main area to watch out for is the switchbacks, but someone has placed very nice ribbons to mark the turns so keep ones eye open. The day seemed to be flying by as it was only noon at this point and I knew I was coming up on Kipapa within the next couple of hours. I passed the weather station on the leeward ridge. I've always wanted to descend down to get a closer look but knew it would have to wait for another time. The switchbacks arrived along with the views of Kipapa trail in the distance and Sugi pines. I've been told that camping can be had at the Sugi Pines, but after much searching, the terrain is simply not flat enough for my liking. I figure they meant it is a good emergency camping area as the Pines and terrain block most wind and rain. Next to the pines are the old remains

of the Kipapa cabin with rusty metal spread out all over the ground. Thoughts of camping at the flat old cabin spot went through my head but I knew that I was not at the true Kipapa trail terminus and a large landslide was about 10 minutes ahead on the trail that had to be negotiated. Continuing on I did some of the last contouring before reaching the large landslide.

In the past, I've climbed the landslide briefly, contoured right slightly and then climbed near vertical vegetation to summit right near the Kipapa terminus. With so much time left in the day (it was 1:15pm!) I was determined to find the correct way around this obstacle. I noticed some pink ribbons descending down from the landslide and seemed to be following a dry stream bed. I followed the pink ribbons down until the descent became steeper with some drops requiring climbing. After my 20 minute time limit had passed, I knew this could not be the correct way and decided that even if it were I would rather climb steeply up a route I've done then descend down dry waterfall chutes into the unknown. Climbing back up to the landslide I proceeded and contoured slightly right as I had done in the past. Then I looked down and noticed a faint line about 20 ft below me and decided to give it a shot. BINGO! Found the correct contour trail that intersects the Kipapa trail very near to the summit. I was ecstatic!

It was now 2:00 pm and somehow I had arrived 2 hours earlier than my last attempt. To go forward would mean a deviation from my plan. When each days water is already determined based on location, deviation can become a problem. So I decided to find camp and enjoy myself. This is supposed to be fun, right? According to old reports of previous attempts by Pat and Gene there was a nice camp spot down the Kipapa trail about 45 minutes. Off I went to discover the condition of the trail and see what I could find.

The trail from the summit down is in really nice condition for approximately 25 minutes and gave me good hope of getting to the camp site early. However, soon the vegetation began closing in and the conditions worsened. After about 45 minutes I could see no visible camp spot nor trail and decided to listen to my gut and head back to the summit. I really did not want to stay at the spot I camped at last time, but I still had hope of finding a different spot with a lot of time left in the day. As I came upon the intersection of the Kipapa and KST I noticed a little hump to my right. Two minutes of heavy vegetation walking got me to the top of a little gem of a site. Set back from the summit enough to block all wind but high enough for incredible 360 views and a large flat open spot big enough for my shelter. It was probably my favorite camp site of the entire trip and one I will return to many more times in the future - I hope.

I set up my shelter and sleep system then did my preparations for the following day. With so much time left in the day I went exploring off a side ridge from Kipapa and revisited my old camping area at the summit behind a mound. What was I thinking! Holes everywhere on slanted terrain and a nice drop off. Chase Chase Chase. Around 4:15 I got out my Kindle and sat down next to my shelter to read. As time went on and I had not moved for a while, summit life started to come back around me and before I knew it the birds were chatting up a storm, insects were flying around, and bugs were crawling all over me. I loved it.

As the evening started rolling in I got my warmer clothes on and set out to make dinner of hot spam. Sitting in complete isolation on a spot just big enough for me, eating a warm dinner I had made, drinking water I had collected, and watching the setting sun turn the sky amazing shades of pink and purple - this will be a memory that sticks with me forever. My sleep cycle seemed to quickly change on this trip to the rising and setting of the sun with a late night being 8:30 pm and a late morning being 7:30 am. With the sun setting, I climbed into my bivy, read and responded to emails and then laid still with the sounds of nature drifting me off into a wonderful dream.

KST8D ThruHike Chase Norton







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## Day 4 (03/28/12)

*Kipapa-Waimano*

*10 hr*

*5.5 miles*

Total Pack Weight: 28.6125 lb.

If moving fast one can reach Waimano by 2pm. Leave Kipapa as early as possible. Ups and Downs, Ups and Downs. Hopefully, it will be clear skies to motivate you. Remember at the gap to descend right for water. Also, bring your pack because the side ridge gives better access to gain the summit ridge. The gap to the corner involves the use of side ridges or annoying moss climbing and with a heavy pack I suggest the right side ridges. There was water down where I camped that time. From the corner turn right and head to the Manana terminus which feels longer than it takes. Relax, snack, chill at the terminus, you have about 1 1/2 - 2 hrs ahead of you to get to Waimano. You will know when you are getting close, namely because you start to see it in the distance. It is the flat section before the first major ascent. The last section to Waimano always makes me feel like the Konahuanui to Olympus stretch, not sure why.

- Kipapa-Ravine 30 min-1hr
- Ravine-Metal pipe (Possible camp for Day 3) 30 min
- Metal pipe - Waiawa Gap 1hr- 1hr 30min
- Waiawa Gap-Corner 3hr
- Corner to Manana Terminus 30min
- Manana-Waimano 2hr-2hr 30 min

Determine wind strength and if is mild, camp at a lower point at the Waimano terminus. If the wind is strong, high camp back on Waimano trail ~2 minutes.

Bail Manana, Waimano

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Woke up around 6:45 am from a great night of sleep that involved very light winds and zero rain. I have been averaging 10 hours of sleep every night and it feels amazing on my body. I would had thought by now that my body would be fighting me, but every aspect of this trip so far seemed to be working with me and encouraging a safe and happy trip.

