



# The Longest Mile: Nine Days in the Great Smoky Mountains

*Ryan Watkins*

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## **The Longest Mile: Nine Days in the Great Smoky Mountains** Ryan Watkins

For nine days one early May, Ryan Watkins along with two brothers, Jeremy and Chris Jones, attempt to backpack the entire length of the infamous Appalachian Trail through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. From his very first steps into the Smokies, Ryan quickly learns the seventy-mile stretch of trail is far more difficult than he ever imagined. The trio battles through torrential rains, lightning, snow, fatigue, multiple encounters with bears and a standoff with a timber rattlesnake as they march more than eighty miles from Standing Bear Farms, a small hostel north of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to Fontana Dam on the park's southern tip. Along the way, the group meets a colorful cast of hikers while experiencing the most physically demanding and personally rewarding nine days of their lives. The story is a painfully honest, unadulterated, sometimes raunchy, and humorous retelling of the hike that is most definitely not suitable for readers of all ages.

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