With smiles on my face I made up a warm cup of coffee and enjoyed my breakfast again to the rising sun. I prepared myself for the hike of that day as in the past it had put serious strain on my body and mind. With my pack, belly and mind ready I stepped off of the KST and onto the Koolau summit towards Waimano at 8 am. Off of

the KST, the trail disappears requiring one to wade through leg high vegetation up and down every peak. I knew my first goal was to hit the Waiawa Gap where I should find water – and where lunch was planned. The weather was perfect. Not too hot nor too cold, not too wet nor too dry. I had never seen the summit so clear and it made the going very smooth.

Since I've done this section many times in the past I was expecting a 2-3 hour descent to the gap and was shocked when I reached it by 9:45 am!! I credit this to the weather, proper footwear and now a clear (to me) swath. It seems every time I come up here swaths are getting better which is motivating as it lets me know these sections are getting more use. Even a year ago there were zero swaths or signs of any activity. Also, it seems that people are creating leeward contours on some thin ridge portions and these contours are getting use! Gotta love what a small group of people can do. Not hungry at all, I dropped down the lee side of the gap and reached my water source. All water was stagnate and had dead bugs floating around in it but you do what you have to do and I collected 3 liters from various small puddles then filtered through my bandana and dropped the tablets.

Climbing out of the gap involves three major peaks and can be very taxing under wet and muddy conditions. I was fortunate for the dry and sunny conditions. Under any conditions, the climb out of the gap is easiest for me: side ridge, main ridge, side ridge. This bypasses the steep mossy sections that will pointlessly drain energy. Just had to remember to contour windward early to connect back up with the main ridge. Before I knew it, I was looking down on the three challenges and straight ahead at the "Corner". I laid down and relaxed with clear skies overhead knowing that the worst of the day was behind me and it wasn't even 11am yet!

About this time a helicopter came by and I had to do that awkward non-action that means, "I can't wave or look at you because I don't want you to think I need help." The moment passed and I pressed onwards to the beautiful wind swept Corner. Reached it by noon and now was playing a game with myself to see how quickly I could get to Waimano as I had never moved this fast, this smoothly and with this big of a smile across my face. I reached Manana by 12:25pm and took a short five minute break before pressing on to Waimano. The trail to Waimano is wide open these days and after being on non-trails, this might as well have been paved. To Eleao is quick and the windswept area of it is absolutely beautiful. I always loved that name Eleao for some reason.

In the past it has been easy to descend the wrong ridge at this point when socked in but with clear skies and knowledge of the area it made the descent heading towards Waimano easy to find. I felt like I was running to Waimano and could point out the terminus making going even faster. I made it a mission to arrive by 2 pm and would dance around with joy. Then before I knew it after a few ups and downs I arrived at the last uphill contour and knew I had reached it. On the last attempt, I had two friends meet me at Waimano, camped out and crossed over to Aiea with me. The morale boost that was provided allowed me to continue on that trip. This time my morale boost came from the ridiculous time I was making, the beautiful weather I was experiencing and the natural high I was getting from it all.

At 1:58pm I tagged the trail sign and let out a huge yell. I considered moving on to Waimalu middle where there was a camp site I had stayed at on a previous overnighiter but the camp at Waimano is really nice. I've learned how important a good night's sleep is on every aspect of the trail and some of my camp decisions were based on this key point. Waimalu middle summit is about 2 hours from Waimano so I told myself just make it an early night and early morning which a good night of sleep would allow.

I love the terminus of Waimano where 6 inches means the difference of wind that could blow you down and slight wind that eases you into sleep. Did my normal evening camp chores (at 2pm!) and went exploring down the small valley behind the camp site until overgrowth got more annoying than fun and headed back up to the camp to get my Kindle. Finding a spot to read was not too difficult at that camp site especially on a day like that.

I have been saying in my emails to some people how this trip is the first time I feel like the summit wants me to be here and that it feels more like fun than work. From previous experiences, I've equated this section with misery and struggle. To find myself with 3+ hrs of spare relaxation time boggles my mind to this day. The open time was therapeutic, allowing my soul and mind to focus on the tasks ahead of me instead of the continually feeling of minute to minute survival.

As the sun began to set I put on my evening clothes, made dinner and got ready for the next day's hike. I was getting into my book and for the first time stayed awake long enough to see the moon come out. It seemed to light up my entire surroundings. If Kipapa was my favorite night, this had to be my second. I took down my tarp and laid under the light of the moon in my bivy. Looking up into the stars trying to find the constellations kept me mesmerized until I fell into a deep sleep.







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## Day 5 (03/29/12)

*Waimano - N. Haiku*

*8.5 hrs*

*5.3 miles*

Total Pack Weight: 26.6125 lb.

Get up early regardless. If you move fast enough you can reach N. Haiku Stairs. At the end of the day the feeling of how far we have truly gone will start to kick in. Water source at Waimalu Middle. There is camping at both Aiea and N. Haiku. If arrive at Aiea past 3:30 then camp there. I prefer under the power lines due to wind blockage. If the winds are gentle enough, the summit offers amazing camping and sunsets/rises. It will result in a push the next day from Aiea to South Haiku stairs and on to Bowman.

- Waimano - Waimalu Middle 2hr-2hr 30min
- Waimalu Middle - Aiea 4hr-4hr 30min
- Aiea to Hidden Haiku 2 hr

Camp near in building to block wind

Bail Waimalu Middle, Aiea

~~~~~KST&D ThruLike Chase Norton~~~~~

Pulling myself out of a deep sleep I woke up to clear skies and calm winds. This was the first comfortable and planned night sleeping without a tarp in just a bivy and I loved every minute of it. I felt very rested and ready to take on the day ahead of me. This section would involve a steep climb immediately and continual ups and downs until reaching Aiea and if not prepared can be similar to the previous day.

I did morning chores, made breakfast and hit the trail by 7:30 expecting a 3pm arrival in Aiea based on last experiences. Climbed out of the Waimano and passed the old remains of a hiker who spent the night unplanned out on the trail. Broken headlamp, water bottles and emergency blanket have all been here for over a year. So sad as whoever stayed at this spot was very close to the Waimano trail. Pressed on up and over two more peaks and towards Waimalu middle. Reached it by 8:30! Then dropped down to the wind swept area where there is a puddle I have collected water at in the past and seems to be fairly constant. After collecting and tableting, I crossed over to the side ridge that makes ascent easier and summited by 9 am.

Not a single cloud in the sky gave me views unlike any other time I've been up there. I could look out and see the power lines of Aiea in the distance. Anytime you can see your destination the going is somehow easier. Sat up there for some time before making the descent from Waimalu middle heading towards Aiea. The descent has some thin regions and I dropped down in elevation fairly quickly. I think the descent is

easier on the body then ascending it. To be honest, this whole section just flew by without much thought.

I lifted my head and staring me in the face were the Aiea power lines. Without stopping I kept climbing until I laid upon the wide flat region of Aiea summit where I had camped at in November. Looking over 3 hours. Unpacked and sat down to clear skies and a spam hot mustard wrap for lunch. I could look back on Kahana valley and see the route I came from and the route I would be going. Ahead of me were the saddles, challenges that I'd been trying to not think about to allow for good sleep and calm nerves. I decided that noon was far too soon to set up camp and while I absolutely love the camp at Aiea summit I knew I could find good camp in the N. Haiku shack or possibly descend half of the Moanalua saddle and camp by the creek.

Packed back up, said my good byes and continued on around 12:20 pm. There are two climbs one must do between Aiea and the N. Haiku shack and then a major descent next to a land slide. These were all negotiated and I appeared in the shack doorway by 1 pm! This is where I made one of a few mistakes of the trek. Hard to look back on a successful trip and find mistakes but this is one. I decided to wait and spend the night in the shack instead of pushing on to descend half of the saddle to creek camping. Next time, creek camping will be had!

I arrived at the shack and dropped my gear off. First thing was to make sure I could sleep here. Had to brush the rusty metal into one corner. Moved a concrete block over a hole where possible rodents seemed to be entering from. Cleared the millions of spiders that have come to call the shack home. Set up my sleep system and tied out guy lines to make an almost torture looking device (which I would find later it was). After making it livable, I tried to find good spots for relaxing and immediately started to notice my problem. No where to sit that was sheltered from the elements and did not have rust every where. Finally I found a spot on the steps in front of the shack and brought my sitting pad over to it with my Kindle. Unable to focus because of how early it was I looked at the cloud free S. Haiku and the saddle for probably around two hours playing a mind game of continuing onwards but deciding I would tackle each saddle on a fresh night of sleep and I wanted to sort through all my gear and discard every bit of unnecessary item.

North of the shack in a small valley is what looks like the remains of a crashed plane. I stared at it for a while and sent some messages to people I thought might know of it but no one had any information. It is clearly unnatural and unlike anything I've seen before. I still have no information on it but will do a scouting mission to see if I can get over there. It looked like one could contour to it.

I shuffled around "camp" as the saddle sat under perfect weather laughing at me and I felt very restless. It was not until the sun started to set that I could convince myself going further was not an option and I had to accept my decision. Pulled out the cooking gear and heated up some spam while I went through all of my gear and food pulling out what I had learned to live without over the past 5 days and putting it into a pile in the corner. The majority of my excess items came from food. Other UL backpackers have told me that often we pack our fears and it is clear from my pack reduction that I fear being hungry. I dropped every piece of food that I had brought as

snacks or comfort consisting mainly of trail mixes, candy and cliff bars. The gear dropped were my gaiters which had failed me miserably, my knee strap in case of knee injury, and an extra pair of injinji socks. Combined with the decreasing water, my pack was feeling really good for the saddles the following days.

I chowed down on dinner and wrote out an email before slipping into my bed of hell. I had been down for a few minutes when I realized my guy line setup restricted my movement and was tightening around my stomach making sleeping difficult. Of course, I did not fix the problem immediately but instead thought I would just fall asleep. I think stopping at 1pm also made for sleep being difficult as I had just sat on a step for 6 hours. I rolled around until about 10:30pm when I realized that my groundsheet protecting me from the metal underneath my bivy and inflatable pad had slipped out from under me. This left my pad exposed and with all my restless tossing and turning I was worried I could pop my pad and leave me in a worse situation. So I got out of bed and tried to fix everything but never could figure out the correct solution. Then the guy line attached to my bivy face netting broke and the netting fell on my face making things even more annoying. To add on to this my sunburn was making me burn up and the shack has zero air flow with a very hard ground. I ended up stripping down to nothing and laying on top of my sleeping bag on pad and rigged up a fix to get the netting off my face. By this point it was 1am and, of course, somehow I was 100% awake. I went through many periods of trying to sleep but failing however finally I was granted some slack and remember last looking at my watch around 3:27.

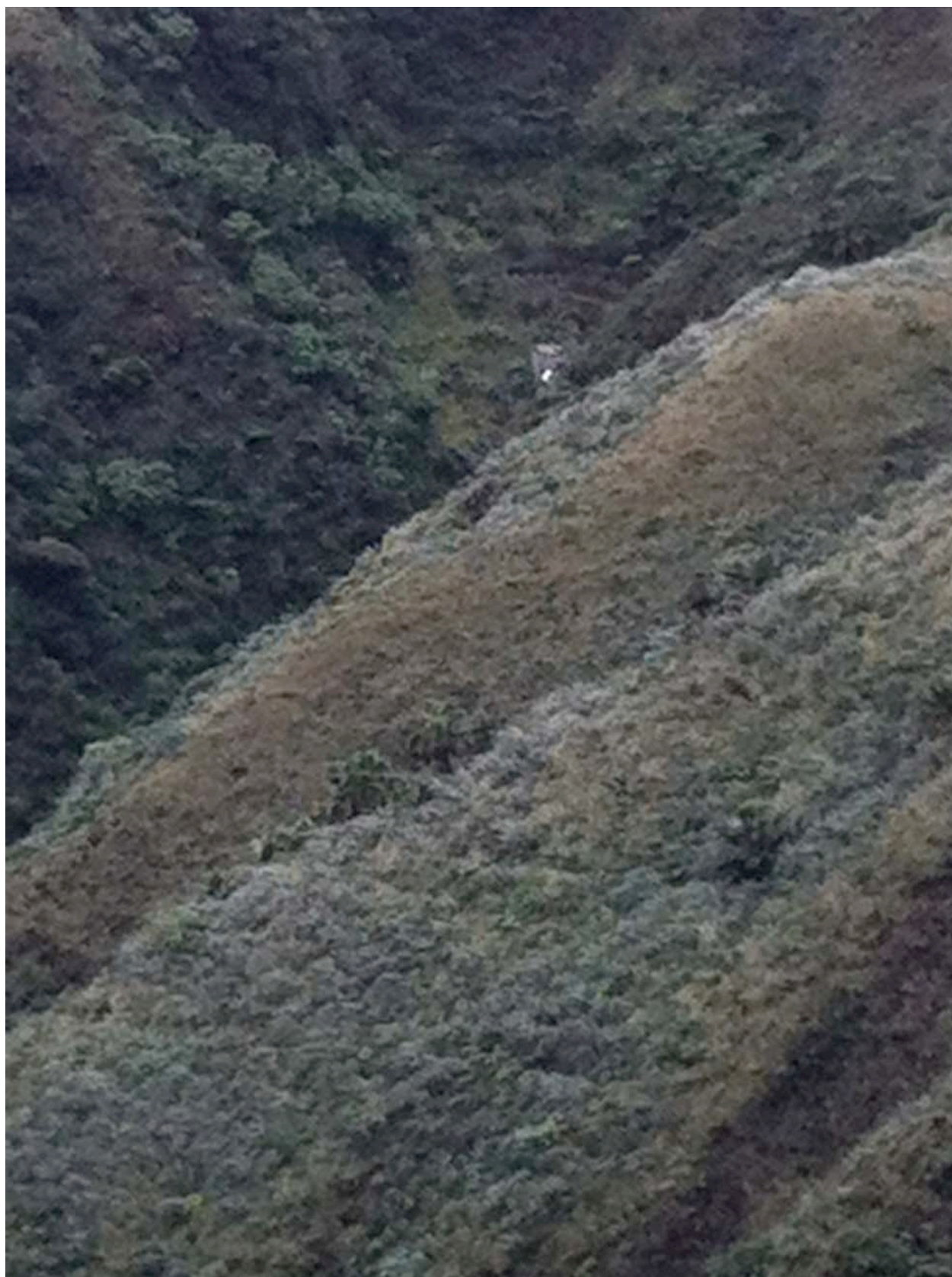
KST8D ThruHike Chase Norton











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## Day 6 (03/20/12)

*N. Haiku-Wilson Tunnel Building*

*6.5 hrs*

*5 miles*

Total Pack Weight: 24.6125 lb.

This begins the saddles. There were a couple of eroded sections in the beginning. Three I think. Then the eroded dike. The ridge isn't too narrow here but you always slip at the second section. Take your time and tie off if needed. Reach the eroded dike(contour leeward) Gain ridge and reach trail junction. Descend 30 minutes to collect water. Refill all containers. Regain trail and immediately it turns back to serious mode. Three problems face you. Remember contour left when you don't think to and contour right to use the root to climb. Remember to not go too far right and never to climb without veg unless on root. Use two ropes (1 in each hand) to get past the third problem. Soon you will see the pre-Stairs stairs. Climb up to the radar structure. Time depending, go inside for a snack and short break. You have about 1 1/2 hr along the summit ridge until the camp spot. Continue along the summit towards bowman. Reach Bowman terminus and snack. You will not have many more chances until the power lines. Reach eroded dike and drop leeward to contour. Reach 2nd Triangle and descend using rope slightly leeward. Similar with the next triangle. Lower yourself past the witch's hat and then windward contour when needed. Reach power lines. Descend power line trail to camp spot at power line pole.

- S. Haiku-Halawa 45min
- Halawa-Godek 30min
- Godek - 1st Saddle 15min
- 1st Saddle - Southern Haiku stair terminus 3hr 30-4hr
- S.Haiku - Bowman Terminus 2hr-2hr 30min
- Bowman Terminus - Power Line trail 2hr 30 min

Camp near pole

Bail Halawa, Godek, State trail, Haiku Stairs, Tripler, Middle, Bowman... tempting?;-)

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On this day last attempt I had fallen off the saddle and cracked my head causing an abrupt end to my plans. This was in my head all day and hard to shake.

Is it morning yet!!?!? After the worst night of sleep on this trip, at the first sign of dawn I jumped out of my cocoon and checked to make sure everything was still in good enough condition before packing it all up. This was the first morning I've woken in socked in conditions and slight rain so I was a little happy with myself being in the

shack. I decided to wait and see if the clouds would clear so pulled out my cooking system and made some hot coffee and toasted my flatten bagel with Nutella.

After about 45 minutes the clouds lifted and the saddle began to show itself in full profile. Taking this as a sign, I grabbed my belongings and began walking along the extremely rusty stairs. Every time I am here I cannot get over the obvious impact exposure to the elements has on metal. If the stairs have a bush blocking it, then they have an almost brand new look but a few inches past the bush the metal resembles a creepy rusty dagger ready to impale you.

Passed Halawa and Red hill fairly quickly and was moving with the same sort of speed that had carried me through the previous days. There looks to be good camping at Halawa right before the summit for one small shelter setup. Might consider that if ever near this section and don't want to sleep in the shack nor descend the saddle.

Began the descent down to the state trail at the middle of the saddle around 9:15 am. Personally, I enjoy this descent compared to other saddle descents. There are two or three eroded areas but the words of my mother the night before to "take it slow and I would get through it safely" rang through my head often during the following days. It is only at one section where I have to lower myself down an eroded spot and a tree is there for hand holds but no matter what I do I always end up having to let go of the tree and fall a foot or so which causes me to slide down the crap rock and catch myself in the vegetation. Always. Every trip. I considered using my guy line cord to lower myself but knew I would need it for other parts on the Kalihi saddle. So sliding I went and everything went smoothly. Reached the eroded dike and dropped down then contour leeward to get past it. After the dike it is basically smooth sailing to the flat area that marks the trail terminus. Reached it at 10 am and dropped my gear and put my front pack around my waist to descend down to the stream to collect water. Man, going from summit conditions to state trail is a little overwhelming at first and I proceeded to run down the trail. Reached the stream within 10 minutes and smacked my forehead as I saw all the beautiful camping spots that lay around the stream. Next time, next time! I was tempted to take a quick bath but just threw some water on my face, filled up all my water containers and proceeded to run back up the trail ready to get past the obstacle that put me out last trip.

I reached the trail terminus at 10:30 am and got ready to tackle the three challenges of the Moanalua saddle to Haiku. Weather was perfect for this attempt and just told myself take it slow and I knew how to do this. First challenge is just rock climbing with a windward contour and was handled with ease. The second challenge, my previous downfall, is to leeward contour but only slightly. Too far and one will begin to ascend with very little vegetation and will likely slip at some point. With this in mind I slight contoured and began to climb the obvious vegetation. This area really could do with a rope if people are actually doing this section as often as seems to be indicated. Had to climb using trees and vegetation until the root needed to gain the ridge appeared and then shifted right until I could reach it. No problems this time and was sitting upon the ridge with smiles on my face.

Honestly, throughout this entire trip, that was the most fear I will encounter because of the mental block caused by my old mistake. There is a little voice inside my

head that knows when something does not feel right and in November I ignored that voice with the thought that “If I can just reach that spot right ther.....e”. This trip I strongly feel was successful because probably 6-7 times that voice began yelling at me and this time I listened, stopped and reattempted the problem from a different angle. It sounds like common sense but sometimes when all you need to do is get to a spot 2 feet away, it can be easy to quiet that voice and think it is just 2 feet away!!! One of many hard lessons I’ve had to come to learn on the trail.

The third challenge would be more difficult than it was if numerous ropes were not set up. Using one in each hand I got past the third problem with no real fuss and continued on up to the summit. With the main problems of that done I knew the first saddle was behind me which meant I would be going further than I had ever gone before and I was ecstatic!

I reached the Haiku Summit by 11:30am and scarfed down lunch with full intent to cross over to tripler and set up camp. Then who comes running up the stairs but the haiku troll himself! I had seen no one since Sunday and was really happy to see and chat with him. He offered to cross over to tripler with me and of course I let him. We made great time and I loved being able shake the nerves off with some good laughs and stories shared with him. We arrived at Tripler terminus where I had planned on stopping for the day but it just did not feel right. It was only noon and I imagined a repeat of the previous night. So we moved on and crossed over to Bowman. This is when I started to contemplate descending the Bowman side of the Kalihi saddle that day. By the time we reached Bowman I was trying to talk the troll into descending the saddle with me but unfortunately for me a group of 4 wahines passed us on the way to tripler and I knew where his priorities lay. At Bowman it was only 12:20 pm and I knew camp was not going to happen so I said my good byes and pressed on to descend the saddle with hopes of reaching the power line trail. I look back on it all and doubt I would have descended to the power lines that day if it wasn't for running into him. The ability to laugh and share stories does amazing things for the morale and put me in the right mood. I am very thankful for that encounter.

I began the descent and it is like most of these saddles where first you have to reach a smaller peak before the actual descent begins. The thing about this descent is the problems really do not stop until you reach the middle. There are three main challenges that require use of ropes and sometimes dropping almost a hundred feet just to contour correctly. But even beyond the main challenges, the “minor” challenges are more difficult than any other major challenges on the other saddles in my opinion. It takes putting my mind in a certain state of pure focus and movement. Fear and nerves were the fuel to push me, but it has taken a long time to learn to use fear as a fuel and not lock up. It also becomes important to learn to focus on only the problem in front of me. If I would begin to try and figure out how much further to the power lines it became overwhelming and my mind would lose focus. At times I look back and realize I have very little memory of these dangerous sections compared to other sections. I think my mind handles the one problem in front of me and when I make it past, my mind removes that entire thought and begins working on the new problem. Adding to the complexity, the rock on this section is some of the worst I’ve ever had the displeasure of dealing

with. Nothing is sturdy. As I told a friend in the past, the Kalihi saddle is a section of the summit that anyone could go across and die. You could take the most inexperienced hikers up and lead them through it and maybe they would make it, but then the world's best hiker goes up there the next day and touches a rock the wrong way and falls to his/her death. It really is a game of Russian roulette. I never suggest anyone do this saddle as someone will get hurt very badly at some point. I had a moment while descending one of the triangles that my footing gave way and I was left dangling by a rope attached to a tree that wiggles when you touch it.

Slowly, ever so slowly I made my way down the ropes, down the rock faces and around the eroded sections until that glorious windward contour that let me know I am very close to the end. I did a little "I am alive dance" at 2:45pm.

1 1/2 saddles completed in 4 hours does a number on one's heart and nerves. I dropped shortly down to a leeward sheltered area and was able to calm myself back to normal levels before picking up and descending. Down I went via the power line trail about 500 vertical feet to a really nice flat spot next to the old Wilson tunnel building and a power line pole. I immediately called certain people and let them know I was alive and had made it to the middle of the Kalihi saddle. Then I did some quick calculations and realized that it would be very wise for me to find the Kalihi stream if I wanted to make it from Konahuanui to Makapuu without a water stop.

First, I set up camp and did all my typical evening chores that had become almost robotic now. Then I grabbed my water gear and went exploring for the Kalihi stream. First couple of stream beds I found were bone dry and I began to get a tad worried. I gave a call to Rasta to see if he had ever run into water. He seemed quite sure that the stream always had water in it and if I went down the road and cut off onto a trail I would find it. He cautioned to not get lost. So off I went down the road and then I found a trail leading off to the left and took it. Some really nice camp spots throughout this trail but ignored them as water was my mission. Walked over some pipes that were dry and continued deeper into the woods. I went probably 40 minutes in and had ventured onto a few trails that led nowhere until I finally accepted no water was to be found. It was almost 5pm by the point and did not want to be wandering around in the dark. So I started to head back until I realized that things did not look right and I was beginning to bushwhack when I never had to coming in. Before I knew it, I was lost. So immediately I got my phone out and took a GPS reading and took note of where the road was and got my compass bearing. Over time, I have gotten lost quite a few times but I have learned how to stay calm and what I need to do to get myself out safely. Normally, it begins with a gut feeling of something being off. After two times of that feeling I begin to take it seriously and go to my compass and then go to my GPS as a last resort. From my readings I knew where I needed to go but could not find the trail to get me there and bushwhacking was becoming problematic without anything but my phone and water gear. Then after some time trying to find my way home I heard the glorious sound of water trickling! Laughing to myself I walked over to a flowing stream.

So it takes me getting myself lost to find water, great. As I told myself, now I have water but am still lost. I briefly washed up and continued down the stream thinking that it

would eventually lead me to the road. As I went through a concrete tunnel and vegetation began to block the way I turned left out of the stream and ran right into the road leading to the old Wilson tunnel building! Success! Found water and found my way home!

I walked back up to my camp site and sat down extremely pleased with myself for that day's work. Night was coming and from where my camp was I had a great profile view of my challenge for the next day, the ascent of Lanihuli from the saddle. I made myself dinner and sent out emails as the sun set. At this elevation the temperature was much warmer so I did not need to jump in the sleeping bag as early. I sat out and read under the moon light deep into the night. At some point the lights at the Wilson building turned on which kind of creeped me out but I let it disappear from my thoughts as I got into bed and let sleep overtake me.

KST8D ThruHike Chase Norton



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## Day 7 (03/31/12)

*Power lines to K1*

*6-10 hrs.*

*~2.5 miles*

Total Pack Weight: 22.6125 lb.

Civilization? Today we get to visit the Pali Lookout. The issues do not end until summitting Lanihuli. The next section contains the sharks fin, bunny ears(up and down), doorstep(ascend, lower), pimple(lee contour), can opener(windward contour). Summit Lanihuli and have lunch. The initial descent will feel like any portion. From memory you will need to descend and contour leeward until you reach the base of the dirt rock. Use cable to climb the dirt rock. Cross over narrow ridge then climb a baby tooth. Contour leeward and gain elevation. Continue until you reach more teeth. Look right and descend to the contour of hell. Gain ridge, continue, descend contour around 100 ft face. Descend old Pali road and then turn left to hit the road. Walk down road until reach the hairpin turn and fill water containers. Return to the notches the same way. To the notches(1,descend,ascend,2,use rope to descend on the right) and past the nub(lee contour), up the chimney (Use both ropes) and onward to Konahuanui. Continue on to the Konahuanui trailhead and camp at summit.

Bail Power line, Lanihuli, Pali Lookout  
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Ready for the most challenging day of your life Chase? Wake up! Got out of bed around 6:45 am and did all my usual morning chores. I was excited because by the end of the day I would either be done with the most challenging aspects of my trip or I would be severely injured and the trip would be over. Today was the day this had all built up to for me and I felt more ready than ever!

I packed up, said good bye to my camp spot and headed up the power line trail to reach the summit by 8 am. The wind was blowing strong but weather overall seemed perfect for today with complete visibility to the summit so off I went. This side of the saddle is a tad better in my opinion than the other side. But after talking to some who have done this saddle I think I feel that way because I enjoy ascending crap rock rather than descending it. Also, it does not feel like every moment is a new challenge. First couple of challenges are up and overs with rope on some section. At one point the option is provided to contour the doorstep leeward or now with a rope affixed one can up and over it. Mistake number 2 occurred here when I contoured leeward. This contour was semi ok when wearing a day pack but with my current pack even as small as it was, I made very slow going through the dense leeward vegetation. With the additional weight and off balance the pack provides, when I tried to gain the ridge line I failed multiple times. First I tried past the pimple and had that inner voice yelling at me to retreat. Unable to find a safe ascent I backtracked to before the pimple but past the

doorstop. There seemed to be an ascent possible using tree roots but the rock was crap and my pack made everything hellacious. Finally after about 6 failed attempts in total, I found the right balance of luck and roots to make it up without an incident. Had I been coming top down and had rope there was a nice tree to fix it to and would be a nice addition to this contour from hell.

Now I looked on to the pimple which requires a nasty leeward contour where balancing myself became a true challenge as the rock seemed to want to throw me off. I tried about 4 different times until I had to sit down and gather myself. The only time I ever thought about giving up was at this moment. Again, this is one of those, "If I could just get 2 feet over there!" moments but extreme caution was needed. I could not find a way to contour the pimple and going up and over was just not an option. Then I remembered I had my guy line for my tarp in my pocket and saw a small little root I could attach it to and possibly provide the extra balance needed. Slowly, I undid my guy line and connected it as a loop to go around the root and allow me to contour/swing to the spot I knew I needed to get to. I realized at that moment how much I took the ease of a day pack for granted as it felt like my pack and rock were working against me.

Slowly, I made it around the pimple and with feet on somewhat solid ground I knew the worst was behind me. Contoured windward to connect up with the ropes of the can opener and climbing steadily to reach the top. Past the can opener are a couple eroded sections that needed me to cross on my butt with each leg on a different side of the ridge. Soon enough I started to find the signs of being near the summit with a couple of different ribbons and an old red rope now turned white. At 10:30 am I stood atop Lanihuli alive and dancing! Lunch was had and I joked with myself about camping there as it was the original plan, but began my descent down to the Pali lookout.

Almost immediately I could see in the distance the W and incisor and at each someone had put up new rope since my last trip across and I was smiling big. Dropped down leeward and contoured over to reach the rope attached to the anvil rock and what did I find?!? A new rope that was tied to a tree root instead of the dirt rock! Awesome! With all of these ropes I breezed through these parts that used to take forever and move on wards. Mentally, I was in the zone at this point and was feeling great! There is a leeward contour or one can take the teeth both of which I've done in the past and after the previous leeward contour hell I opted for the teeth as I decided nothing could be worse then contouring. I believe I made the correct choice. Worked through the teeth and before I knew it I was at the huge descent/contour one must make to get past the wall face at the puka. I quickly descended using the ropes and came out to the puka feeling like I was on top of the world. I could see very clearly the people at the Pali lookout and began to race down. As I approached people after 7 days out I became overwhelmed by smells of perfume and cigarettes so much so I almost had to sit down. I reached the Pali by 1:15 pm and laughed out loud to myself at my accomplishment of that day. I rested very briefly and made some phone calls to let friends and loved ones know I was safe and then knowing time was important, descended the old Pali road and walked down to the hairpin turn where I knew a water source to be. This was the only time I pulled out my iPhone and listened to some music to pass the time down to the stream and it put me into even better spirits. I reached the

stream which was flowing strongly and filled up all my water containers and immediately headed back up to the lookout.

Now, I had two options. Find camp nearby or try and finish the saddles. This half saddle is one I have done many times in the past and one in which I really enjoy. Also, I knew that the sleep I would get that night would be made even better with the thoughts of all saddles pau and just K1 to Makapuu left. So off I went at 2:45 pm making the climb to the notches. The first notch was passed with no problem but coming upon the 2nd notch I noticed all rope had been removed. I had descended the 2nd notch once without rope but it ended with me jumping a good distance to the ground and I did not want to risk an injury this close to the finish line. So undeterred, I started to work with the rock to find a route down and either the previous saddles had taught me something or I've gotten better at climbing as the descent happened almost without thought and before I knew it I was down and heading to the nub. A contour around nub and then the climb up the chimney were done quickly. Someone has put new black webbing at the top of an annoying rock climb past the chimney and so I used it to help with a contour ascent.

The challenges fell fast and then as if my body knew the worst was behind me I hit a mental and physical wall of exhaustion. It felt like my body just let go of all the built up stress over the last 7 days. I had never felt so empty of everything inside me. I had run out of water around the last rock climb and still had 2 1/2 hrs until the hairpin water was deemed drinkable. It was around 3:30 pm at this point and I knew even if I went extremely slow I would make it to the summit before dark so the remainder of the ascent became 2 minutes of rest for every minute of hiking. Literally, 5 or 6 steps, rest, then repeat. That last climb up the steep mud with the tree you have to use for footing was by far the hardest thing I have had to do the entire trip. But I made it and dragged myself to the summit laying on top K1 at 4:45 pm.

It took about 30 minutes until I could move enough to call friends and family to let them know where I was and I was safe. Even talking was difficult. My mother later told me she has never heard me sound like that and it had worried her. I played with the idea of crossing over to K2 but my body quickly told me what I could do with that idea so the highest point on the summit of the Koolau mountains was my home for that night and I could not have been happier. I was exhausted, extremely dehydrated and starving but I was alive and had successfully crossed the saddles in 2 days.

As the day faded into night, clouds began to roll in and for the first time this entire trip I was setting up my shelter for possible rain that night. I welcomed the thought of it knowing tomorrow would be a very long and very dry day. I hoped to do the entire section the next day, but since I had pushed my body beyond its limits today I told myself to just go as far as I could.

I sent out a email to the ground crew, quickly ate dinner, chug the now drinkable water and climbed into bed for a great night of sleep. Throughout the night I awoke to the sound of rain coming down making me snuggle up more into my sleep bag with a big smile on my face. Life is good.









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## Day 8 (04/01/12)

*K1-Makapuu*

*15 hrs.*

*10 miles*

Total Pack Weight: 18.6125 lb.

The standard trek. Its the cool down from the workout. Enjoy every moment and laugh the entire way. You have made it, but still take caution, now is not the time to injury yourself. If you do not have it in you to finish today there are many camp options. Mariners, Camp Awesome and Chaps to name a few. But you got this so push!

Bail A lot, don't do it though

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Pitter patter against the tarp woke me around 6:30 am and I decided to try and wait for it to pass before getting out of bed. Shortly, the rain ceased and I began what would turn out to be the last day of my journey.

Today I started with 3L of water to get me to Makapuu and what does idiot me do? Make 500ml of coffee to start the day! Really would have enjoyed that water later in the day. Mistake 3. At K1 there used to be a pink ribbon blocking the descent of a side ridge. It is no longer there and in the fog of my morning mind and the excitement I made mistake 4 by descending down this ridge. At some point I realized the clouds were much darker around me than the ones to my left and a quick yell confirmed my suspicions that I was descending off the summit. Grumbling, I retraced my steps to my camp site and started off an hour late at 8:45 along the summit.

I crossed over to K2 and took a short break before heading to Olympus. I ran into a small group checking out the summit, said brief hellos, and continued onwards. Lanipo came up shortly after which I ran into a OWH group and chatted with a guy named Dan for some time as their group tried to find their way through the socked in summit to Wiliwilinui. When possible I side skirted them and continued onwards at a steady pace. Summited Wiliwilinui around noon and met a guy chilling on the bench. We sat silently and ate lunch together. He left shortly after I arrived and a grandfather/grandson summited. We talked briefly and I was excited to hear the young grandson so eager to hike and push himself. Really nice folks. I had to respectfully decline the food they were offering and stood up to depart around 12:30 pm. I was now down to 2 liters and understood that rationing was to be required. I allowed myself 3 gulps every hour which turned out to be too generous. The rest of the cross overs were made without much thought to time or really which summit I was passing. At some point past Ka'au I realized I was going to have to make it the whole way or else I would be

camping without any water. My head was down and my legs were pumping to get me home. Around Hawaii Loa I was down to 1L of water and by the time I reached Mariners I was empty. The section between Mariners to Makapuu while enjoyable hiking wise, was very difficult due to lack of water. It is not like I was well hydrated to begin with and by the time I was empty I was already very dehydrated. As the sun began to lower itself and the heat reduced some I was able to move a little faster but still my hiking was mainly, "Get up that and then I'll lay down for 10 minutes" and repeat. I have done this section countless times and again knew if I took my time, rested when needed, I could make it to the lighthouse by nightfall. Just as the light was starting to fade away I tagged the lighthouse fence and quickly descended back down to make it to the road/look out right as complete darkness set in around 7:45.

PAU!

I called Rasta for a possible pick up but he was unavailable so he called Duc and Thea who both happened to be coming to pick me up. I descended down to the Makapuu beach park water fountain for a well needed water chugging session. Silly, just a little knob and fresh clean ready-to-drink water in unlimited supply. With the last few percentages of my battery I let family know I was safe and let Duc know Thea was coming to pick me up. She showed up with what I believe to be my first lei and an amazing one at that! It had the power to mask all of my horrible smells! I enjoyed a great conversation with her on the ride back into civilization. She had driven me home on the attempt in November and we both agreed this drive felt much better:-)

Slowly, we pulled into my apartment building and with a hug and good byes I walked back into my old life, stronger and more confident in who I am and my abilities than a mere 8 days ago. My apartment may be in town but my home will always be in the mountains. A great friend summed this entire journey up well in an email afterwards, "I feel like you have completed a long journey that has covered years gradually building up your knowledge and abilities. Discovering the KST, the tough sections, not listening to naysayers (like me) and just seeing and doing for yourself."



Chapter 5: Thank you

Thank you to everyone who was on my emailing list. They have absolutely no idea how vital they were in my successful completion. Every night I looked forward to their replies and words of encouragement. It and reading from my Kindle were the only two leisure activities.

Rainbow man and Rasta, the sections they joined me on were pivotal as the first leg of the journey and the cross over beyond the November attempt.

Thank you to those who provided reliable contacts for rescue if the worst were to occur. Something we never wanted but knew was always a possibility.

I want to thank those who came before me. Often, I was walking on the shoulder of giants. This trip would not be possible without the many hikers out there who have found routes, laid rope, cleared trail and made the impossible possible. For legal reasons I will not name names, but I thank those who laid the route on the Moanalua , Pali and Kalihi saddle, to the people who have helped clear route up on the northern summit sections, HTMC and their clearing crew who make the routes up to the summit possible and provide this island with so many of the trails we love dearly.

Lastly, thank you to my parents who I contacted every night by phone and provided an amazing ground crew. My mother's words to take it slow and I would succeed echoed through my head during every struggle or difficult moment.

It should never be underestimated what the power of love, encouragement and support can do when challenging one's self.

Aloha and safe trails,

Chase